

University at Buffalo Information Science Graduate Student Association

MS-ILS Portfolio Talk with Dr. Brenda White Information and Q&A Sheet

Purpose

The portfolio is designed to be a culminating project at the end of the program, rather than requiring a thesis or other intimidating large project. It's about reflecting on your experiences from the program and fitting them into the bigger picture.

What makes up the portfolio?

The portfolio should consist of major projects you worked on, not discussion board posts or reading logs, but final assignments, big group projects, etc. You will be picking a total of 8 work products (called "artifacts") to showcase in the portfolio that demonstrate how you met the goals of the program (two artifacts for each of the four goals), accompanied by a statement about how the artifact meets the particular goal. You must have at least one product from each core course in your portfolio. When addressing how the assignment meets the goal of the program, you will write approximately 250-300 words.

You will also be asked for an updated version of your plan of study, an unofficial transcript, a clear copy of an updated resume, a personal statement (impact essay, ~750 words), a copy of your original statement (the one you submitted to apply to the program), your educational goals, and some other personal information.

Note to remember: You will be earning an MS-ILS, a Master of Science in Information and Library Science, not an MLIS or an MLS. It is a science degree!

You want to remember to download every major assignment from your courses as you progress, and make sure you have multiple versions of those files because if something happens to your computer, professors aren't required to keep track of everything for you. It is recommended that you use UB Box and create a file folder for every course as you take them.

Examples of how to apply assignments to the learning goals of the program.

Learning Outcome 1: *Graduates demonstrate theoretical and conceptual understanding of information science, including the creation, representation, organization, retrieval, dissemination, use and curation of information.*

So, the statement might be something along the lines of: Well, I designed an information system and needed to understand the concepts of representation and retrieval as well as the importance of user-centered design. This is based on an assignment from LIS 507.

Learning Outcome 2: *Graduates are prepared to apply disciplinary knowledge and skills in a variety of information contexts.*

A statement might highlight a project from LIS 508 where you had to do an analysis and application project and examine a specific user group. From this, you understand the importance of looking at and learning about different users. Regardless of the user group you learn about how we change the things we do depending on the user group, which shows preparation to work in diverse information contexts.

Learning Outcome 3: *Graduates demonstrate professional competences, including leadership, critical and analytical thinking, research, communication, collaboration, cultural competence, reflective practice, and adherence to professional ethics.*

Perhaps you took on a leadership role in a group project, or in LIS 575 when you need to critically analyze the literature for the literature review.

Learning Outcome 4: *Graduates demonstrate values, attitudes and behaviors that are essential for information and library professionals, including diversity, equity and inclusion.*

These goals can be accomplished from every assignment in every course, depending on the subject matter.

It is also recommended that you attempt to align the artifacts you choose with the future career path you want to pursue. This is because you're also supposed to be reflecting on how these skills learned will help you in the future.

Q&A

Q: When do we complete the portfolio?

A: In your final semester of the program. If your final semester will be in the summer, you must submit your portfolio by the spring deadline as most faculty do not work over the summer.

Q: How do we get registered for the portfolio course?

A: Typically, Dr. B will send out an email at the beginning of each semester with the form you need to complete to be assigned to the portfolio course. After this happens, you will get access to the means for submitting the portfolio via UB Learns. You should contact Dr. B either during or slightly before your final semester begins.

Q: What does submitting the portfolio look like?

A: The portfolio course on UB Learns is essentially a step-by-step guide to all the parts you need to submit. Each piece you need has a separate submission folder, and as long as you get everything in by the deadline, you can work through the submissions at your own pace.

Q: Do the submission artifacts need to have professor comments on them?

A: It is preferred that your submissions have professor comments attached. If your professors did not comment directly onto the file, you can upload a separate screenshot image of the comments from UB Learns into the submission portal.

Q: Is the portfolio a letter grade score?

A: The portfolio is Pass/Fail.

Q: What happens if we fail?

A: You really shouldn't fail as you're given a lot of guidance throughout this process. Dr. B will work to do everything she possibly can to allow you to succeed at the portfolio. The only way to really fail is if you do nothing. As long as you are consciously putting in the work you will pass.

Q: What counts as an artifact?

A: Major assignments from classes you completed. This can be presentations, final papers, videos, group projects, etc. As long as it is something you worked on that demonstrates your ability to do that work.

Q: With the switch to Brightspace, will we still have access to previous course materials? (We typically get access to previous courses for a full year after the course ends to allow for the downloading of materials)

A: The answer to this is being worked on, as we do not currently know what will happen to the old UB learns Blackboard information when the switch happens. Please keep an eye out for emails concerning this topic from the listserv emails.

Contact Information

If you have any follow-up questions, please contact either Dr. White or Ayiana Crabtree. (Dr. White for specific questions about the portfolio, and Ayiana for any questions about this document or the session)

Dr. Brenda White
IS Department Faculty
blb@buffalo.edu

Ayiana Crabtree
IS-GSA President
ayianacr@buffalo.edu