

# PORTFOLIOS AS AN AID TO PROJECT ASSESSMENT

DR. JOHN WRIGHT  
SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND  
BIOSCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

## PREVIOUS PROJECT ASSESSMENT

- **The Final Report** - a mark for the report  
(major contribution) - (probably) some assessment of competence and diligence.
- **A Presentation** - a seminar or poster presentation  
(minor contribution)

## **Problems encountered which we needed to tackle:**

- How do you assess diligence and competence?
- Even if you think you can, how do you justify your assessment?

**We introduced portfolios as way of meeting these problems**

## What does a portfolio consist of?

- **A work record** - the most important part of the portfolio. details to follow.
- **Early project drafts** - to encourage students to start work on the writing up early, and to seek their supervisor's advice.
- **Copies of key papers** - now limited to a maximum of six.

**This is handed in with the project report, sometimes in a box file, but often simply bundled and secured with an elastic band!**

# **The Work Record:**

## **A lab book and/or a diary.**

This is the most important part of the portfolio

- **The lab book** – a day by day record of experiments, regularly inspected and countersigned by the supervisor.
- **The diary** – a record of visits to libraries or of computer searches
  - contains references to all papers, reviews and books consulted.
  - contains the student's notes on these references.
  - records meetings with the supervisor and is signed regularly.

A lab based project may use a lab book and a diary, though most students include the diary material in the lab book.

A library or computer based project uses a diary.

## **Marking the project:**

The mark allocation is:

- Report - 70%
- Poster Presentation – 15%
- Portfolio - 15%

Therefore the portfolio does not give a major mark contribution in itself, but it can provide evidence and justification for the allocation of marks for diligence and competence within the report assessment.

## **Perceived advantages to use of portfolios:**

- Encourages students into good record keeping habits.
- Produces a requirement for a regular contact between supervisor and student.
- Provides an unsanitised day by day account of the progression of the project work, from which the student's habits of work and effectiveness are clear.
- Does not require any extra work from the student.

## User perceptions about portfolios:

- **Students** are happy with the procedure, and are generally pleased that good working habits are rewarded.
- **Supervisors** complain about the volume of additional material generated which needs to be stored, but are less likely to lose contact with students.
- **External examiners** find them extremely useful. Our external feels that reading the portfolio along with the project gives him a much better feel for how the project has been carried out.