Queens College
Epsilen Pilot Project
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

If you are having a problem with your ePortfolio please consult this FAQ to see if the question has already been asked. You can also go to the Epsilen My Portal FAQ after you log into your account. It is located on the opening menu. You may also find it useful to view the Epsilen manual, which is available as a .PDF download at http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/edtech/eportfolios.

If your question has not been addressed here, the Epsilen FAQ or the Faculty or Student Manuals please contact us at: eporfolios@qc.cuny.edu We view this FAQ as a living document that reflects the most common problems encountered in our community. Check it frequently for updated information.

1. **Why should I assign ePortfolios to my students?**

2. **Why are ePortfolios better than paper portfolios?**

3. **What is My Portal?**

4. **How do I start my ePortfolio?**

5. **How do I upload a file?**

6. **What are Access Keys?**

7. **What is the ePortfolio Meter?**

8. **Can I upload my resume directly to my ePortfolio?**

9. **I want to add my own custom menu link to my ePortfolio. How do I do that?**

10. **How do I add a YouTube video to my ePortfolio?**

11. **How are ePortfolios different from Facebook and MySpace?**

12. **Where are the templates that I can use for my ePortfolio?**

---

1. Why should I assign ePortfolios to my students?

ePortfolios add an entirely new dimension to teaching/learning and create new opportunities for students to express themselves in a digital medium. They can help to enhance learning, self-development and sense of community. But the most important advantage, from both the point of view of a faculty member and the student, is that the ePortfolio is a personal record of learning and an expression of personal identity. It also serves to substantiate student claims of achievements, strengths and potential by incorporating appropriate evidence. For the student, ePortfolios provide a means of sharing with family, friends and future employers examples of

life-long learning.

ePortfolios have been developed by students at all education levels and all over the world. They are the best way, to date, for students to keep track of their achievements and to provide the ability to have multiple ePortfolios designed to meet individual needs. This is particularly true for an ever growing group of students who transfer from institution to institution.

---

2. **Why are ePortfolios better than paper portfolios?**

Here are some ways that the ePorftolio is superior to a paper portfolio. An ePortfolio can:

- incorporate images, audio and video
- make student learning visible and available for feedback at any time
- allow students to communicate to their chosen audience(s) (teachers, prospective employers, family etc.) what interests and motivates them
- provide actual evidence of what competencies the student has developed and how they relate to his/her goals and objectives
- act as an archive of materials that can be arranged to suit a particular purpose (such as self-assessment) – in particular, syllabi, course descriptions and calendars for easy transfer to another institution or to supplement application for advanced work
- enable the student to demonstrate his/her technical skills through the production of artifacts that take advantage of the most recent advances in technology to keep an ePortfolio up-to-date and reader/viewer friendly
- include links that demonstrate the connections between different parts of the student's work and with other material on the web
- be more easily reproduced and transported than traditional portfolios

---

3. **What is My Portal?**

The MyPortal tool is the part of Epsilen where you build and edit your public ePortfolio. Remember that MyPortal is private – only you can see it – while your ePortfolio is public and visible to others.

There is a FAQ on your My Portal page that you should find helpful.

---

4. **How do I start my ePortfolio?**

After logging into Epsilen, you are taken directly to your My Portal page, which contains a series of tools that allow you to create/control your ePortfolio. We recommend that you initially ignore all of them except for the My ePortfolio toolset. Click on the My ePortfolio button, just under My Portal on the left side of the page. This opens up another set of action buttons that allow you to create and edit your ePorftolio. Hover over any of the buttons under My ePortfolio to learn more about what they do. You can also find a summary of the tools by

makes it easy for you to edit and delete artifacts in your ePorftolio.

5. How do I upload a file?

Epsilen accepts many different types of document files – Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, image files, PowerPoint presentations, audio and video files, etc. The easiest way to share these files is by using the Showcase feature under My Eportfolio. Click Add New Showcase, provide a title and some explanatory text, and then look for the Add Picture or Add a File interfaces further down the page. Make sure you've selected "Upload new picture"/"Upload new file", and click on the Upload button. Use the popup box to browse for the file on your hard drive.

Once you've uploaded a file to Epsilen once, you can use it in as many Showcases or parts of your ePortfolio as you'd like. Instead of choosing "Upload new picture"/"Upload new file", choose "Select existing picture"/"Select a file" to use an item from your personal Epsilen file library.

6. What are Access Keys?

Access Keys allow you to control who sees various parts of your ePorftolio. In other words, you are in charge of who can see any part of your ePorftolio. Some keys such as Public (allows everyone) and Institution (Queens College) are already set up. You also can create your own access keys. For instance, a faculty member can restrict access to parts of the ePortfolio to students, and students can do the same for faculty or just for a class. In this way, the ePortfolio can be used as a quasi-course management system akin to Blackboard.

Create a new Access Key by navigating to My ePortfolio > Access Keys > Add New Access Keys. Apply an Access Key to an artifact in your ePortfolio by navigating to that section (Showcase, for instance), clicking on the Edit pencil icon, and scrolling down to find the Visible By section.

7. What is the ePortfolio Meter?

To quote a great New York ism "forgetaboutit!" The meter merely gives you a graphic view of how complete your ePorftolio is.

8. Can I upload my resume directly to my ePorftolio?

Yes you can. Click on "Upload New Resume" in My ePortfolio > Resume. You can also create one using the Resume Wizard Template tool.

9. I want to add my own custom menu link to my ePorftolio. How do I do that?

Go to My Portal>Options to create or delete the selected menu options.

10. How do I add a YouTube video to my ePorftolio?

Before you open your ePorftolio you should go to the Youtube site and copy the URL of the video that you want to display. Then, in the My Portal section of Epsilen, go to Pictures/Videos>Video Link Manager>Add New Video Link. Copy/paste the URL into the Video Link > Web Address box. (Note that the beginning of the address is there, i.e., http://, so take care not to duplicate it when you paste in the URL). Add a Description of the video; this is required. You can also add a Reflection if you choose. Select the proper Access Key and save your input.

11. How are ePortfolios different from Facebook and MySpace?

Although ePortfolios typically have many of the same social networking features of Facebook (FB) and MySpace, they are intended for very different audiences. Specifically, ePortfolios are designed to spotlight your personal and professional goals, challenges and achievements in terms of learning, self-development, skills, and personal growth. There can be a good degree of overlap between the materials you might post on FB and your ePortfolio—both are a reflection of who you are—but your ePortfolio is closer to an on-line resume than it is a way to highlight how you spent your spring break.

The ability to restrict access to selected portions of your ePortfolio via Access Keys means that you can feel comfortable sharing your ongoing work with peers and instructors that you might not want to post for general access until it is in a more finished format. So, when posting photos or other materials to your ePortfolio account for public access, please reflect on the image you wish to project to your family, faculty, colleagues, and potential future employers. Just as one would not be well-advised to wear a tee-shirt and jeans to an interview, you probably don't want to post photos or comments of questionable taste on your ePortfolio. This is not an issue of self-censorship, but rather one of presentation.

12. Where are the templates that I can use for my portfolio?

You can find them in My ePorftolio>Themes. All that you need to do is to check the box for the theme that you select. Don't forget to save your selection. You can change this as often as you like. We expect to create more personalized QC template(s) in the not-too-far-distant future: stay tuned.