

PORTFOLIO DO's & DON'Ts

OVERVIEW

A portfolio is more than a collection of work. It is your professional story. While a resume tells recruiters what you have done, a portfolio shows how you think, how you solve problems, and how you present your work.

This document explains each topic covered in the Portfolio Do's & Don'ts module in simple language so that students clearly understand how to build a portfolio that is purposeful, honest, easy to navigate, and professionally strong.

The goal of this guide is to help you create a portfolio that builds trust even before the interview begins.

WHY YOUR PORTFOLIO MATTERS

Recruiters and hiring managers use portfolios to evaluate:

- Your practical skills
- Your problem-solving approach
- Your communication and storytelling ability
- Your attention to detail and professionalism

A well-structured portfolio gives proof of your abilities and creates a strong first impression.

DO'S – WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

1. CURATE ONLY THE WORK THAT REFLECTS WHO YOU ARE TODAY

Your portfolio is not an archive of everything you have ever done. It is a strategic selection of your best and most relevant work.

Include projects that:

- Represent your current skill level
- Match the type of role you want next
- Show growth in thinking and execution

Quality always matters more than quantity. A focused portfolio creates a stronger impact.

2. BUILD STRONG NARRATIVES FOR EVERY PROJECT

Every project should tell a clear story. Recruiters want to understand:

- What problem you were solving
- How you approached the problem
- What your specific role was
- What outcome or impact was achieved

Strong project stories show ownership, clarity, and maturity. They make your work memorable and credible.

3. MAKE IT EASY TO NAVIGATE

Your portfolio should be simple and intuitive to explore.

Use:

- Clear menus and categories
- Logical project flow
- Clean layouts without clutter

Easy navigation reflects clear thinking, which is an important professional skill.

4. MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE AND MOBILE-FRIENDLY

Your portfolio should work smoothly across laptops, tablets, and mobile phones.

Ensure:

- Fast loading time
- Responsive layouts
- Readable fonts and user-friendly design

A technically sound portfolio shows attention to detail and respect for the viewer's experience.

5. INCLUDE CONTACT INFORMATION PROMINENTLY

Make it easy for recruiters or clients to contact you.

Include:

- Professional email ID
- Phone number (if required)
- LinkedIn, GitHub, or portfolio links

Place contact details on the homepage and footer so they are always visible.

6. INCLUDE A VARIETY OF WORK

Showcase different types of projects to demonstrate versatility.

This may include:

- Different tools or technologies
- Different problem domains
- Different styles or approaches

Variety shows adaptability, but every project must still be relevant and strong.

7. CREATE AN ABOUT PAGE

The About page helps visitors connect with you as a person.

Include:

- Your background
- Your key skills
- Your interests or work philosophy

Keep it authentic, clear, and professional.

8. GET TESTIMONIALS AND CASE STUDIES

Testimonials and case studies strengthen credibility.

They show:

- How others experienced working with you
- Proof of professionalism and reliability
- Real-world impact of your work

Even short testimonials can significantly improve trust.

9. KEEP YOUR PORTFOLIO UPDATED

An outdated portfolio can make you look inactive or disconnected from current trends.

Regularly:

- Add new projects
- Remove weak or outdated work
- Improve older content

Consistency reflects growth and seriousness.

10. SHOW YOUR PROCESS

Do not display only the final result.

Show:

- Research and analysis
- Drafts, wireframes, or iterations
- Key decisions and learnings

Employers value how you think and approach problems, not just the final output.

11. USE HIGH-QUALITY IMAGES AND MEDIA

Visual quality affects perception.

Use:

- Clear screenshots
- High-resolution images
- Consistent formatting

Poor visuals can reduce the impact of even strong work.

12. INCLUDE A CLEAR CALL-TO-ACTION

Guide visitors on what to do next.

Examples:

- Contact you
- View your resume
- Schedule a discussion

A clear call-to-action makes your portfolio purposeful and results-driven.

DON'TS – WHAT YOU SHOULD AVOID

1. DON'T INCLUDE EVERY PROJECT JUST TO LOOK BUSY

Including too many projects:

- Overwhelms the viewer
- Hides your best work
- Makes your portfolio look unfocused

Be selective and intentional.

2. DON'T USE TEMPLATES WITHOUT PERSONAL IDENTITY

Templates are fine, but your portfolio should still feel like you.

Avoid:

- Looking generic
- Copy-paste layouts without customization

Your portfolio should reflect your personal brand.

3. DON'T IGNORE LOAD TIME AND PERFORMANCE

Slow portfolios create a poor impression.

Performance issues suggest:

- Technical gaps
- Poor testing
- Lack of attention to detail

User experience always matters.

4. DON'T MAKE NAVIGATION COMPLICATED

If users struggle to find content, they will leave.

Complex navigation suggests:

- Poor clarity
- Weak user-centered thinking

Keep everything simple and accessible.

5. DON'T MISREPRESENT YOUR WORK OR HIDE YOUR ROLE

Always be honest about:

- Team projects
- Your exact responsibilities
- Collaborative work

Integrity builds long-term trust.

6. DON'T VIOLATE CONFIDENTIALITY OR COPYRIGHT

Never share private or sensitive information.

If required:

- Mask data
- Use anonymised examples

Ethical behavior is essential.

7. DON'T USE HEAVY JARGON WITHOUT EXPLANATION

Your audience may include:

- HR professionals
- Recruiters
- Non-technical stakeholders

Clarity is more important than complexity.

8. DON'T LEAVE YOUR PORTFOLIO UNMAINTAINED

Broken links, outdated projects, or empty sections indicate:

- Lack of consistency
- Lack of ownership
- Stagnation

Regular maintenance reflects professionalism.

9. DON'T ALLOW BROKEN LINKS OR ERRORS

Technical errors communicate carelessness.

A portfolio should be polished from start to end.

10. DON'T FOCUS ONLY ON AESTHETICS

A visually attractive portfolio without substance lacks depth.

Recruiters value:

- Case studies
- Reasoning
- Problem-solving ability

Looks should support content, not replace it.

11. DON'T IGNORE ANALYTICS OR USER INSIGHTS

Analytics help you understand:

- Which projects get attention
- Where users drop off
- What content works best

Use insights to improve your portfolio.

12. DON'T PRESENT OLD WORK WITHOUT REFLECTION

If you include older projects, explain:

- What you learned
- What you would improve now
- How your thinking has evolved

Reflection shows growth and self-awareness.

FINAL NOTE-

Your portfolio is a living representation of your professional journey. Build it with intention, honesty, and clarity.

“Design your portfolio with purpose. Let every project say something meaningful about who you are and where you’re going.”