



## Notes from EPN Meet-Up Portfolio Session - May 8<sup>th</sup> 2019

Creating a portfolio of work can seem like a daunting process, but it doesn't need to be! This document contains some hints and tips on how to put together a body of work in a way that showcases the best of your abilities during interviews or other professional situations. We hope that this document helps you get started.

*The Icon EPN Network*

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### Content and Presentation

**1.** Your portfolio should be a clear, focused reflection of your abilities. Examples of treatment-based work should be carefully chosen to demonstrate the level of your practical work and show the different skill sets that you have to offer. Your portfolio should be presented in an organised arrangement, providing immediate information through key images with a few sentences about the treatment process and outcomes.

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**2.** Along with presenting your abilities a portfolio can play a key role during interviews. It is important to consider how a portfolio will relate to the job description and how it can be used to support your answers. Things such as annotations and images can serve as prompts and facilitate talking points during interviews to help focus the direction of your answers.

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**3.** Always make sure that key job description requirements are illustrated in your portfolio, if evidence is required. For example, if an employer wants to see your experience in metals conservation make sure that these pages are near the front or easily accessible.

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**4.** Including other areas, like volunteer projects, can be a valuable addition to your portfolio and can demonstrate your ability to work as part of a team and commitment to conservation.

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## Formatting

1. Size and formatting of a portfolio needs to be carefully considered. A specific size generally isn't required, although A3 was considered a good size for presenting information clearly. However, if you are traveling for an interview it may be more practical to have a smaller size format.

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2. If you don't want to create a physical portfolio, **digital portfolios** are becoming more common and can be a very beneficial way of presenting your work. A digital copy can be sent in advance to be viewed by the interview panel and allows you to create a more interactive format by including videos of treatments. Programmes for creating digital portfolios include **Microsoft Publisher, PowerPoint, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign** or other web building programmes, such as **Prezi**. You can also include a link to your digital portfolio in a CV which is a good way of directing an interviewer to more of your work.

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3. Be consistent in how you format your portfolio. What colours, fonts or layout will you use to achieve uniformity? Showcasing a well thought out portfolio shows that you can present yourself and your skills in a professional way.

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## Images

1. Good quality images are essential in creating a good portfolio. They show that you possess attention to detail and demonstrate that you can consistently achieve good, professional results. They can also be used to help illustrate your point during an interview.
  2. If you are including documentary photography of an object, is a scale present? Is the object centred? Is the lighting good? Is the contrast appropriate? Blurry, wonky photos will not showcase your ability and won't communicate information clearly.
  3. Good before, during and after pictures can really help demonstrate a treatment process so be sure to take lots of photos, then select the best to use in your portfolio.
  4. Consider how you present yourself in any photographs. Along with pictures of object treatments you can demonstrate your skills by including photos of yourself undertaking various conservation activities (remedial treatment, pest monitoring, packing an object etc.)
  5. There are free photo editing platforms available if you don't have access to Adobe Photoshop. Try out **Pixlr** or **Gimp** for simple editing tools, such as cropping or removing backgrounds.
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## Other Tips

**1.** The most effective way to present your work is to give very immediate information and then back this up with more detailed examples. This sort of information can be provided by putting a link to your website (if you have one), or by providing an example of a full laboratory treatment report or lab record card.

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**2.** You can show a diverse skill set which can enhance and compliment treatment-based work by including a page of personal interests demonstrating practical ability, such as carving, painting, embroidery etc.

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**3.** Once you have completed your portfolio it is very useful to take a break and look at it with fresh eyes at a later time. Getting a colleague or friend to review your final copy is also very useful as they may spot things you haven't seen!

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**4.** Your portfolio is not a fixed entity! Be prepared to change the order of the pages, or cut pages, so that you can tailor it to a specific job interview. As you gain further experience, you will also need to keep updating your portfolio so that it reflects your growing skill set.

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