

UTeach Portfolio System

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Everything About the Preliminary Portfolio System

A passing score on the preliminary portfolio is a prerequisite for Apprentice Teaching. Students without a passing score will not be cleared to register for EDC 651S or UTS 170. This prerequisite is firm and there is no appeal. All sections of all proficiencies are required.

When can I start on the portfolio?

Now. Every student in UTeach has access to the portfolio. Starting with Step 1, upload all documents to the portfolio site.

When do I need to complete the portfolio?

A passing score on the preliminary portfolio is one of the prerequisites for admission to Apprentice Teaching (EDC 651S and UTS 170). While UTeach students have access to the web-based portfolio system and build the portfolio throughout all courses in the program, the preliminary portfolio must be submitted by the due date in the semester prior to Apprentice Teaching. Students will be given permission to register for EDC 651S and UTS 170 before the scores are finalized. These courses are audited after the due date and students without a passing score will be dropped. This means that students must delay their student teaching by at least one semester if they do not meet this deadline. Extensions are not available for this prerequisite.

What if I miss the deadline? Can I get an extension?

Given the importance of the prerequisite, there are no extensions.

What if I can't log in?

If you can't get into the system, send an email to the Portfolio Coordinator. Include your EID and which area you're certifying in, like math, science, etc.

I can log in, but I have the wrong portfolio. How do I get the right one?

Send an email to the Portfolio Coordinator with your EID. The correct preliminary portfolio for all students is "Preliminary Portfolio V3 2017."

Who evaluates my portfolio?

A trained evaluator with classroom experience in the content area.

How is the portfolio scored?

For the preliminary portfolio, you need 1 point per subsection. The following rubric is used:

- Unsatisfactory = 0 points
- Beginning Competent = 1 point
- Competent = 2 or 3 points
- Advanced Competent = 4 points

The complete rubric goes into detail about the requirements for each point value.

How much will I have to add to my final portfolio?

The final portfolio, produced during the Apprentice Teaching semester, further develops the skills of the preliminary portfolio. Requirements for the final portfolio are more extensive than for the preliminary portfolio and there is an expectation of greater depth, maturity, and competence at this level, as students are preparing to launch their professional careers. You will receive separate instructions in your Apprentice Teaching semester.

Can I use a piece of evidence, like a lesson plan, for more than one proficiency?

Yes. Be sure to guide the evaluator to the relevant sections of the artifact for each proficiency. In fact, it's best to re-save the document with a clearly relevant title. In each one, highlight the sections that pertain to the specific proficiency.

Do I need an artifact for each proficiency?

Yes. Even if you use a single lesson plan more than once, you definitely want to include an artifact of some kind to illustrate major points in all of your reflections. Make it easy for the evaluator to see how the artifact is related to the proficiency. Highlight or bold specific sections. Renaming the document helps, too.

My old computer crashed, and I don't have my files. What do I do?

Since there are no extensions for the preliminary portfolio, it's best if you have been uploading documents all along. That way, you don't depend on a specific computer. If you no longer have copies of lesson plans, start contacting the students you were partnered with to see if they still have copies. Some instructors keep documents from previous semesters, but some don't. If you submitted documents through Canvas, you may be able to retrieve them. Basically, budget time for retrieving files.

Do I have to turn everything into an electronic document?

Yes, all documents used for evidence must be in a format, like a PDF, that can be uploaded into the portfolio system. The copier in the Student Workroom can be used to scan documents, turning them into PDFs that you then email to yourself. Feel free to ask for help if you need it. Scanners are also available in libraries across campus.

Where can I archive my documents?

All UT students, faculty, and staff have access to UT Box for *free* backup and storage. The portfolio system also has room to store artifacts (log in and drop down the "My Home" menu). Do not upload raw, unedited video to the portfolio system. You will use up all your space.

What if I need more than 50 documents for my portfolio?

Be selective. However, if you feel that you need more than 50 documents, contact the Portfolio Coordinator with your request. Space will not be allocated for unedited videos. Upload only compressed, web-ready video.

How do I know if my portfolio has been evaluated or needs revisions?

You must log in periodically to check the status of your portfolio. **This is your responsibility.** The icons will tell you where your portfolio is in the process of evaluation. If you see the "needs revision" icon, get in there and revise according to the evaluator's comments.

Where can I get help with revisions?

All faculty are aware of the portfolio and its requirements and are available to help with revisions. Feel free to talk to them whether you're still in their course or not.

What about registering for Apprentice Teaching?

Students register for EDC 651S and UTS 170 during their regular registration access period provided they have met all other requirements. You will receive an email from the Apprentice Teacher coordinator, Pamela Powell. Follow all instructions in the email carefully. An audit is run before registration access opens again. Students registered for the Apprentice Teaching courses who have not submitted a portfolio or who have not completed revisions are dropped.

How do I get started on the portfolio?

Log in and start uploading documents.

Portfolio Evidence and Artifacts

Many kinds of material can be used as evidence for the preliminary portfolio: lesson plans, reflection assignments, observation feedback forms, video of your teaching, copies or images of student work, exams, papers, homework assignments, lab reports. As you engage in field experiences, think in terms of artifacts for the portfolio. Take a quick picture of work students have done on the blackboard or projects built collaboratively. Remember to respect student privacy and black out any identifiers, such as names and faces. Ask your instructors if you have any questions. Err on the side of caution.

You may also find that experiences from outside the university are helpful in addressing certain proficiencies: work you have done through an internship, a tutoring job, or a coaching position, for example.

A single piece of evidence may be used in more than one proficiency. For maximum clarity, save the document with a new title each time you use it. Highlight the parts of the lesson plan that are relevant to each proficiency, e.g., technology and collaborative learning. This helps you be sure you're matching the right document to the right proficiency.

Artifacts from UTeach courses can include specific assignments, like a generative lesson plan from Knowing and Learning or responses to a forum prompt from Classroom Interactions. Think about drafts of assignments, too. Courses with material relevant to specific proficiencies are identified at the end of each Section, but other coursework may also apply. Artifacts from course work, like drafts, papers, and exams, that include instructor comments and grades make especially good evidence.

Material from content courses can also be used. In particular, think about lab courses, both lower- and upper-division and any research methods course (UTeach, Dean's Scholars, Freshman Research Initiative, etc.). Or think about a particularly challenging proof or the kind of problem solving you did in any Moore Method course. Save documents that seem to fit into proficiencies, especially ones with instructor comments and grades.

IMPORTANT: You are expected to include at least one piece of evidence per proficiency. The best way to make sure you're able to do this is to take advantage of the generous allotment of space in UT Box and just save everything whether you're certain it would be useful or not.

The final portfolio, produced during the Apprentice Teaching semester, further develops the skills of the preliminary portfolio. Requirements for the final portfolio are more extensive than for the preliminary portfolio and there is an expectation of greater depth, maturity, and competence at this level, as students are preparing to launch their careers as professionals. You will receive separate instructions in your Apprentice Teaching semester.

Portfolio Proficiencies

This page details the requirements for the preliminary portfolio. The final portfolio, produced during the Apprentice Teaching semester, further develops the skills demonstrated in the preliminary portfolio. Requirements for the final portfolio are more extensive than for the preliminary portfolio and there is an expectation of greater depth, maturity, and competence at this level, as students are preparing to launch their careers as professionals. You will receive separate instructions in your Apprentice Teaching semester.

For a passing score on the preliminary portfolio, you must earn a score of at least 1 (out of 4) on each of the required sections. See the portfolio rubric for more details.

Profile Information

In this section, you will provide the portfolio evaluator with a context for you as a student and pre-service teacher.

Academic summary

Your academic record should include all UT coursework, all transfer course work, and all grades. Do not include an advising audit in this section; a free copy of your entire record, called an academic summary, is available from Registrar's Office. This proficiency is scored as "included or not included." Your portfolio will not be evaluated based on your academic record.

Résumé

This document presents your work and educational background. The audience is a principal or other professional who hires teachers.

Your résumé should be up-to-date and include your UTeach field experiences at all levels (with an indication that these were short-term, not full-time employment) and any UTeach internship experience.

As with other portfolio submissions, be sure to proofread this document for spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Teaching philosophy

State the major concepts and guiding principles that shape your views on being a successful teacher. You might choose to address such questions as: What led you to become a teacher? What do you hope to accomplish as a teacher? What educational experiences (either as a student or pre-service teacher) have had the greatest impact on you, and why?

Your teaching philosophy must be at least 350 words, in clear, expository prose. Please be sure to proof-read this document (and all other portfolio submissions). Misspellings and grammar or punctuation errors show a lack of professionalism.

Consider work you may have done in: Knowing and Learning, Perspectives, Project-Based Instruction.

Cover letter for employment

State your future goals for employment in a letter that accompanies a résumé to a potential employer.

This letter should be tailored to the job you seek, demonstrating to a future employer that you are a good fit for the school. Your cover letter may be addressed to a school at which you have had a field experience or a school where you would like to seek future employment. Even if you are unsure about whether or not you want to teach, the cover letter should be as professional as possible.

As with other portfolio submissions, be sure to proofread this document for spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Ethics & Professionalism

In this section you will reflect on the important of ethics in teaching. Submit the "Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators" as evidence and refer to and reflect on a specific standard. Describe the ways in which this standard might apply in your future classroom.

Equity and Inclusive Design

Demonstrate an awareness of student diversity while preparing lessons, presenting lessons, and assessing students.

Include a discussion of how you create an inclusive and accessible learning environment for students from various backgrounds, who have different interests, ability levels, genders, students for whom English is not a first language, or students who legally require accommodations and/or modifications.

Classroom Environment & Management

In this section, you will demonstrate how you create a safe and supportive learning environment that fosters high expectations for the success of all students.

Participation and Connection

Explain how you design lessons that encourage all students to participate, that connect the content to the interests and experiences of your students, and that make learning assessable and meaningful for students of all ability levels.

Safety

State explicitly how you consistently maintain a safe learning environment for students, both emotionally and physically. Include a lesson plan in which you specifically discuss safety with your students.

Lesson Design

Inquiry is an approach to teaching that involves students exploring concepts or ideas in order to create new understandings. The purpose of this section is for you to describe and document your process for developing lessons that promote student learning through inquiry. Your reflections should explain how your inquiry lesson is connected to state and national standards. You should also discuss the ways in which your lesson design uses the experiences and perspectives of the learner to support students taking an active role in the construction of their own knowledge.

Inquiry Design & Assessment

Document your process for planning and developing a learning experience designed to promote student learning through inquiry. Explain how you develop assessments to evaluate and demonstrate the student's grasp of the lesson material in relation to state or national standards. Also explain how you assessed the validity of the resources and student activities for this lesson.

Technology

Discuss how you have used or plan to use technology to create and enhance the learning environment. Include an assessment of the appropriateness of that technology for reaching your instructional goals.

Lesson Implementation

In this section, you will demonstrate how you stimulate interest in your content and elicit students' sustained participation in learning activities through inquiry and the use of technology.

Questioning and Assessment

Describe and provide evidence of your questioning and assessment techniques. Include evidence of how you used assessment to respond flexibly to students during instruction. Include a discussion of how your assessment strategy or instrument effectively measured the learning objectives and how you used assessment data to revise and improve the lesson.

Meaningful Learning Experience

Describe an inquiry-based lesson that you have actually implemented. Provide evidence showing that all students engaged in meaningful learning experiences, such as: making predictions, gathering data, creating their own explanations or models from data, and communicating those explanations.

Content Knowledge

In this section, you demonstrate **YOUR** knowledge in the subject matter you will be teaching. Your reflections should describe broad and current knowledge. Include work you have completed in your university courses. Be sure to thoroughly describe the work and how it demonstrates your proficiency.

Based on your certification area, you will need to complete the indicated proficiencies:

CERTIFICATION	ALL	SCI	MATH	ENG	CS
Science	X	X			
Mathematics	X		X		
Engineering	X	X	X	X	
Computer Science	X				X

ALL – Historical Importance

Show how you bring out the historical importance of your subject material, its contribution to large ideas, and its significance in today's society. Include a brief discussion in your reflection/analysis of the importance of helping your students understand the context of the information you present.

ALL - Model

Generate a model of a natural phenomenon, or an engineered product or process, or describe an already existing model and evaluate how well the model represents the situation.

ALL – Topic Connections

Describe a topic in the subject area and describe the connections with prerequisite topics, future topics, and other subjects.

SCI – Question Inquiry

State a question about the natural world and outline how to develop it into a specific inquiry that answers the question in whole or in part.

SCI – Science Explanation

Evaluate the strength of a scientific explanation or hypothesis using scientific evidence and methodology and articulate that evaluation in clear, expository prose.

MATH – Formal/Informal Reasoning

State a mathematical theorem or conjecture and apply informal mathematical reasoning and a formal proof of the theorem or conjecture.

Evidence must include a statement about the particular type of proof chosen for the theorem or conjecture (i.e., direct proof, proof by contradiction, existence proof, uniqueness proof, contrapositive and equivalent forms, proof by mathematical induction, et.) and why that method of proof is most appropriate.

MATH – Multiple Representations

Describe a mathematical concept that can be represented in multiple ways and articulate the connections between its representations in clear, expository prose.

ENG – Design Challenge

State a design challenge you have undertaken and describe the steps you went through to address it, providing specifics of each step. For example, do not simply state that you considered the needs of the client. Describe how you did that.

ENG – Grand Challenge

Select one of the engineering grand challenges and describe in clear expository prose how it 1) relates to a human or societal need, 2) illustrates the global nature of engineering, and 3) might be addressed using engineering practices and habits of mind.

CS – Computational Problem

State a computational problem and an algorithm for solving it. Apply both informal and formal techniques to evaluate the algorithm in terms of its clarity, efficiency, and correctness. Describe the benefit of being able to apply both formal and informal reasoning to the same problem.

CS – Software System

Describe a scenario or problem that can be improved or solved by the creation of a software system, and formalize that system using multiple representations, including descriptive prose, a graphical representation (UML, flowchart, etc.), code or pseudo-code.

Writing and Selectivity

Writing in the Profession

Being able to present information to a variety of audiences in both written and oral form is an important aspect of any profession. Teaching is no different. To get started in the profession, you write a letter and construct a resume whenever you apply for a job. Imagine a principal reading a letter that's poorly organized and riddled with errors. Then think about that same principal reading a well-constructed, clear letter. All qualifications being equal, which candidate is more likely to get that job?

All teachers write. They write a lot, and not just lesson plans. They write assessments, evaluations of their own teaching and that of others; they write to parents; they write instructions that must be clear and helpful; they write professional presentations; they write grants. More and more, they write their own web pages and even construct—and provide text for—entire websites.

The proficiencies all require prose that is clear, thoughtful, detailed, and correct. Evaluators do not line edit your work, but they will send it back for revisions based on poor writing. Read your reflections carefully before submission for clarity and completeness. Proofread and clean up errors. Written work with fragments, agreement errors, run-on sentences, etc. impedes understanding and undermines your credibility as a professional.

The University of Texas at Austin runs an Undergraduate Writing Center that is nationally ranked. You can get great help with the reflections for the portfolio.

From the UWC webpage: The Undergraduate Writing Center (UWC) offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. The writer works with a trained consultant to define goals for the session, for example:

- deciding on a topic
- clarifying and organizing ideas
- researching, drafting, and revising
- improving grammar, punctuation, and usage
- citing sources properly

Go to the UWC homepage for more information.

Writing the Reflections

For the preliminary portfolio, expect to generate about 1-2 pages total for each subsection or proficiency. The analysis makes clear to the evaluator how the evidence (lesson plan, teacher observation, etc.) relates to the proficiency. This section must be clear and lucid. It is insufficient to say something like, "This lesson plan engaged all students in meaningful learning experiences" (6.a). Explain how students were engaged and how you knew that, referring both to specific aspects of the lesson plan and student response that support your contention. Be descriptive. Help the evaluator understand the context. Next, be reflective. Discuss the importance of the proficiency for education. What happened during this experience? What would you change? What would you do the same?

The most successful portfolios include reflections that meet the following criteria:

- They carefully identify which part of which item demonstrates which proficiency.
- They describe as clearly as possible HOW an item demonstrates that proficiency.
- They share specific details that help the reviewer understand your point of view and the context of your experience.
- They address the value of the proficiency for education in general.
- They include every aspect of each proficiency. The individual proficiencies or subsections break down into several aspects. Be sure you address them all.
- They conform to the standards of written English.

Writing Help

Your student fees support one of the best writing centers in the country. Trained writing counselors will work with you on the portfolio, even from scratch. They're great at brainstorming and invention.

Selectivity

Guide the evaluator to the relevant section of an artifact, using **bold face** or highlighting. You can do this in the word document and then, when you are done, PDF the document to maintain the formatting. Under no circumstances should an evaluator have to hunt around in the artifact trying to figure out how the artifact is relevant to the proficiency.

Similarly, if you include a teaching video, explain to the evaluator which part of the video is relevant and why it's relevant, and provide a time stamp, e.g. from 12:42 to 15:34. Just as an evaluator should not have to hunt around in your lesson plan for the relevant section, an evaluator should not have to screen 30 minutes of video trying to figure out which section to look at. Evaluators have been instructed to return for revision any proficiencies with unedited video for evidence.

Redundancy is a good thing. If you use a lesson plan more than once (which is likely and acceptable), save it as separate documents: CBR 2.a, CBR 6.c, etc. Highlight the relevant areas for each individual proficiency. This helps you make sure the evaluator knows which part of the lesson plan supports which proficiency.

When You Must Revise Your Portfolio

The most common reasons why proficiencies need to be resubmitted are:

- Omissions: There is a lot of ground to cover and students sometimes simply omit a part of a section. Careful proofreading helps.
- Unclear connections: Evaluators will assign zero points when the reflection does not make clear how the evidence relates to the proficiency.
- No evidence at all: Include at least one piece of evidence or artifact per proficiency.
- Poor writing: Evaluators do not line edit, but they do return proficiencies for revision due to poor writing. Take advantage of UT resources like the Undergraduate Writing Center.

It is **your responsibility** to check in on your portfolio to see if revisions are required. Because there are no extensions for late revisions, this is a critical responsibility. If you have any questions concerns at all about the revision process, contact the Portfolio Coordinator immediately.

Portfolio Rubric

Writing in the Profession

Being able to present information to a variety of audiences in both written and oral form is an important aspect of any profession. Teaching is no different. To get started in the profession, you write a letter and construct a resume whenever you apply for a job. Imagine a principal reading a letter that's poorly organized and riddled with errors. Then think about that same principal reading a well-constructed, clear letter. All qualifications being equal, which candidate is more likely to get that job?

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Redundancy is a good thing. If you use a lesson plan more than once (which is likely and acceptable), save it as separate documents: CBR 2.a, CBR 6.c, etc. Highlight the relevant areas for each individual proficiency. This helps you make sure the evaluator knows which part of the lesson plan supports which proficiency.

When Portfolios Must Be Revised

The most common reasons why proficiencies need to be resubmitted are:

- Omissions: There is a lot of ground to cover and students sometimes simply omit a part of a section. Careful proofreading helps.
- Unclear connections: Evaluators will assign zero points when the reflection does not make clear how the evidence relates to the proficiency.
- No evidence at all: Include at least one piece of evidence or artifact per proficiency.
- Poor writing: Evaluators do not line edit, but they do return proficiencies for revision due to poor writing. Take advantage of UT resources like the Undergraduate Writing Center.

It is **your responsibility** to check in on your portfolio to see if revisions are required. Because there are no extensions for late revisions, this is a critical responsibility. If you have any questions concerns at all about the revision process, contact the Portfolio Coordinator immediately.

Troubleshooting and Tips

- Click only once. Clicking multiple times will only slow you and your fellow students down even more.
- Use a hard-wired computer whenever you can. Wireless connections can vary in strength and speed. Using a hard-wired connection, like the computers in the UTeach workroom, can help avoid issues in the first place, particularly uploading large files.
- Turning a document into a PDF preserves formatting and makes for a faster upload. This is especially good for format-heavy documents like lesson plans and resumes. Save your document as a PDF; upload it, and then attach it as evidence.
- Never leave a text box empty. If the uploaded document contains the actual reflection or fulfills the requirement (like a resume), be sure to let the evaluator know what to look for. In the text box, point the evaluator toward that document with language like this: "Please see the attached PDF for the reflection" or "Resume is attached."
- Label evidence clearly so the evaluator knows what to expect. Resave the same document under different names and highlight the portions relevant to a specific proficiency.

Common Error Messages When Uploading Documents

All error messages appear in the top right corner of your screen. They will remain on your screen until you manually close them. If you're having trouble with a document, please watch your screen for an error message. Some of the most common are:

- "Due to technical constraints, please try to limit file upload sizes to a maximum of 300MB." This is actually just a reminder about file size and not an error message. Go ahead and upload the file but **click only once**. Clicking a lot of times slows things down even further. When the system is being used heavily, you'll need to be patient.
- The file name is too long. Close the document and rename it or do a Save As, rename it, and complete the upload.
- The file type may not be accepted. The Portfolio system accepts the most common file types, like PDF, Word, jpgs and other image files, and most common video files. File types are limited to those most accessible to the evaluators. If the file type is not accepted, save the document as a different type and complete the upload. See below for the complete list of file types accepted by the system.

If you cannot resolve an error on your own, send an email to the Portfolio Coordinator with the following information:

- browser (Chrome, Safari, etc.)
- the task you were performing (uploading a PDF, attaching an artifact to a reflection, etc.)
- the specific error message
- whether or not you were using Wi-Fi
- your UT EID

File Types Accepted by the Portfolio System

- avi (movie)
- bmp (image)
- csv (comma separated values)
- doc (Pre-Office 2007 document)
- docx (Word 2007 XML Documents)
- flv (flash video)
- gif (image)
- jpeg (image)
- jpg (single, still picture)
- mid (audio file)
- midi (audio file)
- mov (QuickTime)

- mp3 (audio file)
- mp4 (mpeg 4 – movie file)
- mpa (audio file)
- mpg (movie file)
- pdf (Adobe)
- png (image)
- ppt (Pre-Office 2007 PowerPoint)
- pptx (PowerPoint 2007 XML Presentation)
- qt (QuickTime)
- rm (Real Media)
- rtf (rich text format)
- swf (Flash)
- tif (image)
- txt (generic text file)
- wav (WAVE audio)
- wks (MS Works spreadsheet)
- wma (Window media – audio)
- wmv (Windows media – movie)
- wpd (Word Perfect)
- wps (MS Works spreadsheet)
- xls (Microsoft Pre-2007 Excel)
- xlsx (Microsoft 2007 XML Workbook)

Portfolio Evaluators

UTeach relies on outside evaluators to score the portfolio, both at the preliminary and final levels. We value the expertise that classroom teachers bring to this process as they help our pre-service teachers prepare for their future as professional educators.

All portfolios are evaluated online through the Portfolio website. The evaluator reviews submissions and the evidence that supports the submission and assigns grades based on a rubric. Please feel free to read through the proficiencies for the preliminary portfolio as well as the rubric.

UTeach offers a stipend for evaluators: \$75/preliminary portfolio and \$125/final portfolio.

If you're interested in evaluating portfolios for the UTeach program, please email Pamela Powell for details.

Links and Resources

- Portfolio website: <https://portfolio.uteach.utexas.edu/>
- Portfolio coordinator email: bwestbrook@austin.utexas.edu
- Canvas: <https://canvas.utexas.edu/>
- UT libraries: <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/study-spaces-technology/print-copy-scan>
- UT Box: <https://it.utexas.edu/students>
- UT academic summary: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/students/records/summary>
- Undergraduate writing center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>