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HOW TO PREPARE A PORTFOLIO

UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION

SCAD®

The University for Creative Careers®



Introduction

When exploring an education in art or design, students may submit a portfolio as part of the application process. Although portfolios and auditions are not required for undergraduate admission, applicants are strongly encouraged to present performing arts, riding, writing or visual arts portfolios or to audition when possible to enhance the application file and to be considered for scholarships. Since undergraduate portfolio submissions are for scholarship consideration and do not ever adversely affect the likelihood of a student's acceptance, submitting a strong portfolio can be of enormous benefit to students. Use this guide as a resource for building a portfolio or improving one you've already started.

What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a collection of your strongest artistic work that is presented as professionally as possible and, depending on your area of talent, can take one of the following forms:

A **building arts** portfolio should demonstrate strong spatial understanding and creative skills through the inclusion of samples like observational sketches, CAD drawings and building interiors and exteriors.

A **visual arts/design** portfolio should include 2-D and 3-D works executed in any medium that demonstrate both creativity and a grasp of basic artistic techniques and principles.

A portfolio composed of **digital or time-based media** should demonstrate a basic mastery of the concepts of composition as well as effective use of software or other relevant digital tools.

A **performing arts** audition, whether performed on site or submitted digitally, should demonstrate strong characterization, energy and physical commitment to the role.

An **equestrian riding** portfolio should demonstrate the applicant's skill with riding, jumping and/or dressage as well as experience and level of performance.

A **writing** portfolio should demonstrate the applicant's ability to create clear and compelling copy across a variety of genres.

Visual portfolio tips

(including visual arts, design, building arts, digital and time-based media portfolios)

Submit fully-resolved pieces.

Create artwork early and often.

Keep a sketchbook or journal to build your creative ideas.

Take art classes.

Seek portfolio feedback from peers, teachers, professionals and SCAD representatives.

Use only original work—don't "borrow" images.

Whenever possible, work from direct observation.

Experiment with different media and techniques.

While building your artistic repertoire, be prolific; this will give you options later and allow you to be selective when compiling your final portfolio.



Things to consider

Composition—placement or arrangement of elements in a work.

Drawing—demonstration of line weights, mark-making, proportion and medium.

Design—overall unity achieved by combining elements of art and principles of design.

Value—relative darkness or lightness of a color.

Spatial perception—understanding of the spatial relationships of objects, as well as foreground, middle and background.

Technique—skillfulness in the use of fundamental methods and media.

Color perception—general sensitivity to color and sophistication in its application.

Originality—capacity to think independently and transform the predictable; the quality of being new and original.

Conceptual awareness—expression of a clear idea and effective use of materials and processes to strengthen the concept.

Aesthetic awareness—guiding principle in matters of artistic beauty and taste.

Submission requirements

A portfolio inventory sheet must be included. In the case of documented, professional or group projects, applicants should indicate personal responsibilities.

Traditional 2-D and 3-D work:

- Submit 10-20 pieces digitally on a CD, DVD, USB flash drive or through the online file management system, SlideRoom. (scad.slideroom.com)
- Files should be saved as JPEG or PDF, or a digital portfolio can be created in PowerPoint or Flash (JPEG images are preferred).

Time-based work:

- Multimedia work should be a maximum of five minutes in length presented in a platform-independent player format or in QuickTime with the file suffix labeled as .qt, .mov or .mpeg.
- Sound design portfolios should consist of a five-minute sample in digital or multimedia format.

Meredith Burwell, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, B.F.A. student, illustration, *Ducks Part II*, oil



ANTHONY ERIC COUNTS

"CHASE SCENE"

DRAW 106-06 • 200910

PROF. DAVID HARLAND ROUSSEAU

Presentation counts

Think of your portfolio as a "visual interview." Your portfolio must speak for itself. Strong presentation shows work in its best light and indicates your ability to communicate in an effective manner. Pay close attention to the content and presentation of your portfolio.

Fill the frame and don't include anything that distracts from the artwork.

Consider the entire composition.

Strong values reproduce best and make a good first impression.

Images should be clear and easy to read.

Images should show accurate color balance.

Crop images for a professional appearance.

Edit your portfolio by keeping only your strongest work (quality over quantity).

Clearly label images to coincide with inventory information.

Your portfolio should be evenly paced with your strongest work.

You may include supporting materials such as résumés, copies of awards and certificates, and relevant newspaper articles or other features.

Performing arts audition tips

Take on challenging roles.

Choose roles that demonstrate the breadth of your performance capabilities.

Practice voice projection, enunciation, memorization and character emotion.

If your repertoire includes music, dance and/or physical performance, use them in your audition.

Things to consider

Characterization—dramatic representation of the character through speech, action and gesture.

Energy—vitality and intensity of expression.

Physical commitment—amount of energy and physical expression used when interpreting a character.

Relaxation—ability to appear natural, unrehearsed and free from nervous tension or anxiety.

Submission requirements

Complete a four-minute audition and interview at the university or submit an audition on CD, DVD or USB flash drive or through the online file management system, SlideRoom. Audition dates may be found at www.scad.edu/audition. A performance should include two contrasting monologues or one monologue presented with song or dance. Include a list of pieces performed. A headshot and résumé are optional.



Equestrian riding portfolio tips

Consider membership in local, state, regional or national horse show organizations.

Participate in shows and competitions.

Ride a variety of horses to practice your handling.

Things to consider

Form and balance—poise while in the saddle and evident control of the mount.

Rhythm—rising and lowering with the rhythm of the trot.

Style—relaxed presence commanding the horse

Submission requirements

Submit a four-minute video from a professional competition that demonstrates strong horsemanship and versatility. Proper riding attire is recommended. Footage should be submitted on a CD, DVD or USB flash drive or through the online file management system, SlideRoom. A listing of the competition information, including a list of skills demonstrated, the venue, trainer information, level of competition and date of competition, should also be included.



Writing portfolio tips

Use appropriate writing styles (MLA, AP, Chicago or Turabian).

Cite and reference knowledgeable sources.

Support your arguments or claims.

Display individuality.

Things to consider

Organization—an ordered manner and structure for arranging information.

Clarity—the extent to which ideas are fully understood and expressed.

Storyline—a plausible and comprehensible course of action.

Originality—an individual opinion and demonstration of independent thought.

Mechanics/correctness—use of consistent tense/voice, correct spelling and grammar, and proper citations.

Standard requirements

Applicants may submit fiction or non-fiction writing samples such as research papers, short stories, dramatic writing, poetry or other forms of creative or professional writing. All samples must include applicant's name and title of work, as well as class or teacher/supervisor, if applicable. Research papers should provide a clearly stated premise, findings and conclusion; they must be well organized and must demonstrate consistent use of citation and documentation conventions according to a specific writing style. All writing samples must be submitted electronically in a typed, double-spaced format and should not exceed 15 pages.



Photographing a portfolio

There are several ways to photograph artwork in order to create a professional and polished digital portfolio. For each method, use large image size, JPEG file type, 100 ISO and auto white balance. Do not use a flash.

Daylight method

When shooting outdoors, choose an overcast day or a shady area to avoid glares and shadows.

1. Remove artwork from frame to avoid glare. Affix artwork to an outdoor wall using tape or Velcro. If photographing a vertical piece, place it on the wall horizontally, as this will enable you to photograph the piece without having to change the camera orientation.
2. Place the camera on a tripod or steady surface.
3. Frame the artwork in the viewfinder so the artwork takes up as much of the viewfinder as possible. Make sure the piece is squared perfectly in the viewfinder.
4. Using your in-camera light meter, find the correct exposure and take the picture.
5. Double-check your exposure with the preview screen to make sure the image is neither under- nor overexposed. Make sure all the detail is visible in both the highlights and shadows.
6. Upload photographs to a computer and use photo editing software to crop out all space surrounding the artwork.



Photographing a portfolio

3-D work

For best results, shoot indoors using clamp-on reflectors and flood lightbulbs. Shooting outdoors with natural light is also possible, but the results are more difficult to control.

1. Use a steamer or iron to press a large piece of black velvet, velour or felt fabric to eliminate wrinkles. Use a lint roller to remove all dust and debris.
2. Place a table up against a wall and use thumbtacks or tape to attach fabric to the wall above the table, allowing it to fall down over the table. Make sure the fabric arcs gently between the wall and the table. If the artwork is dark, consider using gray or white fabric or backdrop paper.
3. Place artwork on fabric, roughly 3 feet in front of the arc of the fabric.
4. Set up the lights. If light stands are not accessible, try clamping each light to the back of a chair. Direct one light on the work as the main or "key" light to the left of the camera, and place the second light to the right, farther away from the work to fill in the shadows.
5. Turn off any additional lights and block as much daylight as possible from entering through windows or shoot at night.
6. If the artwork is very shiny, the light can be diffused by having assistants hold sheets of tracing paper between the light and the artwork to soften the light.
7. Follow steps 2-5 from the daylight method on page 12.



Submitting a portfolio

After completing an application for admission, you may submit a portfolio. The online file management system SlideRoom is the preferred means of submission. Go to www.scad.slideroom.com to upload still images, word documents and digital and multimedia files. Instructions for creating the required corresponding inventory of work (including titles, dates, mediums, dimensions, specific responsibilities on group projects, etc.) is provided. A fee of \$10 is charged for each portfolio submission. Once uploaded, the portfolio may be viewed and rearranged until you are ready to finalize submission.

If you prefer to submit a portfolio by mail, send a CD, DVD or USB Flash drive to the appropriate SCAD address listed at www.scad.edu/portfolio. Be sure to include the portfolio inventory sheet available for download.

Images should preferably be high-resolution JPEG files (with a file suffix of .jpg or .jpeg), although files in PDF, PowerPoint, Director, Flash or HTML formats are also acceptable. Images should be saved at 72 dpi screen resolution with a minimum height/width of 1,000 pixels. Digital portfolios should be checked to assure that links work properly and all necessary files are included. Applicants should indicate if any special instructions are necessary for the viewing of digital portfolios.

For additional information refer to the portfolio tips for visual art/design, performing arts, equestrian riding and writing.

Remember, every portfolio is unique and every artist has a unique vision. *Show us yours!*

www.scad.edu/portfolio

Contact us

Visit: www.scad.edu/admission · Email: admission@scad.edu
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Call: 877.722.3285 or 404.253.2700 for Atlanta
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Victoria Yeager, Marlborough, Connecticut, B.F.A. student, film and television, *Shadowbox Hanging*, production design



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