TUM

06. Assessing the ePortfolio

Where should you start?

Assessing the ePortfolio can be daunting, especially when faced with how to assess your students' reflective work and progress. To help you get started, we've created a checklist with some practical questions. You can consider these as you plan the assessment of the ePortfolio before your course begins.

Checklist: Planning for assessment

☐ Have you defined clear learning outcomes for the ePortfolio that are measurable? (What should your students be able to demonstrate in their completed ePortfolio?)

☐ Does the approach you have chosen (e.g., scaffolding and sequencing the ePortfolio) align with those outcomes?

☐ Have you set criteria for assessing the ePortfolio as part of a rubric?

☐ Have you considered how and how often you (or your students) will provide formative feedback?

☐ Have you thought about how to explain the assessment criteria to your students to ensure that they have a clear understanding of how they will be assessed and what is expected of them?

☐ Do you have an example of what a good ePortfolio and/or a good reflection entry looks like that you could show your students?

What approaches could you use?

The ePortfolio can be assessed through various approaches that are largely dependent on your learning outcomes and the context of your course. To help save you time in the long run and maintain fairness in grading – especially when multiple graders are involved – we'd recommend developing a rubric. Let's explore **three common types of rubrics.**

1. Analytic

Multiple criteria (in rows) are assigned different performance levels and weights (in columns) within the rubric

When to use: Ideal for assessing a distinct set of skills, competencies, or knowledge separately with specific feedback

Advantages
- Provides targeted feedback on strengths and areas of improvement
- Individual criteria can be weighted to reflect its relative importance to the whole

Disadvantages
- Can be time-consuming to develop and apply
- Can lead to variations in scoring interpretations when multiple graders are involved and criteria aren't well-defined enough or too detailed

Analytic rubric

	Beginning 1	Developing 2	...
Criterion 1	Description	Description	...
Criterion 2	Description	Description	...
Criterion 3	Description	Description	...
Criterion 4	Description	Description	...

2. Holistic

Single scale with key assessment criteria considered together in a unified framework (usually in a single paragraph)

When to use: Ideal when assessing students' overall performance is more critical than evaluating specific elements

Advantages
- Can simplify assessment by focusing on overall achievement rather than specific criteria
- Can save time on grading, especially for large-scale assessments

Disadvantages
- May lack detailed feedback on areas for improvement
- Choosing the most appropriate description becomes challenging when student performance is at different levels across the criteria

Holistic rubric

Score	Criteria/Description
4	Description
3	Description
2	Description
1	Description

3. Checklist

Multiple criteria with only two performance levels (e.g., yes/no, complete/incomplete, pass/fail)

When to use: Optimal for assessing practical or procedural components that require clear criteria. This type of rubric is most easily adaptable for self- and/or peer assessment

Advantages
- Can make grading easier and quicker by focusing on whether individual criteria are met (or not)
- Can lead to more consistent grading decisions

Disadvantages
- Can be challenging to adapt every performance criterion to a checklist format
- May not capture varying levels of performance within a criterion (i.e., no "middle ground")

Checklist rubric

Criteria	Yes (1 point)	No (0 points)
Criterion 1		
Criterion 2		
Criterion 3		
Criterion 4		

Do you need a refresher on designing rubrics or a better idea of what criteria for a holistic rubric might look like?

Brown University and Queen's University have helpful teaching resources on creating a rubric, scoring strategies, and more.

For a more detailed analytic rubric, take a look at this example from Carleton University.

What criteria can you use?

One way to approach developing criteria for the ePortfolio is to centre them around three key areas: content, presentation, and reflective work. Since reflection holds an essential role in the ePortfolio, it's important to give it the appropriate weighting (e.g., in the distribution of grades) and evaluate its depth and quality rather than prioritizing content.

Consider developing criteria with your students. This can be motivating, especially since the ePortfolio is likely unfamiliar to them. By involving them in the process and inviting their contributions, they'll have a fuller understanding of how they can meet expectations and will feel they have more ownership over their work.

To guide you in the development process, here are examples of criteria you can use to assess the ePortfolio more effectively. Keep in mind that these are flexible starting points that can be adapted to suit the unique context of your course and your learning outcomes.

Sample criteria could include:

Content	Organization, argumentation, factual accuracy, and completeness
Presentation	Language, grammar, spelling, layout, choice of media, and citations
Reflective work	Overall depth of reflection, selection of artifacts (with justification), critical reflection on learning process, integration of knowledge and/or skills, analysis of situation/course content, and critical self-awareness

Given the central role of reflective work in the ePortfolio and its grading challenges, our next section will provide sample criteria and guiding questions to help you create an effective rubric.

How can you assess your students' reflective work?

Assessing students' reflective work is often seen as one of the more demanding aspects of adopting the ePortfolio. The good news is, using a rubric not only helps improve grading consistency, but also provides targeted feedback. While it may demand more initial time and effort, the long-term benefits are significant. So, where do you start?

Let's delve into individual sample criteria that you can use to assess reflective work in more detail. These criteria, along with their guiding questions, serve as reference points for creating and defining your own criteria and are by no means comprehensive. To simplify this process, we've categorized the sample criteria as **basic** and **advanced**, reflecting the criteria's complexity.

Following the sample criteria, we provide a cross-section of an analytic rubric. Feel free to adapt and tailor them to align with your course requirements.

Reflective work: Sample criteria

Basic

If you're new to introducing reflective work and using it as part of assessment, we'd recommend starting small and focusing on three key questions.

- In their* reflective work, does the student explain why they chose the artifacts and justify their selections?
- Do they regularly reflect on course content and its significance or relevance to their learning?
- Do the reflections show evidence of what the student has learned and what is still unclear or challenging for them?

(Adapted from Carleton University's ePortfolio Faculty Learning community with additions by the authors)

*We've opted to use the pronouns they/their when referring to the student to signal our commitment to inclusivity.

Advanced

If you already have experience in assessing reflective work within the ePortfolio, we've developed more demanding sample criteria designed to challenge your students. As you explore these criteria, we'd recommend considering your unique context and the level of your students.

1. Integration of knowledge and/or skills
The student should incorporate knowledge and/or skills they've gained in the course, demonstrating how they interconnect with their previous knowledge, experiences, and ideally, other relevant contexts.

- Do the reflections show a comprehensive understanding of the course content with the student connecting different concepts, ideas, and perspectives?
- Does the student use theoretical knowledge from the course to understand and analyze problems and/or real-world situations?
- Are there instances where the student has integrated readings, research, and personal experiences to offer insightful reflections on what they have learned in the course?

2. Analysis of situation/course content
The student should demonstrate the ability to contextualize and critically analyze the situation or course content.

- Is there evidence of the student detailing specific aspects of course content that was meaningful for them? Do they provide rationale for its importance?
- Are they able to effectively demonstrate how these insights can be applied to a similar context or how these insights have played a role in shaping their learning journey?
- For a better idea of what this might look like, see the cross-section of a sample rubric on the last page.

Reflective work: Sample criteria

3. Critical self-awareness
The student should effectively show instances where they challenged their own opinions, beliefs, and preconceived ideas through the reflective process and feedback from others, leading to new learning.

- Does the student critically reflect on their preconceptions, attitude, and values? As a result, are they able to develop and articulate new perspectives?
- Are they able to link and by extension, apply their experience/s to question their self-concept, perception of others, and course concepts?
- Is there evidence that the student can adapt and transfer knowledge and/or skills to new contexts through self-awareness?

4. Reflection on learning process
The student should be able to critically reflect on their learning journey, offering in-depth insights into their learning process and how it's reshaped their prior knowledge.

- Are there specific instances where the student reflects on their initial understanding compared to their current insights (demonstrating an awareness of how their learning has changed or progressed across the semester)?
- Are there reflections that highlight the student's capacity to adapt and adjust their learning approach based on experiences and challenges encountered?
- In their reflections, does the student analyze their learning experiences with insights into how learning occurred and how it transformed previous knowledge?

(Adapted from Carleton University's ePortfolio Faculty Learning community with additions by the authors)

Sample analytic rubric

We've included a cross-section of an analytic rubric below to give you a better idea of what a criterion might look like across different performance levels.

Performance levels	Not attempted 0	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Competent 3	Exemplary 4
Analysis of situation/course content	Does not describe situation/relevant course content or provide insight or interpretation.	Describes situation/relevant course content.	Describes situation/course content and provides limited insight and interpretation.	Provides interpretation and insight into situation/in reference to course content. Identifies alternative viewpoints and contextualizes situation/references to course context.	Provides in-depth interpretation and insight into situation/in reference to course content. Integrates multiple alternative viewpoints and contextualizes situation/references to course context.
...	...	...	...	...	...

(Adapted from Carleton University's ePortfolio Faculty Learning community with additions by the authors)

Need more advice on how to assess the ePortfolio?

We're happy to provide individual support.
Get in touch with us at info@prolehre.tum.de!