MATC Portfolio Comprehensive Exam, Fall 2013

Introduction

For the MATC Portfolio Comprehensive Exam, you will develop, organize, categorize, and present your best academic and practical work to demonstrate what you have learned in the MATC program. Your portfolio serves as the assessment tool for faculty to comprehensively review your work. The portfolio collection should provide evidence of your growth through the program and provide support for the ideas you offer in the Reflective Analysis Essay that you will write as part of the portfolio presentation.

Goals for the Portfolio and Reflective Analysis Essay

The Portfolio and Reflective Analysis Essay should demonstrate the following:

1) Graduate-level writing and editing;

2) A fundamental understanding of rhetorical theory and research methods as they pertain to the field of technical communication;

3) A fundamental understanding of key scholarship and research, history, current issues, and cultural matters in technical communication;

4) A fundamental understanding of connecting theory to practice by creating effective documents in technical communication genres and by performing proficiently in software technology;

5) A fundamental understanding of ethical issues for technical communicators.

Format, Design, and Presentation

Students will upload the portfolio exam in their MATC Exam Fall 2013 TRACs Dropbox for faculty members to review. Students can use a range of electronic technology such as HTML or Flash as long as all faculty members can access it. However, all paper documents must be in the PDF format when presented in a digital version. The portfolio should be arranged with the Reflective Analysis Essay at the beginning and the various documents (such as a research paper) and projects (such as WebPages) neatly separated and clearly marked. Any documents with long amounts of text need to be done in conventional serif typefaces such as Times Roman; shorter documents and text can be in conventional sans serif typefaces such as Arial. If you have a reason related to your portfolio presentation for different typefaces, please feel free to use them, but you should consider explaining the choice to your reviewers. You can choose whatever documentation style you wish as long as it is a standard one in Technical Communication (MLA, Chicago, APA), and you should stay consistent throughout your portfolio with that style.

When you upload your portfolio, it needs to be appropriately organized with the Reflective Essay at the beginning and the Contextual Introductions before each appropriate section. (See detailed information below.) Appropriate organization of the portfolio demonstrates professionalism.

Portfolio Contents

There are three key parts to the portfolio: a Reflective Analysis Essay; documents and projects; and Contextual Introductions to the documents and projects.

Reflective Analysis Essay

A key part of your portfolio is a 12-page double-spaced essay in which you describe and explain your educational growth over the time you have been in the MATC program and how the documents and projects you are presenting in the portfolio reflect that growth. The essay should

1) demonstrate graduate level writing and editing;

2) explain how the document addresses at least three of the goals stated earlier;

3) tie rhetorical and/or technical communication theory with each of the documents/projects. Any one document or project in the portfolio may deal with all of the goals or a few of the goals, but, overall, the essay must address all of the goals stated earlier.

Documents and Projects

In addition to the Reflective Analysis Essay, the portfolio must include three to five documents and projects that demonstrate your best work and the knowledge and skills you learned in course work in the program. At least one of the documents should be an academic scholarly essay or research essay; at least one document or project should demonstrate technology skills you have learned; and at least one document or project should demonstrate an applied project you have completed in your course work. In determining how many documents and/or projects to include, you may want to include three if they are large, or more if they are smaller. You can include collaborative work if you wish, but you must have contributed substantially to the work, and you must explain to the reviewers your part in the work. If you do include collaborative work, it cannot be more than 30 percent of the documents and/or projects presented. If you use proprietary work in your portfolio documents, you must get permission from the business, organization, or agency that owns them. You need to include in the portfolio a letter from the owner(s) stating you have permission to use the work.

Contextual Introductions

Each document or project presented must be introduced with at least a 500-word description and explanation of the rhetorical situation for which it was produced, such as the course in which you created it, and the theoretical and/or practical context from which you worked to create the piece. If you have revised the piece or project since you were in the class, describe and explain why and how you revised it. In the case of collaborative work, you must explain your part in the work.

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Submission and Due Date Information

Students must upload the portfolio exam in their MATC Exam Fall 2013 TRACs Dropbox, including any specific instructions the reviewers may need to open or view the portfolio and a copy of the MATC Portfolio Checklist **no later than 6 p.m. on** **Friday November 1, 2013**. If you have any questions regarding the portfolio, consult with the Dr. Miriam Williams at mfw@txstate.edu .

Evaluation

Faculty members will evaluate your portfolio based on the goals stated earlier. You should not assume that if you received a good grade on a project or document in a course that all reviewers would give it the same grade in the portfolio review. Each faculty member will submit one of the following scores to the Graduate Director for each portfolio: Pass or Fail. In some very rare circumstances, a portfolio may be given a Pass with Distinction. If there is a difference in scores between the reviewers, then the portfolio will go to another reviewer. Whatever grade two of three reviewers give the portfolio will be the final grade. In the event of a failure, the candidate can appeal to the Graduate College to be allowed to revise and present the portfolio again for review. Please keep in mind that the MATC Portfolio Exam is only given during the fall and spring semesters.

FAQ

Q: How much time do I budget to prepare my portfolio?

A: Every student’s portfolio will require different amounts of time to prepare. Students who begin early to collect, organize, and prepare their course work materials will likely spend less time putting it together during the semester they plan to submit the portfolio. No one however should wait until the last minute. The faculty expects professional level work.

Q: My projects were created in a variety of software applications and exist in a variety of file formats. What file types, software applications, and browsers are available to faculty?

A: We all have access to Microsoft products, DVDs, Dreamweaver, Flash, Acrobat, and Internet Explorer. Three faculty use PCs and two use a MAC, so all portfolios must cross platforms.

Q: Can we submit links to websites we developed independently of our coursework?

A: Yes, if the website was created while you were an MATC student, demonstrates knowledge and skills you have learned in your coursework, and you clearly relate the work to technical communication principles. If students use work that is proprietary, though, they must have permission from their employers to submit the work, and students have to include the permission in their portfolio. Of course, websites created for classes may also be included. However, all websites must be at least six pages long.

Q: Can we submit documents or projects we created in cognate courses?

A: Yes, if they relate to technical communication or clearly demonstrate knowledge and skills you have learned in your Technical Communication courses. Students should not however submit work that requires faculty with expertise outside of English to evaluate the portfolios.

Q: Will faculty know that I am the author of the portfolio they are evaluating?

A: Yes. Portfolio authors are not anonymous.

Q: Are portfolio contents considered public or private?

A: Private. None of the contents will be used without the author’s permission.

Q: Students used to be required to take a comprehensive essay exam instead of submitting a portfolio. Is this a permanent change?

A: Yes. Students who entered the program before spring 2009 who wish to take a timed essay exam rather than submit a portfolio need to contact the MATC Director the semester before they intend to graduate to discuss this matter with her.

MATC Portfolio Comprehensive Exam Checklist

Your Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Your name and any specific instructions for opening or navigating documents and/or projects

\_\_\_\_\_ Your Portfolio with 1 Reflective Analysis Essay

\_\_\_\_ Your Portfolio with 3 to 5 documents and/or projects including the following:

\_\_\_ 1 academic essay

\_\_\_ 1 technology-based project

\_\_\_ 1 applied project

\_\_\_\_ Your Portfolio with 1 Contextual Introduction for each document and/or project in the portfolio

\_\_\_\_\_Your Portfolio organized appropriately

\_\_\_\_\_ A copy of this checklist

Updated 9/2013