

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): Preparing the Portfolio

This document is intended to supplement the **Portfolio Guidelines** for promotion-eligible full-time faculty members. Please refer to the documents in the Provost's Office [Personnel Decisions webpage](#) and the University Handbook (see the [Faculty Handbook section C.13](#) on "Academic Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure") for more information. Questions marked with \* have been updated.

### Portfolio Submission Timeline

Q1: When is my portfolio due?

A1: Please see the "Calendar for Personnel Decisions" document on the Provost's Office [Personnel Decisions webpage](#); it is updated each summer. All promotion/tenure portfolios are due by October 1. Reappointment portfolios typically are due around the start of the fall or spring semester and depends on the type of review; please check with your dean's office and/or chair for the college and department deadlines.

Q2: Can I add or modify my portfolio after the submission deadline?

A2: Once a faculty member submits the portfolio in [Watermark](#), portfolio materials may not be added, removed, or modified by the applicant.

### Portfolio Preparation and Planning

Q3: I am a faculty member on the tenure track or tenured, clinical track, instructor track, or teaching faculty track preparing my portfolio for reappointment. What guidelines should I use?

A3: The [Portfolio Guidelines](#) (effective in Fall 2017) applies to all promotion-eligible faculty members submitting a portfolio for promotion or reappointment review. Reappointment portfolios should be prepared using the same guidelines for promotion and/or tenure portfolios.

Q4: I'm overwhelmed! What suggestions do you have for getting started?

A4: Updating your [CV in Watermark Faculty Success](#) is a good starting point, as it helps you review your activities and accomplishments (see Q8). Having a plan and working on small sections at a time can help the process feel less overwhelming (see the [Portfolio Guidelines](#) and [Watermark Activities Detailed Guide](#)). The portfolio is an opportunity for you to showcase and reflect on your activities, achievements, and contributions. [CETL](#) is a resource available to you for individual consultation and to help answer questions.

### Submission of the Portfolio Using Watermark

\*Q5: How do I prepare my portfolio for [Watermark](#) submission? How do I preview my portfolio?

A5: You can use [Watermark Faculty Success](#) anytime to add/update your activities and upload your evidence materials to incrementally develop your portfolio. The Activities screen is organized by following the portfolio outline described in the [Portfolio Guidelines](#). All your activities will be used by [Watermark](#) to create your Portfolio CV (see Q8), and activities within the period of evaluation (see Q9) will be used to compile the evidence materials reports for teaching, professional performance (for library faculty), scholarship and professional activity, and service.

You can preview your portfolio evidence sections by going to the Reports tab in [Watermark](#) and selecting the "Portfolio evidence" reports. Please see the guides for [Watermark Faculty Success](#) and [Portfolio Guidelines](#).

Q6: How do I submit my portfolio using [Watermark Faculty Success](#)? What about the narrative?

A6: Starting in the 2025-26 academic year, all portfolios are submitted using [Watermark Faculty Success](#). A few weeks before the due date, a workflow will be created for you to submit your portfolio. You will be notified by email when your workflow opens; you also can access it directly via the “Workflow” tab in [Watermark](#). Within the workflow, you will fill out the application form and upload (as pdf files) your narrative document, any context documents (section B), and any supplementary materials (Part 2 of the portfolio). See the “[Preparing and Submitting Your Portfolio Using Watermark](#)” guide for details.

## Portfolio Contents

Q7: Which areas in [Watermark Activities](#) correspond to the portfolio sections?

A7: The Activities tab is organized to align with the portfolio outline from the [Portfolio Guidelines](#). Please see “[Preparing and Submitting Your Portfolio Using Watermark](#)” for a table that maps the portfolio outline to the [Watermark Activities](#) screens.

\*Q8: Do I need to follow a Curriculum Vita (CV) template? How do I prepare my CV in [Watermark](#)?

A8: The CV is generated in [Watermark Faculty Success](#) using the Activities you added and is formatted using a standard “Portfolio Vita” report. The CV contents can span across your academic and professional experience, including any activity prior to you joining USI and your current position. Note that the [Watermark CV](#) includes a listing of activities and does not include any uploaded evidence materials. You can preview your CV by going to the Reports tab and selecting “Portfolio Vita.”

Q9: What is the period of evaluation for the portfolio? What period of activities/materials do I include?

A9: The period of evaluation for promotion review corresponds to the period in which a faculty member is on the tenure track, duration in the Clinical Assistant Professor rank, or the period that includes the academic year of the previous promotion or tenure review (see Q16). See Q11-Q13 for additional information on the period for teaching materials, which may be a shorter period in some cases.

For reappointment review (non-promotion) of Clinical Track, Instructor Track, and Teaching Track, use the period since the previous reappointment review.

\*Q10: (a) What is included in the narrative? (b) Where do I address intellectual diversity? (c) How do I reference evidence materials in the narrative?

A10: (a) The narrative section includes separate statements for each of the applicable evaluation areas and is up to 15 single-spaced pages in length. The narrative should articulate the significance and impact of the applicant’s contributions and accomplishments, as well as include reflection, in the evaluation areas during the period of evaluation. The narrative also should describe the evidence included in the supporting materials (Sections E-G). [An effective narrative goes beyond a summary or listing of one’s activities by describing the relevance and contributions of one’s work to USI, the community, and their discipline/profession. It should help reviewers understand one’s growth and trajectory based on items included in the CV and evidence materials.](#)

(b) Also, in the teaching narrative, discuss how the applicant, in one’s teaching, helps foster a culture of free inquiry, free expression, and intellectual diversity; introduces students to scholarly works from a variety of political or ideological frameworks; and refrains from subjecting students to political or ideological views and opinions that are not related to one’s academic discipline or assigned course. Please refer to the [Portfolio Guidelines](#) Section D and [Faculty Handbook](#) Section C.13 for guidance.

(c) Evidence documents can be referenced by their file name (such as the first few words or adding a letter/number to the file name) or the page number it appears in the specific Evidence Report. Since the narrative is prepared outside of [Watermark](#), file hyperlinks are not easily included.

\*Q11: What is the period for teaching materials to include in my portfolio?

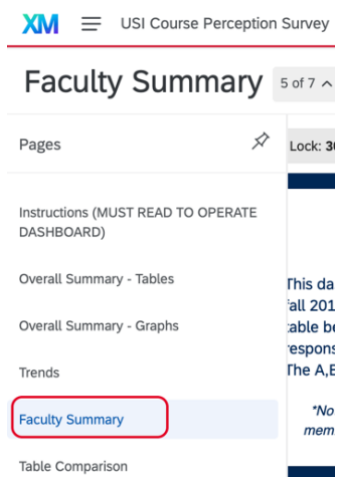
A11: Courses taught during the period of evaluation (see Q9), and **no earlier than Fall 2021**, is included in portfolios submitted during the 2026-2027 academic year. Please refer to the [Portfolio Guidelines](#) Section E for details.

Q12: Do I include all course syllabi from all semesters in the portfolio?

A12: The most recent syllabus for each course taught during the period of teaching materials (see FAQ Q11) should be included in Section E.2 of the portfolio. Additional versions of the syllabus may be included if a course has been taught in multiple modes (such as face-to-face, online, hybrid) or to evidence topics described in the narrative (for example, the syllabus before and after a course redesign). Note that Section E.2 also includes evidence of teaching and learning contributions, such as course materials. Please refer to the [Portfolio Guidelines](#) Section E for additional guidance.

\*Q13: What course evaluation information do I include in the portfolio?

A13: Section E.3 should include summary tables of the CPS scores from the period of evaluation and no earlier than **Fall 2021**. The CPS summary table is available for [download](#) from “Faculty Summary” (page 5) of the “USI Course Perception Survey” dashboard in Qualtrics. Additional analysis of the CPS results developed by the faculty member, such as tables or graphs that focus on specific areas, may be included in Section E.3. Please refer to the [Portfolio Guidelines](#) Section E.3 for additional information.



Q14: Do I include the CPS reports with student comments in the portfolio?

A14: No, not the detailed reports; instead, summary tables of CPS average scores should be included in Section E.3 of the portfolio (see Q13 for details). Faculty members who will be reviewed for reappointment, promotion and/or tenure, copies of the applicable CPS reports (which include the scores and open-ended comments) by course/semester do not need to be submitted in the portfolio. Review committees will be given online access to view the CPS course reports for the period of evaluation. The provided CPS reports do not count towards the 500-page limit for Part 1 of the portfolio. Note that university-wide transition to the CPS in Qualtrics started in Fall 2019; thus, the previous Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) reports are not included in portfolios.

Q15: What are examples of advising and mentoring activity?

A15: Student advising and mentoring materials are included in Section E5 of the portfolio. These activities typically are student-centered and occur outside of a course, such as academic advising, [informal advising](#), mentoring, writing letters of recommendations, or accompanying students to conferences or competitions. Please refer to the [Portfolio Guidelines](#) section E.5 and the [Faculty Handbook Section C.13](#) on “Academic Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure”. Additionally, the impact to students of these activities should be described in the Teaching narrative.

Q16: Do I include teaching or service activities or works that were published, presented, or completed during the year while my previous portfolio was under review for promotion and/or tenure?

A16: Yes, activities from the academic year when your previous portfolio was reviewed is included in the period of evaluation. Evidence that was not included in the previous promotion portfolio (such as application for Associate Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, Teaching Associate Professor, or Advanced Instructor) is included in the current period of evaluation and thus may be included in the portfolio. For example, a faculty member promoted to Associate Professor in fall 2022 would include

their activities and evidence materials starting fall 2021 since their previous portfolio was reviewed in fall 2021-spring 2022. Please see Q11 regarding the period for teaching materials.

Q17: What are examples of professional activity? Where does professional service go?

A17: Professional activity (sometimes referred to as professional service) is part of the scholarship criterion and typically uses one's expertise and contributes to their discipline and profession; activities that contribute to one's professional growth may be included. Example activity include membership and leadership in professional organizations, conference organizing committee, or an editorial board, or serving as reviewer/juror for conference proposals, publications, creative works, or grant proposals. These activities typically are listed as professional service in the CV. Example documentation include email invitations to serve/review, webpage or programs, or other acknowledgements. Please refer to the [Portfolio Guidelines](#) section F.2 and [Faculty Handbook Section C.13](#).

Additionally, the contributions and impact to one's discipline/profession should be described in the Scholarship and Professional Activity narrative. Please refer to the [Portfolio Guidelines](#) section D.

Q18: What are examples of evidence of service or outreach activities to include in the portfolio?

A18: Example documentation of university service and community service/outreach include email invitations, meeting minutes, reports resulting from the service, webpages, programs, or other acknowledgements. Community service should result in the promotion of the University's objectives through public service. Please refer to the [Portfolio Guidelines](#) section F.2 and the section on "Academic Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure" in the [Faculty Handbook](#).

Additionally, the contributions and impact to the university or local/state community should be described in the Service narrative. Please refer to the [Portfolio Guidelines](#) section D.

Q19: Do I include copies of past performance evaluations, reappointment reviews, and faculty activity reports (FARs) in the portfolio?

A19: No, these documents are not part of the portfolio documents for reappointment or promotion review. The narrative and supporting materials sections may be used to describe and evidence progression and development based on feedback and reflection. Please refer to the [Portfolio Guidelines](#) sections D. and H. and the [Faculty Handbook Section C.13](#) for guidance.

Q20: Some sections of the portfolio do not apply to me. Do I skip them?

A20: If an area listed in Watermark Activities does not apply to you, you can skip it. The CV and evidence reports generated by Watermark include only the headings with associated activities added.

### **Considerations Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Q21: An accepted conference presentation or creative activity was not presented due to COVID-19 cancellations. How do I represent this in my CV?

A21: Accepted presentations can be included in the appropriate section of the CV with a brief note to indicate that the conference, exhibit, etc. was cancelled due to COVID-19. For example, please refer to the APA style (or appropriate citation style) for [canceled conference presentations](#). Additionally, these research or creative activities may be described in the narrative and evidenced in the Section F. if this helps demonstrate your current/recent area of scholarship or creative activity.

Q22: Do I need to submit the form(s) that describes the one-year extension to the tenure/promotion review timeline, provided in May 2020 and May 2021?

A22: Submit the form if you have opted-out of the one-year extension(s). In general, you will want to document whether your review timeline has changed due to disruptions associated with COVID-19. If the form is not submitted by the deadline, then each one-year extension to tenure/promotion and reappointment review timeline will be automatically applied.

Q23: Can I change my mind later regarding the automatic extension or opt-out due to the pandemic?

A23: The form submitted by the deadline is the only opportunity to opt-out of the review timeline extension due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q24: What is a COVID Impact Statement?

A24: A COVID Impact Statement is an optional document (up to 2 pages) written by the applicant to document the ways one's faculty work has been directly affected by COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing that the pandemic has impacted faculty workload and professional opportunities in different ways, the statement can help provide context to reviewers by describing the effects of the pandemic on one's performance and contributions in the evaluation areas. The statement should not include any personal information or reasons for any approved leaves related to Covid. Please refer to the [COVID Impact Statement Guidelines](#) for details.

Q25: Is a COVID Impact Statement required?

A25: No, it is optional document. The presence or absence of a COVID Impact statement by itself should not be considered a positive or negative by individuals reviewing the portfolio. If you choose to provide this optional statement, include it in Section B.2.

### **Do you have additional questions?**

We are here to help clarify the process. Please contact Amy Chan Hilton (Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning, [CETL](#)) at [amy.chanhilton@usi.edu](mailto:amy.chanhilton@usi.edu) or 812.461.5476.

Please see the Provost's Office [Personnel Decisions](#) and [Watermark](#) webpages for resources on:

- Portfolio Guidelines
- COVID impact statement guidelines
- Preparing and Submitting Your Portfolio Using Watermark Faculty Success
- Reviewing Portfolios in Watermark Faculty Success

See the [University Faculty Handbook section C.13](#) "Academic Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure" on the areas of evaluation and criteria and [Faculty Handbook C.14](#) on procedures for promotion.