

Tips For Creating A Strong Portfolio

Candidates for the MLA and BLA programs often have questions about creating a portfolio of creative works. Here are some tips and suggestions for strengthening your portfolio. Remember, although all parts of the application are important, the combination of the Statement of Purpose and the Portfolio of Creative Works provides the best opportunity for an applicant to demonstrate their motivation for applying, potential for creativity and success in the program, and interest and knowledge of landscape architecture in general and UW's program in particular.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A PORTFOLIO

- You can include anything that highlights your creative thinking, process, and skills such as hand drawing/sketching, painting, sculpture, photography, ceramics, textiles, woodworking, furniture, set design, construction experience, poetry or other short writing sample, website/logo design, graphic design, etc.
- It is best to include multiple types of work (ie, not all photography) and a mix of 2D and 3D work.
- Include process work in addition to finished work.
- Only include your work. If you need to include group work, clearly indicate that it was group work and indicate your contribution.
- It's okay to edit past work. If your skills and abilities have improved since you originally did the work, it is okay to edit the work to highlight your current level or standard.

QUALITIES OF A STRONG PORTFOLIO

- Overall, the portfolio follows a narrative or tells a story.
- The portfolio is well-organized and easy to follow.
- Includes a variety of types of creative work / types of drawings.
- Start with your strongest work.
- A shorter portfolio with strong work is better than a longer portfolio that includes work that is less strong
- Links to websites should not be substituted for an actual portfolio.
- Proofread and spellcheck your final document.

FORMATTING TIPS

- Follow any guidelines that are provided
- Adhere to the max 30MB file size indicated – there are many free sites online that can help reduce file size for pdf files, if needed - search “reduce pdf”
- Maximum 20 pages/sides (not including cover and table of contents pages)
- Maximize the size of the portfolio for viewing - the portfolio will be viewed on a screen consider this when considering layout (ie, single pages (not facing pages) oriented horizontally may be better)
- Limit text - text should support but not overpower the graphic content.
- Remember, a portfolio is a design document. Consider the choices you make with the graphic design. Simple is usually best and avoid things that draw attention away from the work itself.