

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
DOCTORAL CANDIDACY QUALIFYING EXAMINATION PORTFOLIO

Process for Completing a Successful Portfolio

Check the CJ Website under the link to "Forms" to see the six forms posted (which includes this form), which relate to Portfolio issues (first download the "Portfolio Policy" and then the form called "Portfolio Checklist" and finally this form called "Portfolio Process").

There are different models of what the Portfolio is meant to measure, and this flexibility is intentional. In fact, each doctoral student's Portfolio Committee has discretion in shaping the way the Portfolio is organized. According to the Portfolio Policy on page 2, Section 2(d): "Exactly what is required and/or accepted in any given Portfolio will vary from one student to another but all Portfolio Committees must agree that the work being completed for inclusion in the Portfolio is substantially the work of the student and/or that all collaborative projects have been reviewed and accepted. There is no "boilerplate" or "template" for a Portfolio. Each one completed may include considerably different contents depending on the requirements established by the Portfolio Committee."

The first step a student should take is to meet with a faculty member who has expertise in the area of the student's primary research interest. Once the student identifies a faculty member who is willing to serve as Portfolio Chair, the student should discuss with his/her Chair other potential faculty members to also serve on the Committee. Ascertain if they are willing to serve.

Download the form from the CJ website called "Portfolio Committee Establishment Form," and submit this form to the CJ Graduate Admissions Coordinator. This will get the process underway. The Director of CJ Graduate Programs, in consultation with the student and the faculty, makes the ultimate decision regarding faculty assignments for Portfolio Committees.

Next, students should have their initial meeting with their Portfolio Committee to set the parameters of what the Committee expects for a successful Portfolio. During this meeting, the student should bring their vita, articles published, articles in press or forthcoming, papers they are working on for publication, and other items they might want to include in their Portfolio. The Committee has the final say of the contents in the Portfolio. After agreement is reached, the student downloads from the CJ website the form called "Portfolio Expectations Initial Committee Meeting," and gets the required signatures. This form along with a detailed memo of the agreed upon Portfolio expectations is then submitted to the CJ Graduate Admissions Coordinator.

Then, students must meet the "Collaborative Requirements of the Portfolio Policy," which are specified in the Policy on page 2, section 2(b). The "Collaborative Requirements" may require a detailed letter from the student explaining their contribution to any collaborative projects in the Portfolio. If papers were started in classes, the student must get an email or a letter from the professor who taught the class, saying the paper is the student's own work and it is okay for the student to use it in their Portfolio.

Once the Portfolio Committee determines the student is ready to 'orally defend' their Portfolio, the student must download from the CJ website the "Declaration of Portfolio Defense," form to get the signature from the Portfolio Chair. The form then is submitted to the CJ Graduate Admissions Coordinator. Thereafter, the Portfolio 'oral defense' can occur after a 7-day waiting period.

It is recommended that the student's final Portfolio oral defense be presented via a PowerPoint® presentation. Students may want to develop themes over their research agenda and present them. On the other hand, students could pick a number of specific items agreed upon by their Committee for discussion during the oral defense of their Portfolio (e.g., two peer reviewed journal articles).

With respect to the Portfolio oral defense, whatever the student includes in the Portfolio would be suitable for questions and feedback from the Portfolio Committee and other audience members. Anyone in attendance can ask questions. Feedback can be oral or in writing or both. The Portfolio Committee makes the final determination on Portfolio grades.

Finally, the Portfolio Policy (page 1, section 1) articulates five items that the Portfolio should demonstrate, and these would be appropriate for questions during the Portfolio oral defense:

- (1) students should know the recent research literature within their Portfolio area and be able to relate it to the broader criminological community and/or the criminal justice system;
- (2) students should be able to develop theoretical and research questions about what needs to be studied and the issues that need further inquiry in their area;
- (3) students should know how to apply appropriate methodologies and statistical techniques (if appropriate) to conduct such inquiries in their area;
- (4) students should be good writers with an ability "to contribute to the scholarly literature in their research areas" (Portfolio Policy, page 1, section 1, paragraph 3); and
- (5) it should be clear through the student's presentation via PowerPoint® and their contemporaneous explanations that they possess an in-depth "ability to critically evaluate and integrate knowledge across the significant domains of interest within [the student's] specified area" of research expertise (Portfolio Policy, page 1, section 1, paragraph 2).