



Student Portfolio Tips and Tricks

1. 6-8 Projects (In school I recommend 4-6) - 15 to 35 ish Pages
 - a. Your portfolio should showcase your best work. If you have 10+ projects you should choose the ones that showcase your design process and abilities the best. You can supplement with other artwork or small projects such as lighting design or add ons.
 - b. Pages can vary. Just make sure you aren't overloading the firm with too many pages or information, be smart. Absolute max should be 50 pages but try to cut this down, it makes a very large file and most firms will not read to the end.
2. Concept Is Key
 - a. rendering are great, but the reader needs to understand how and why you arrived at the rendering: make sure to also include Concept Sketches, Diagrams, 3D Models, Boards
3. Process Material
 - a. Like above, include your process work, ideation and previous iterations to show how you arrived at your final products
 - b. Companies want to know how you move through the design process.
4. Cover Page
 - a. Avoid saying interior designer or something this specific, depending on the job, there are many avenues you may want to be considered for such as graphic design work, furniture design, sketching, rendering, planning, experiential design etc
5. Be Yourself
 - a. This feels silly and generic but you want to showcase your design aesthetic and your design personality.
6. Include Work You do For Fun
 - a. If you do design or other artwork on the side, include it! Painting, watercolor, mixed media, woodworking, etc. Companies love to learn

your strengths and who you are. This also showcases your design mind and abilities beyond classwork.

7. Mix Up the Types of Content You Include

- a. This can be taken many different ways but overall you want to make sure you are showcasing the range of your abilities! Choose your strongest elements that tell the story of your design.

8. Don't be Afraid of the Nitty Gritty

- a. A follow up to 6, make sure you include more heavy documentation such as elevations, life safety plans, electrical, and selections. These are very important elements for any design project and a Firm is going to want to know that you have learned these skills.

9. Don't Be Afraid Of Earlier Projects

- a. While it's true you should filter out older, more irrelevant projects, don't be afraid to include some of the projects you did early on in your schooling. Firms will want to be able to see your progress and want to see that you can make corrections and grow as a designer.

10. History and Project Background

- a. While you should be concise and careful with the background information, you should include the important information that helps explain your design decisions and the scope of your project. Elements such as history, site, size, previous use etc can be influential in explaining your concept.

11. Utilize Visual Cues and Symbols

- a. Symbols can help elevate both the look of the portfolio and the legibility of the work. Consider explaining with words, arrows, diagrams and symbols.
- b. Consider pointing to elements in your work such as materials on a rendering, elements on an elevation etc and pulling out more information into the margins to elevate understanding of design decisions and concepts.

12. Utilize Axon Views

- a. If you have a custom design piece or a confusing element in your design, or even a cool ceiling design that connects to the floor plan concept, consider making some axon views to showcase this. Helps with legibility of design a lot.

13. Label Your Drawings

- a. This seems self explanatory but someone who has never seen your work or the project before may not be able to pick out what is what. Consider this especially for conceptual design like diagrams and flowcharts.

14. Simplicity Can be Powerful

- a. Don't feel like you have to overload the pages with information and design. Your work is amazing, have trust in your skills and let the work breath.
- b. Don't be afraid to put one or two elements by themselves on a page. If the element is super influential, or impactful, give it space to be absorbed. This is also a good opportunity to pull out views or other important elements in the margins.
- c. Don't be afraid of black and white as well. It can be super powerful and allow the reader to really see the detail work and the thought process. Rendering, drawings, and concepts can be just as powerful in black and white!

15. Page Numbers v Project Numbers

- a. This is personal preference but when considering adding projects in the future and just simplicity of understanding, consider just numbering projects 1,2,3,4 instead of each and every page.

16. Incorporate Software and Tools Used

- a. I would recommend incorporating this for each project as it can showcase to firms what you're knowledgeable in and how you've utilized them in your work before.

17. Include the Project Size in Sqft

- a. This is also personal preference but I often recommend including the size of the project for firms to learn your range of experience.

18. Put People In Your Renderings

- a. Again, personal design preference, but I've found and heard that it can help a lot with scale and visual clarity.

19. Lighting Can Be Important!

- a. A lot of people will skip out on lighting plans and ceiling plans but if you have designed something that really pertains to your concept or has a big impact in the space I encourage you to include it. Lighting is hugely important in many projects and there are people whose entire job it is to do lighting design for projects.

20. Include Sustainability Considerations

- a. Sustainability is a huge and growing trend in the industry, firms and clients are looking to enhance their standards and incorporate it into their projects. Many firms even have a sustainability expert in the office.

21. Contact Information

- a. While most people will advise you not to put your whole CV into the portfolio, however I do recommend putting your email address or

linkedin within (typically the thank you page) so if you end up getting industry chats or help and they share your work without your resume, firms and professionals can still find you!

Other Advice:

Check Out the ASID student portfolio design competition. There are many great student portfolios from the last few years!

<https://www.asid.org/resources/awards/student-portfolio-competition>

Network with Industry Professionals by having coffee chats and asking for them to review your portfolio! This can help strengthen your portfolio, expand your network, and get you work in front of industry professionals.

Check in with Alumni, Recruiters, Designers, Professors, etc