THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

MINOR IN PROFESSIONAL WRITING

Whatever your major—English, engineering, music or math—good writing matters to your success in school and after you graduate.

Portfolio Prep Workshop
August 29, 2018

Portfolios for Spring 2019 Internships

- Due Monday, Sept. 10, by 11:59 p.m.

- Prepare your 5 portfolio documents in advance

- go.osu.edu/prof-writing-apply

- Fill out online application

- You will receive a confirmation email

In Spring 2019, there will be an opportunity to apply for Summer 2019 and Fall 2019 internships. The deadline will be in late January, around the third week of classes.

Portfolio Requirements – 5 pieces

- Professional cover letter
    - Different from cover letter for a specific job posting
    - Introduces your writing samples, describes context and purpose, and explains skills each one showcases
    - Persuades reader that you will be a skilled, adaptable, and versatile writer in the workplace

- Writing-focused resume

- 3 polished writing samples that showcase your skills

Cover Letter Audience

The MPW Program: Dr. Lindsay A. Martin, Coordinator, Minor in Professional Writing

- The cover letter applies for placement in an internship in a Columbus-area workplace

- It addresses how you'll contribute to a writing workplace in general—not a specific organization

Secondary audience: It will also be sent to the writing workplace you're matched with

The Evidence of the Cover Letter: Discussing the Samples

Consider the cover letter an introduction to the portfolio of 3 samples. These questions should guide you:

- In what context did you write the sample? Class? Internship? Job? Part of a group project?

- What is the genre and purpose of each sample? How are the tone and style you used appropriate for that purpose?

- What writing skills do your samples showcase?

Showcasing Writing Skills

Here are some skills that many of our workplace partners find useful, no matter what kind of organization they are. You may use these or highlight other writing-related skills.

- Writing in a particular genre
    - Press releases
    - Marketing materials
    - Social media
    - Technical writing
    - Others
- Interviewing and telling a story based on interview transcripts
- Researching, processing, consolidating, and condensing large amounts of information
- Writing under tight deadlines
- Shifting tone to suit different audiences/media (show this with versatility of samples)
- Repurposing information for different audiences, documents, or genres

Other tips

DON'T	DO
Emphasize what you'll get from the experience or how it will help you	Emphasize what you'll bring to the workplace.
Focus on the past and your history of growth	Focus on the future and how you will use these skills to contribute something specific to a workplace

Sample Cover Letter

Take a few minutes to read over the sample cover letter. Assess it based on the criteria on the handout.

- What do you notice about this letter?

- What works well in it?

- What could be improved?

Choosing Your Writing Samples

- Choose samples you feel confident discussing as the cover letter prompt indicates.

- Samples should
  - Be **brief**: ideally no more than 500 words
  - Demonstrate a variety of styles and genres

- Samples can
  - Be a selection from a longer piece (Use the cover letter to discuss how the included portion fits into the whole)
  - Come from a group project (Mention this in cover letter and highlight your role in the collaboration)

Choosing Your Writing Samples

- Take 5-7 minutes and consider a sample you plan to include in your portfolio (or one you're considering but unsure of)

- Make some notes on how you would discuss the sample in the cover letter, or draft the actual paragraph for the CL.

- Remember to address:
    - Context written
    - Audience, purpose
    - How do style and/or tone connect with audience and purpose?
    - What skills does the sample showcase?

Your Resume

- Focus on your writing accomplishments
    - in the workplace
    - in clubs, organizations, volunteer positions
    - in coursework
- Illustrate specific skills that you have developed
- Highlight the most relevant accomplishments first
    * The top 1/3 of your resume is prime real estate

What if you don't have much workplace experience?

- Add a section called "Relevant Coursework" to your resume (Only include writing-related courses)

- Use this section to highlight
  - Writing accomplishments / Products you ended class with
  - Collaborative projects you completed

- Remember your audience—They don't know course numbers

- Emphasize accomplishments and products—Not process

Tip: Read your instructor's course description on the syllabus for ideas!

Which is better?

- **English 3304, English 4150, Political Science 4130**

- **Business & Professional Writing**
    - Crafted a marketing proposal, 2 memos proposing changes at a company, and 3 business letters introducing my company to new clients

- **Law and Politics**
    - Collaborated on a legal brief overviewing a case about the fifth amendment
    - Prepared opening/closing statements for a debate

Resume Bullet-Points and Verbs

- Remember your audience—They need help seeing the connection between your experience and the job

- Focus on your verbs that start each bullet-point. Use the [Action Verbs from Resume Development handout](#) from Arts and Sciences Center for Career and Professional Success for ideas:

- Good categories from Resume Verbs sheet for the MPW:
  - Organizational and Supervisory Tasks
  - Communication Tasks
  - Science and Research Tasks
  - Clerical or Detailed Tasks
  - Possibly Teaching, Computer or Technical Tasks

Organizational involvement

- Remember your audience: Our workplace partners may not be familiar with your campus organization

- Avoid undefined acronyms, and offer a brief description of the organization

- Include the writing-focused activities you engaged in

- Describe collaborative tasks that you accomplished

Example of organizational involvement item

Public Relations Student Society of America   January 2017-present
Member   Columbus, OH

- Engage in pre-professional organization for students interested in public relations, journalism and communication
- Attend biweekly networking events with public relations professionals

Why edit your portfolio?

- "Go with the Flow": What are your initial impressions?

- Now, take a minute. Read first half. With a partner, go through and mark any errors with your red pens.

- What do you notice? What is your assessment now? What does editing do for an author's ethos?

What does it mean to be "work-world-ready"?

- The ability to produce clear, correct prose is a skill all workplaces need. The stakes are high!

- Editing is multi-faceted:
  - Big Picture: Do I need to include this?
  - Medium Picture: Should I restructure this? Should I reword?
  - Small Picture: Is the prose correct, proofread and free of errors?

Common Issues in Portfolios

Common Grammatical Errors

- Comma splices
- Dangling modifiers

Even More Common: Stylistic Issues

- Wordiness
- Vagueness

Know your own tendencies! Learn to edit for those.

Strategies to Improve Concision

- The Paramedic Method
  (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/paramedic_method.html)

- Look for and eliminate:
  - "There is"/"there are" constructions
  - Nominalizations
  - Prepositional phrases that don't add essential meaning
  - Phrases that repeat an idea stated elsewhere
    (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/conciseness/avoid_common_pitfalls.html)

Portfolio Submission Information

- **<u>Deadline for Spring 2019 Internships</u>**: Monday, Sept. 10, by 11:59 p.m.

- **<u>How to prepare your materials</u>**
  - Keep each item as its own file and save as a pdf. See website for help. Use file naming rules on website.

- **<u>How to submit</u>**
  - Online! go.osu.edu/prof-writing-apply
  - Scroll to the bottom and click "Submit your application."
  - Fill out the application questions. See pdf of application to preview.
  - Upload your five files individually by dragging and dropping into Box widget.
  - You will get a confirmation page and a confirmation email.