

Honors Diploma: Portfolio

Ohio's Honors Diploma program recognizes students who exceed minimum [graduation requirements](#) through taking rigorous coursework and engaging in robust, real-world experiences. The International Baccalaureate, Career Tech, STEM, Arts, and Social Science and Civic Engagement Honors Diplomas each include a portfolio criterion. Work that is contained in a portfolio documents the student's extensive knowledge and technical, critical-thinking and creative skills (representative of the student's honors diploma area of focus) that the student has learned. Students must get their portfolios reviewed and validated by external experts.

A student does **not** have to complete a field experience to be able to complete the portfolio criterion.

Components of an Honors Diploma Portfolio

An Honors Diploma Portfolio should include some combination of the following:

1. **Introductory Letter** written by the student describing the work and how it relates to his or her honors diploma area of focus.
2. **Table of Contents** of student's work items contained within the portfolio.
3. **Career Development Materials**
 - a. Career and educational development plan
 - b. Resume
 - c. Application for college
 - d. Application for employment
 - e. Letters of recommendation
4. **Documentation of Progress**
 - a. List of tasks or responsibilities in completion of the student's project, field experience or paper.
 - b. Journal entries reflecting on those tasks or responsibilities.
5. **Work Products**
 - a. Examples of materials developed during a field experience.
 - b. Research papers conducted within the student's honors diploma area of focus. Should demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the student's area of focus and use multiple sources (interviews, literature review and internet search) with proper citations to demonstrate research/learning how to learn, information literacy and written communication skills.
 - c. Projects that deal with the honors diploma area of focus.
 - d. Video, photographic and audio demonstrations of work.
6. **Presentation** of the work in the student's portfolio to the school and/or local community
 - a. Examples:
 - i. Participation in a science fair or art gallery exhibition.
 - ii. Presentation to the city council, local board of education or a local civic organization.
7. **Evaluations (see example [rubric](#))**
 - a. Student self-evaluation.
 - b. Evaluation by an expert in the student's honors diploma area of focus that is external to district staff.
 - c. Evaluation by a supervisor of the student's field experience.

Notes:

Students whose portfolios are based on field experiences that are [Work-Based Learning](#) experiences may use the [resources](#) provided by the Office of Career-Technical Education, such as their rubric and suggested components documents, in place of this document.

Work that is completed to meet the portfolio criterion also may be completed through [Credit Flexibility](#) and count toward unit requirements of other honors diploma criteria.

Local districts may determine when deadlines are set for students to submit any component of the portfolio criterion.

Local districts have the ultimate responsibility to organize and/or approve opportunities for students to present their portfolios.

Review and Validation by External Experts

A student who completes the portfolio criterion must have the portfolios evaluated by external experts in the student's honors diploma area of focus. "External" is defined as someone not employed by the student's district. Also, external experts should not be family members of the student. "Expert" is defined as someone with an academic and/or professional background in the student's honors diploma area of focus.

General examples of external experts include:

- Industry and business stakeholders.
- Educators who are either retired, from other schools or from institutions of higher learning.
- University faculty members.
- Graduates of postsecondary programs with experience in the student's area of focus.
- Professionals or practitioners, now employed or retired.

External experts will evaluate the work contained in the portfolio and may use the portfolio rubric if they choose. The external expert and school district are encouraged to use the same criteria for evaluation.

Schools are encouraged to collaborate with neighboring districts in their identification of external experts. A teacher from a neighboring district could serve as an external expert for a student. Educational service centers also may assist districts. Students also may identify external experts to review their work as long as they meet the definitions established above. The district should approve of any experts that the student identifies. Districts have the ultimate responsibility of establishing who will serve as external experts.