



The Journalism Program's Portfolio Requirement

Journalism B.A. prior to 2015 & Journalism-Digital News 2015 forward

The Requirement

In addition to completing their required courses, journalism majors must submit an electronic portfolio of their published work to the journalism faculty for approval. The requirement encourages students to become more involved professionally and ensures that graduating seniors have portfolios they can show employers. Good portfolios demonstrate students' mastery of their craft, thus helping them obtain good internships and jobs. Bottom line: Student portfolios should be a *showcase* of their best published work, not a collection of mediocre clips that the student threw together to meet a requirement. Students must follow the portfolio requirements for the catalog year in which they entered the journalism program.

Publication

All content presented in the student's portfolio must have been published or broadcast by an established independent news organization approved in advance by the journalism faculty. Examples of professional media publications that have already been approved include but are not limited to Orlando Sentinel, Orlando Weekly, Watermark, The Community Paper, WKMG, WESH, WMFE, WOFL and WFTV. Published or broadcast work is also accepted from approved student media including Nicholson Student Media (Knightly News, NSM Today, Knightly Latino, or Centric) and Knight News. If there is a question about whether a publication is accepted, you need to consult with the journalism program coordinator before submitting the portfolio for review. The journalism program maintains the full authority to approve or reject any claim to publication. No self-published work will be accepted. Work that is published solely through social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, or YouTube will also not be accepted.

Content

Each portfolio must contain a minimum of 15 clips. A minimum of five of these clips must be hard news stories. News stories are characterized by the news values that the program teaches in JOU 2100 News Reporting: timeliness, impact, prominence, proximity, singularity/oddity and conflict/controversy. The more of these elements a story contains, the more newsworthy it is. **At minimum, a news story must be tied to an event and must be published within one week of the event (day of the event plus 6 days) to be considered news.** The news category is important because to obtain most jobs, students must demonstrate their ability to cover hard news. Newspapers and magazines rarely assign beginners primarily to features, columns or reviews.

- Beyond the five news stories, students must submit 10 more published clips that can be a combination of feature stories, photos, editing, page designs, graphics and examples of online storytelling. Online samples must be examples of complete storytelling, such as a Flash presentation of a news story, a photo gallery that tells a story or an edited video report that tells a story. Feature stories must provide evidence of thorough reporting and research, quoting multiple, authoritative sources.
- Commentary, such as editorials and reviews, may be submitted as extra examples of the student's published work, but they do not count toward the 15 clips required. The reason is that media organizations, and their reading public, value original reporting more than opinion. The reality is that while everyone may have an opinion, there are very few entry-level jobs in opinion writing.
- Students who submit visual samples (photos, video and page design/graphics) must demonstrate good composition, technique, storytelling and creativity. Additionally, photo clips are expected to have captions. Galleries are not expected to have captions for each photo, but some explanatory text is expected for storytelling purposes.

Every student is encouraged to submit more than the minimum number of stories. Why? Some stories may be placed in the wrong category, may be too short or may fail to quote enough first-hand sources and, therefore, be disqualified.

Other Requirements

- All stories must be journalistic work completed during a student's college career. At least 75 percent of the

stories must have been published while a student was an accepted and declared journalism major at UCF (“journalism pending” is not included). High school publications and work unrelated to the journalism major (poetry; short stories; and work in advertising, public relations and broadcasting, for example) are not acceptable.

- Each story must contain a minimum of 250 words.
- Each story must have a minimum of two first-hand and identifiable sources who the reporter interviewed and quoted or paraphrased within the story. Web sites or other media organizations are not considered first-hand, original sources (Faculty members give higher scores to portfolios containing stories that go into depth and that quote multiple sources).
- So faculty members can assess their work, students who submit stories they have edited must submit copies of the stories both before and after they were edited. In addition, the journalism faculty requires a letter from each student’s editor (on official company letterhead) verifying that the student edited each submitted piece. These documents can be scanned and uploaded to the portfolio as PDFs.
- Calendars, listings and briefs are not acceptable. **Previews do not count as hard news.** Stories using a question-and-answer format are only permitted if a second source is contained in an introductory paragraph or elsewhere in the story. Columns, editorials, first-person how-tos or advertorials (news stories that promote a company or its products) are not acceptable.
- Students who submit co-authored stories receive one-half credit for them.

Portfolio Presentation

Journalism Portfolios must be turned in as electronic portfolios by the designated deadline for each semester. A link to your portfolio must be submitted through the Journalism Portfolio submission page on the Nicholson School of Communication’s website. It is recommended that you use online portfolio sites such as Clippings.me or Journo Portfolio, or website builder sites or blogging sites such as Squarespace, Wix, or Wordpress. The journalism program does not require a particular site. You are free to choose and build your portfolio based on your platform preferences. However, all electronic portfolios must contain the following information:

1. A simple statement or note indicating a student’s planned date of graduation. This could be in a small bio or “about me” text box.
2. A hyperlink to a LinkedIn page that takes the place of a resume. The content should be suitable for use in seeking employment as a journalist, emphasizing a student’s journalistic experience and related skills (knowledge of computer software, photography, foreign languages, etc.). Typographical, spelling or factual errors in a LinkedIn profile can damage the assessment of the material.
3. Identifiable categories for Hard News, Feature or Non-Deadline stories, Editing, Photos, Page Design and/or Graphics, and Multimedia storytelling. Other than the required Hard News category, a portfolio need not contain categories for other previously listed categories. Only include categories for your best work, and make sure only clips that meet the portfolio requirements as outlined on the previous page are included.
4. Hyperlinks for each clip submitted for review should be included in the proper section. If an online version of the clip does not exist, scan the print version of the clip as a PDF and upload it to your portfolio. If a link is broken, or directs to only a portion of the story, it cannot be judged as part of the portfolio. (Thus the importance of including more than the minimum number of clips.)
5. With each clip, the following information needs to be included with or as part of the hyperlink:
 - Story headline
 - Name of publication
 - Number of sources quoted in the story
 - Word count
 - Date of publication

Deadlines

Students **must** submit their portfolios a semester before they intend to graduate. The early deadline gives faculty members time to evaluate students’ portfolios. If a portfolio is not approved, the early deadline gives students time to make necessary improvements.

- The faculty judge portfolios each fall and spring, not during the summer. Many faculty members are not employed by UCF during the summer.
- Students graduating in May or August must submit their portfolios by the fall deadline announced at the start of the school year.
- Students graduating in December must submit their portfolios by the spring deadline announced at the start of the school year.
- After students submit their portfolio and the deadline for submissions passes, students cannot add more items

to their portfolio. Rather, students must wait until the next fall or spring semester.

- Portfolios submitted a semester late – the semester a student intends to graduate – **must include five additional hard stories – a total of 20** – and are not eligible for any prizes.
- If a portfolio obviously does not meet the Journalism Division’s minimum requirements – if it does not contain a minimum of five hard news stories and 10 additional items – the faculty will not evaluate the portfolio. **When resubmitted the next semester, the portfolio will be considered late and must include a total of 20 items – with ten being hard news.** Portfolios will also be disqualified and a similar penalty imposed if they include stories that do not meet the other minimum requirements outlined in this document, or if the portfolio does not follow the presentation requirements.

Additional Guidelines

- Students can count a story package -- meaning a story with a photo(s) taken by the reporter or a story with a video -- as two clips if the second item meets the criteria for a full clip. If a photo, it should display evidence of journalism principles and quality and contain a full caption; if a video, it needs to tell a story and generally contain multiple sources. List the story package in both applicable categories with hyperlinks in each location.
- Because not every story written during an internship will satisfy these requirements, ask about the types of stories you will write before accepting an internship.
- To help students prepare their portfolios, the faculty offers a portfolio workshop each fall and spring.
- Each portfolio is reviewed by a committee of at least three full-time journalism faculty members.
- While judging each portfolio, the faculty looks at quality in addition to quantity. A portfolio should not include all your published clips but rather a sampling of your best work. Put simply: Your portfolio should demonstrate that you have earned the right to graduate with a journalism degree and that you are ready to pursue a career in the field. **Portfolios judged to be below the faculty’s minimum expectations of quality – factors that include but are not limited to newsworthiness, news writing, originality, creativity, accuracy and range of coverage – will be designated as failing. Failed portfolios are to be improved upon and resubmitted by the following semester’s deadline with an additional five hard news stories for a total of 20 items.**