



School of Information Science

College of Information and Communications

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

General Track Portfolio FAQs

What exactly is the MLIS portfolio?

The MLIS portfolio is a compilation of your hard work in the MLIS program. It serves 3 roles:

1. All graduate students at the University of South Carolina must complete an end of program evaluation. Some programs require a thesis, we require the MLIS portfolio.
2. Allows students to reflect on everything they've learned in the MLIS program and how it relates to the MLIS Core Competencies – did you learn what we promised you would when you started?
3. Gives students a work sample to provide to potential future employers

When should I start on my portfolio?

All End-of-Program Portfolios are due in the student's graduating semester, with the exception of summer graduates:

- Spring graduates – portfolios due April 15th of the graduating term
- Summer graduates – portfolios due April 15th of the spring semester prior to graduation
 - Example: If you are graduating in Summer 2025, your portfolio would be due April 15, 2025
 - This is due to professor availability during summer semesters. We need to have faculty reviewers available to review portfolios and not all faculty are on contract during summer semesters
- Fall graduates – portfolios due November 15th of the graduating term

However, just because your portfolio is due in your final semester doesn't mean you need to wait until your final semester to DO your portfolio! Here's some ways to get started early:

1. Review the Core Competencies early in your program to get an understanding of what to look out for in your assignments.
2. Compile ALL assignments in your own personal organization system.**
 - a. Do NOT rely on being able to get back into blackboard to find an assignment.
 - b. Save EVERYTHING yourself as a precautionary measure
3. Bookmark the required assignments
4. Bookmark assignments that seem to meet the Technology core competency

- a. The Technology core competency is the only one that does not have a required assignment.
5. Jot some things down about assignments – what went well, what didn't go well
 - a. These don't have to be full paragraphs. Even just short notes to yourself will help immensely!

****We STRONGLY recommend saving assignments somewhere that can be accessed via internet connection, meaning not strictly on your desktop of your personal laptop. What if the laptop you used all through your program completely crashes in your final semester and you lose everything?**

Every student has access to OneDrive through their university email address, drop your assignments in your personal OneDrive and they can be accessed anywhere. GoogleDrive is a similar option.

How do I create a portfolio?

All portfolios will be created in the website building format of your choice. By far the most common site is **GoogleSites** – it's free, easy to navigate, and many people already have a Gmail account.

However, you are free to use any website of your choice! Other common ones are:

- WIX
- Wordpress
- Weebly
- Canva

Can I use Blackboard? It's not listed above but I know previous students have built their portfolio there!

As of Spring 2024, MLIS portfolios will no longer be allowed to be submitted via Blackboard. Blackboard is tied exclusively to your USC account and the only people who can view the beautiful portfolio you built are you and the specific person you shared it with. That means you can't take this portfolio and show it to potential employers.

Blackboard portfolios are no longer accepted.

Can I see what a great portfolio looks like?

Yes! The following portfolios all received a perfect score (100) and their creators were kind enough to allow us to share them with future students**:

- [General Track Portfolio 1](#)
- [General Track Portfolio 2](#)

****Note:** These examples are from *before* there were required assignments for the portfolio, so they have some different assignments in there. These are still good examples of quality portfolios, especially in regards to formatting and depth of reflection.

What needs to be included in the portfolio?

Every General Track Portfolio will include the same 9 sections. Students who complete the Certificate in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion** must include a 10th section addressing the EDI Certificate.

- [General Track Portfolio Requirements](#)

The 9 required sections are outlined in the website above as well as listed here:

1. Welcome or Introduction Page
2. Resume
3. Core Competency 1 Work Sample and Reflective Essays
4. Core Competency 2 Work Sample and Reflective Essays
5. Core Competency 3 Work Sample and Reflective Essays
6. Core Competency 4 Work Sample and Reflective Essays
7. Core Competency 5 Work Sample and Reflective Essays
8. Core Competency 6 Work Sample and Reflective Essays
9. Vision Statement

Students who complete the EDI Certificate** will add a 10th section which includes a work sample that is directly related to the EDI Certificate, along with a reflective essay. The essay prompts are included in the link above.

**Starting in Fall 2025 – students who complete ANY certificate will be required to add a 10th section addressing their certificate.

What are these core competencies anyway?

The MLIS Core Competencies indicate what skills, knowledge, dispositions, and professional values MLIS graduates should be able to demonstrate. Basically, why was your MLIS degree important? What did you learn? What was it all working toward?

There are [6 MLIS Core Competencies](#):

1. Information and Its Organization
2. Provision of Information Services
3. Leadership and Management
4. Research
5. Technology
6. Professional Development and Lifelong Learning

You'll see on the website linked above that each **core competency** also includes several **learning outcomes** with it. The learning outcomes give additional information and context to the core

competency. For example – Core Competency #4 is Research. “Research” is a pretty broad term, what kind of research? How are you supposed to demonstrate that you are proficient in research? By using the learning outcomes! We’re not asking “can you do research?”, we’re asking:

- A. Can you identify and explain a research question?
- B. Can you locate, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize research findings?
- C. Can you identify appropriate research methods, collect, and analyze data to address issues faced by libraries or other information agencies?
- D. Etc.

In your reflective essay you must clearly and explicitly discuss at least two of the learning outcomes for each core competency.

Required Work Samples

Are there required assignments for the portfolio?

Yes! Starting in Fall 2024, the MLIS program is requiring students to use specific assignments in their General Track MLIS portfolio. Please see the additional Required Assignments handout for the specific assignments.

The only core competency that does not have a required assignment is Core Competency #5 Technology. Students are allowed to choose any assignment that they believe demonstrates their understanding of the Technology Core Competency.

What are the required assignments for the portfolio?

The required assignments for the General Track Portfolio are:

1. Information and Its Organization – Document Representation and Searching Essay Assignment (ISCI 706)
2. Provision of Information Services – LibGuide Assignment (ISCI 703)
3. Leadership and Management – Students may choose either:
 - a. Advocacy Plan (ISCI 702)
 - b. Grant Proposal (ISCI 704)
4. Research – Research Proposal (ISCI 705)
5. Technology – no required assignment, students may choose any assignment that is not already being used in the portfolio
6. Professional Development & Lifelong Learning – Philosophy Statement and Personal Development Plan (ISCI 701)