

Getting what you want from e-portfolio systems: a starting point for Institutional Managers in HE.

This guidance template is one of six documents aimed at different audiences that have been developed to help Higher Education (HE) institutions make informed choices about e-portfolio systems, from a range of different perspectives. The others in this series include:

- Generic guidance: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/Guidance_final.doc
- A starting point for technical managers in HE: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/Guidance_tech.doc
- A starting point for MIS managers in HE: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/Guidance_MIS.doc
- A starting point for students in HE: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/Guidance_student.doc
- A starting point for Personal Development Planning (PDP) practitioners in HE: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/Guidance_PDP.doc

This template has been completed from the perspective of institutional managers. It provides a perspective on the key issues in developing and implementing e-portfolios from their point of view.

As every institution is different, you might not agree with all they say.

However, it might help you to clarify your own ideas about your contribution to your institutional discussion about developing and implementing e-portfolio. The third column gives space for you to record your own ideas as the basis for discussions with others.

A blank template for recording results of collective discussions with other stakeholders can be found in the generic guidance document.

Aspects/functionalities/features/ for consideration ¹	Key issues for Institutional Managers	Key issues for you
1) Target learners and e-portfolio purpose(s)	Remember that this is not a categorical list, but some 'first thoughts' from other Institutional Managers to help you decide what the key issues are for you, and for learners in your context..	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are our target learners? 	All registered students. All new staff that have a probationary period to undertake.	

¹ We suggest that the questions may appropriately be used as an aid to conversation with colleagues, including institutional managers, PDP practitioners who support learners, IT developers, and with learners. With this in mind, we have addressed the questions to 'we/our', as though readers are asking colleagues and themselves together. The question tool may also be used by an individual as a personal prompt, in which situation, a reader may prefer to read it as though addressed to 'I/my'.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is their stage/episode of education or employment? • How does this link with previous stages of their learning? • How might this link with their next stages of learning? 	<p>Key stage for new students is their Induction programme. No links to any previous Portfolio owned or used by the new student or staff member. For most individuals, they are coming to a process new to them. Recording their personal data on the new, electronic portfolio system is a useful first step to considering what to record, how to present it, and how to become familiar with the IT.</p> <p>All students receive the standard model of Portfolio. Some groups may require bespoke tailoring for the professional nature of their course, e.g. ITT or Nursing/Midwifery Education to match their compulsory "Career Entry Profile". For staff, the headings and guidance notes will be different, or require a different emphasis.</p>	
<p>What do we see as the main purpose(s) of e-portfolio for our learners?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to support formal (e.g. curricular) learning/learning to learn • to support overall development (including personal and career areas, and experience/learning from less formal contexts) • to support formative assessment, • to provide an assessment management tool, for formal summative assessment • to create a presentational portfolio/showcasing for progression • to support transition between different learning environments • to support personalisation, effective choices and pathways • Other purposes? 	<p>The primary purpose is to encourage students to engage in the processes of recording, reviewing, reflection and action planning.</p> <p>It is not essential that this be supported by an electronic portfolio, but there are distinct advantages which should be shared with the student, e.g. classifying, sorting and selecting information for a particular purpose; then presenting in a form "fit for purpose" and sharing it as necessary.</p> <p>If students are able to engage effectively with preparing an e-Portfolio, they should relatively easily be able to transfer this learning to other aspects of their life, learning and work. In the early stages of learning, this transferability is one of the key aspects to be explained and emphasised by their Personal Tutor. It is a skill to be learned, and like all skills must be practised to be effective.</p> <p>It can be applied to all situations, circumstances and life events, and should not be seen as being of relevance solely to academic learning in HE, which would be a very limited and limiting perspective.</p>	
<p>2) What guidance to support a learner is important in our context to include online or alongside? (Would you include this 'online' or 'alongside' the e-portfolio system?).</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance to learner on the purpose(s) of the system • Guidance to learner on how to use the system 	<p>Explaining the purposes is the most effective way of getting students (and staff) to engage with the electronic system and hence with the processes. There should be a range of strategies used to convey the message: peer Mentors; printed information; electronic text at the opening of the software; possible web links to case studies or profiles of previous students and endorsements of "the process and product"</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tutorial programme alongside to support the PDP/e-portfolio process • On-line tutor/mentor support for feedback to learner • Diagnostic tools to assist with self-assessment, or educational or career planning • Other guidance? 	<p>Maximum effectiveness requires the student to be supported with a personal tutorial system, whether by a subject tutor in the context of the academic programme, or by a Personal Tutor in the context of personal development. Feedback on PDP should best be given face-to-face in regular review sessions, e.g. termly. Feedback on learning and academic performance is a separate issue, given in the context of the academic programme, but may be used as the basis for personal appraisal and review, which takes place when approaching decisions have to be made. Other diagnostic tools, e.g. assessment of learning styles or diagnostic testing, may be explored as deemed necessary in support of personal reflection, but they are no substitute for the personal reflection and action planning.</p>	
<p>3) Information management: a) What types of information are/will be managed by a learner, and will not be processed for the purposes of the institution?²</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal development records (PDRs) e.g. statements of interests and achievements; claims of progress, skills, and competency; aspirations, goals, plans • Evidence, e.g. qualifications, certificates, licences, other digital files (audio, video, picture) • Reflections • CV • Other information? 	<p>Yes. Whatever a student wishes to include in their PDR as appropriate to them. If electronic versions of paper documents are required, scanner facilities should be made available. These are the personal statements “logged” by the student or staff member, which “reflect” their analysis, views and feelings at the time. Therefore, they form a unique record. As the individual changes, as learning progresses, the Log entries become an historical record of the journey, which enable them to see where they have come from, and to measure their progress. Automatic preparation of a CV from the data record on file would be a useful facility, but emphasis would need to be made that to be effective, this would require tailoring to a specific purpose or target.</p>	
<p>b) What types of information will be managed by a learner and will also be processed for the purposes of the institution?</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is our institution acting as a data controller of e-portfolio learner information? (Yes/No)³ - If ‘yes’, does our institutional notification to the Information Commissioner cover our proposed processing/ use of e-portfolio learner data? 		

² Legal framework terminology for what is often described in lay terms as ‘owned by the learner’.

³ For the purposes of the Data Protection Act (1998), the institution is a ‘data controller’ of learner data that are processed for the institution’s purposes. For a

c) Information owned and managed by Institution/ Organisation		
Developing transcript - will a learner be able to view progress/assessed achievements (marks, grades) to evidence formal progress during a period of study?	Yes. After each assessment period, the "Official Interim Transcript" should be transferred into the student's individual portal on the network, for them to read and apply self-analysis, with copies sent to the Personal Tutor and academic Programme Leader for reference, and to stimulate the above analysis and future planning.	
Transcript – will a learner be able to view and link to transcript as authenticated evidence of achievement after period of study?	Final Transcript and any additional materials, e.g. Diploma Supplement will be available electronically. Any responses by staff tutors about the student, e.g. reference statements should be made available to the student for comment and feedback.	
How will security and authentication of transcript information be assured and maintained?	The "authenticated version" of the Transcript can exist only in hard copy with the Institution's seal/stamp and signature. All electronic versions should be labelled "Copy".	
How will the e-portfolio interoperate with our existing VLE? MLE? MIS?	The links all run from the MLE or MIS into the individual's e-Portfolio to provide sources of evidence for statements made by the student. The Institution would expect to send the Transcript into the student's individual PDR, but other information, e.g. Programme Specifications or Regulations, etc. would need to be imported by the student.	
Other considerations?	For regular operation during a student's programme of study, e-links could be built into the portfolio system for quick access. This depends on the level of IT Service support available.	
d) What information might be managed or processed collaboratively, e.g. by more than one learner, or by more than one organisation? What are the implications of shared information?⁴		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative work involving other people's personal data • Work undertaken with another organisation, e.g. work experience placement • A record of a discussion at key review points • Learner information shared with the institutional MIS, and re-used for the purposes of managing the e-portfolio 		

discussion of obligations of a 'data controller' with respect to a 'data subject', and related DP issues, see endnote reference to the JISC Legal Aspects of ePortfolios. If the institution is not a data controller, then the DPA 1998 does not apply to the information, but e-portfolio system users may need advice on DP implications of their own activities – see section 3d.

⁴ For all potentially shared data, considerations include: "Who has an interest, an obligation, a right with respect to these data? What is the interest, obligation, right?" e.g. Is the learner's sponsor aware of, and agreeable to, use of their placement data, (which may include commercially sensitive data) in the learner's portfolio?

"Does our portfolio system have suitable prompts about the use of other people's data, or other people's copyrighted material, at the point of incorporation?"

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Does our portfolio system have suitable prompts about the use of other people’s data, or other people’s copyrighted material, at the point of incorporation?” • Other considerations? 		
4) Managing information: How will a learner manage information? What editing rights and facilities will a learner need?		
<p>e.g. should a learner have rights/facilities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enter, edit and save text? (e.g. personal development records) • upload files as evidence of learning/competency etc? (these might be text, images, audio, video) • hyperlink to files as evidence? (text, audio etc) • export files? • create his/her own web page templates? • see all his/her data and a list of uploaded and linked files? • view/link to his/ her developing transcript/awarding body record? • Other considerations? 	<p>An electronic portfolio should belong to the student (ref DPA) and they must have rights of ownership and editorship. The element which is “owned” by the Institution is the Transcript and Diploma Supplement, which is dropped into the student’s Portfolio at appropriate times in their record. This has to be “read only”.</p> <p>Yes. Yes. direct e-mail link to named persons (e.g. Personal Tutor) is a key element of the selection of information, the review and reflection processes. This would be quite sophisticated as an option (possibly not essential). Yes. Yes (see comment above). Verification by the Institution. It is important to have an element which is an agreed statement between the student and an “official” representative of the Institution (usually the Personal Tutor). Once agreed, any proposed changes require both signatories to be effected.</p>	
5) Privacy⁴ and ownership/stewardship⁵ of information		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is our institutional Data Protection Officer (DPO) aware of our (planned) e-portfolio implementation? Do we have an ongoing dialogue with our DPO to tackle data protection issues as they arise? • What is our institutional data protection policy (DPP)? • How does our e-portfolio implementation relate to this policy? • Will a learner be able to view the institutional DPP from within the e-portfolio system? (Yes/No)⁶ 	<p>See comments above.</p> <p>The Institution’s Data Protection Policy should be available on the Intranet system, probably via a hyperlink.</p>	

⁵ Where ‘stewardship’ is defined as ‘the assumption of responsibility for the proper management of learner data’. See Q 4 of (1.) of a series of papers in the form of FAQs, produced by the JISC Study to Explore the Legal and Records Management Issues Relating to the Concept of the Lifelong Learner Record i

⁶ If ‘yes’, can a learner view information about the policy and institutional use/processing of their data, by means of collection notices at a point when personal data are collected?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who will have permission to view all or part of a learner's e-portfolio? Who will set permissions for sharing learner information? (learner/Department/ School/ Faculty/Institution/ awarding body/company?) How long may/must data be stored after learner leaves Institution /Organisation? What are the institutional obligations of stewardship? Other considerations? 	<p>Whoever is authorised by the student who "owns" the Portfolio. The student owner. The Institution shares its official data on the student's performance (the Transcript). Download facilities must be available for a student to remove their record from the system. Practically, perhaps a period of grace of three months might be made available.</p>	
6) Accessibility/usability		
<p>Accessibility/usability issues which should be taken into consideration include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does our e-portfolio system comply with our obligations under the DDA and SENDA "?" can each learner select preference settings for screen display – font style, size, colours of font and background, which are stored and automatically applied at log-in? is accessibility via a keyboard (instead of a pointing device) available to a learner? Other considerations? 	<p>In an ideal world. In practice, this would require additional, central programming, but should not be too difficult. Yes. <i>Ad hominem</i> facilities such as a voice synthesizer would need to be negotiated individually.</p>	
7) Storage capacity and storage duration		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much space will be allocated to each learner's PD records and digital files? How long will a learner's records be retained, so that learner may reflect back on progress between 'then' and 'now'? Other considerations? 	<p>To be answered in conjunction with the MIS Manager. For the length of their period of registration with the Institution plus 3 months (see above)</p>	
8) What does the system need to conform to e-learning standards?		
<p>How will the system interoperate with other systems, so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a learner can transfer his/her PD information from previous stage, and to next stage of learning/ organisation without re-keying information? an organisation can transfer a learner's information from previous, and to next, stage of learning/ organisation without re-keying information? Other considerations? 	<p>Download to a WORD file is probably the most ubiquitous form of interoperability. The system should be able to recognise and "upload" WORD files for incoming students. Cut and paste may be necessary. Any other files might be stored with link access.</p>	
9) What other resources do we require to run alongside to assure effective learner support?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e.g. human resources, such as tutor support, IT support 	<p>Peer Mentor system for new students; training for Mentors and</p>	

If 'no', how are learners advised about DP implications of their own e-portfolio activities?

for learner and system, IT developer support for further development. • Other?	Personal Tutors and subject-based “PDP-link Tutors”. The electronic Portfolio system must be a recognised element and responsibility of central IT Co-ordinator as part of the Institution’s VLE/MLE provision. An essential element should be an Institutional Steering Group, with appropriate Terms of Reference. Any system must evolve with time and according to feedback.	
10) Evaluation		
How might we evaluate efficacy, e.g. • level of use by learners • impact on learners • impact on staff • Other ?	Regular data monitoring centrally for number of entries and level of usage; number of items “shared with Tutors” This should be an element of the annual reflection carried out by the learner and recorded as part of the PDP process. Staff should be encouraged to engage with similar processes and to produce an annual (minimum) reflective statement.	

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Acronyms:

- DDA – Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- DPA – Data Protection Act 1998
- JISC – Joint Information Systems Committee
- MIS – Management Information Systems
- MLE – Managed Learning Environment
- PDP – Personal Development Planning
- PDR – Personal Development Record(s)
- SENDA – Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- VLE – Virtual Learning Environment

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ⁱ A series of papers in the form of FAQs, produced by the JISC Study to Explore the Legal and Records Management Issues Relating to the Concept of the Lifelong Learner Record:
 1. Legal Aspects of ePortfolios: A Short FAQ - http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/Legal_Aspects_FAQ.pdf (accessed 23/12/05)

2. Data Protection, Lifelong Learner Record Systems and ePortfolios: A short FAQ - http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/Data_Protection_FAQ.pdf (accessed 23/12/05)

3. Consortium Agreements: A Short FAQ - http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/Consortium_Agreements.pdf (accessed 23/12/05)

(Further outputs and information on the legal study can be found at: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/project_learner_records_legal_study.html) (accessed 23/12/05)

ii Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 <http://www.hmsa.gov.uk/acts/acts2001/20010010.htm> (accessed 23/12/05).