



Deanship of Academic Development

Comprehensive ePortfolio Strategy for KFU

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The new Department of Professional Development (DPD) in the Deanship of Academic Development (DAD) at King Faisal University (KFU) proposes to utilize an ePortfolio system as the backbone of the development of both the individuals we serve (faculty, administration, students, employees and clients) and the Department itself. We intend to pilot an ePortfolio tool and service that meets a variety of purposes - managing skills development and learning, demonstrating quality of learning and services, and building learning communities while developing critical ITC skills and services. In this process, we will learn from the ePortfolio leaders worldwide and lead in the implementation of ePortfolios in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Further, in this process, we will work collaboratively within the Deanship, contributing to the goals and achievements of the departments of eLearning, Quality Assurance, and Research/Consultancy; and we will work collaboratively within the University, contributing to the goals and achievement of the deanships of faculty affairs and others associated with program development and international outreach.

The DPD ePortfolio strategy sets out purposes and outcomes an integrated approach using ePortfolio tools and processes for reflective learning and self-assessment of non-formal learning, assessment and demonstration of formal training and education, assessment and demonstration of quality of training products and services, and collaborative learning and communications. Underpinning the strategy is the need for ePortfolio tools, digital storage, and expertise; policies for access, security and ownership; and processes for training, development and management of ePortfolios.

This proposed strategy is set in the context of the Islamic religion and culture of Saudi Arab that pose unique challenges to the ePortfolio assumptions of photography, exposing personal identity, and acceptable types of communications. At the same time, it is set in the context of a university growing, changing and moving into the 21st century with eLearning and international accreditation efforts.

Ultimately, this strategy will be implemented in phases, from a small pilot to a broader implementation, and beginning where all ePortfolio needs to begin: with the faculty. It will be designed as a research project supporting the training functions of the Department of Skills Development, gathering data on the

effectiveness of the training and demonstrating Return on Investment in this new approach to the management of learning.

From the outset, we will seek to study the degree to which our ePortfolio strategy can contribute, at King Faisal University, to:

- Improved teaching, research and community service by helping faculty develop and use explicit competencies through targeted and accountable training managed by an ePortfolio framework;
- Increased learning by giving students training, tools and supports to manage their own learning and take pride in achievements;
- Improved administration, management and leadership by helping individuals in those roles to target skills deficits and improve personal and organizational performance;
- Improved human resources management by identifying and utilizing the University's entire bank of human capital, by supporting Continuing Professional Development for career development, human and social capital development of all those associated with the University;
- Increased and innovative use of learning technologies associated with effective eLearning and appropriate uses of the Internet;
- Increased effectiveness of committees and committee work, meetings and projects using online communication tools;
- Awareness of DPD products and services that support the skills development of faculty, administration and employees at KFU;
- Implementation of a lifelong learning approach to support skills development and academic development throughout the regions served by KFU.

1. Introducing the ePortfolio

An **ePortfolio** is a digital tool used by both individuals and organizations to demonstrate competencies – acquired learning – with supporting digital evidence. An ePortfolio is both:

- Product (digital tool / presentation) **and** process (learning / portfolio development);
- Digital archive (data bank) **and** purpose-driven presentation (for demonstration / assessment).

For purposes of this ePortfolio strategy at KFU, the term ePortfolio will mean the tool that is the interface between the creator's archive of digital materials and the purposes for which a presentation or communication are established. That is to say, digital materials – e.g., Word documents, PowerPoint Presentations, YouTube videos, audio messages – can be stored anywhere on a person's computer, an institutional server, or a web-based storage service. The purposes for a presentation might be, e.g., a job application, a course assessment, a reflective learning activity, or a showcase of achievements; the purposes of establishing communications might be, e.g., class group work, committee activities, personal and professional communications between students and faculty, collaborative work with individuals from around the world, keeping track of colleagues and projects. The ePortfolio tool is what makes it possible and easy for individuals to create and store digital evidence of competencies and achievements, and to share them in a secure and private fashion.

At King Faisal University, then, a comprehensive ePortfolio strategy will seek to implement the tools and training to achieve multiple goals associated with improved teaching and learning, increased development and utilization of ICT tools and skills, expanded effectiveness and efficiency of human and social capital development activities, and implementation of innovations and strategic change.

A person's ePortfolio is a personal learning management tool that can be used to:

- Identify, record and demonstrate learning (skills and competencies) either as a showcase of ability/excellence or against skill standards for certification / employment;
- Plan for new learning (create personal learning plans and conduct learning gap analysis);
- Account for and utilize learning from all environments – formal and informal, community, travel and work;
- Learn and continuously apply critical Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills.

From this perspective, all people are learners – students, faculty, and administration – even organizations and businesses.

For purposes of our ePortfolio strategy, there are basically three types of ePortfolios presentations with many subsets:

1. **standards-based ePortfolio** – using, e.g., skills standards, intended learning outcomes, standards of service excellence as a framework for identifying and demonstrating achievement of competence
2. **demonstration ePortfolio** – selecting best case examples of competence to showcase achievements and abilities
3. **social networking ePortfolio** – communicating and connecting for collaboration and for social capital development

Ideally, one tool or service will allow for all three. All the following uses of ePortfolio are inter-related in some fashion. ***The first step in our strategy is to provide a personal ePortfolio – an online, digital repository and presentation tool that meets international quality standards – to all faculty and students which belongs to them and can form the basis of a lifelong learning portfolio.***

2. Using Standards-based ePortfolios at KFU

At KFU, we propose to use a standards-based ePortfolio for assessment of both skills development and academic learning. As well, standards-based ePortfolios will be used for Quality Assurance (QA) of both learning outcomes and programs, and learning products and services - contributing to the QA role of the Deanship of Academic Development.

2.1. Management of Skills Development and Human Capital Assets

Regarding skills development for students, faculty as learners, and other learning clients, the associated strategy involves:

1. describing roles and responsibilities of students, faculty, administration and employees in terms of skill/competence requirements with associated levels of achievement – entry level, adequacy, excellence;
2. populating an ePortfolio tool with the stated competencies;
3. offering learning programs and services to acquire the competencies;
4. training learning clients to demonstrate their competencies by attaching digital artifacts (papers, hyperlinks to projects, video and audio demonstrations) for each and all learning standards;
5. engaging learning clients in the process of prior learning assessment (pre-training) and management of achievements (post-training);
6. ensuring that learners transfer the new competencies to their personal ePortfolios.

This approach to the management of learning is part of Human Capital Management (HCM) – the process of recognizing and utilizing the entire inventory of a person’s skills and knowledge. HCM is considered to be the “new management of learning” - recognizing that learning happens in many settings

and all has value; recognizing that each person has a wide variety of skills and knowledge beyond those represented by formal credentials; recognizing that the best use of human capital is to utilize the entire range of skills by individuals, employers and nations. HCM is fundamental to the new Department of Skills Development, partly because of the informal and non-formal nature of training and skills development.

Both the university as employer and outside industries can use ePortfolios for human capital management. Employers develop intended or required competencies with associated skill levels. The potential employees (e.g., College graduates) can demonstrate what they know and can do, with digital evidence. Thus, at KFU, all students should graduate with their personal ePortfolio of acquired competences, to be used for employment, career development and lifelong learning.

As well, all faculty and staff should also have an ePortfolio to manage continuing professional development. As a long-term goal, when the HCM approach is adopted at KFU, we will be a total ePortfolio institution – the first in Saudi Arabia.

2.2 Assessment of Student Learning

Academic programs provide for formal learning which will also be assessed using an ePortfolio approach. In fact, this is the oldest and most traditional use of the ePortfolio – for portfolio assessment of learning. Regarding the assessment of learning in academic programs, the associated strategy involves:

1. describing all learning objects, modules, courses and programs in terms of intended learning outcomes, i.e., competencies that are observable and demonstrable;
2. developing ePortfolio standards frameworks and marking rubrics for each and all courses, i.e., embedding the intended learning outcomes as learning requirements or standards in the ePortfolio tool, with associated marking rubrics;
3. training students to demonstrate their competencies by attaching digital artifacts (papers, hyperlinks to projects, video and audio demonstrations) for each and all learning standards;
4. training faculty (and learners, for self-assessment) to assess the digital evidence against the learning standards using marking rubrics;
5. assisting incoming students to create ePortfolios of acquired competencies for, if desired, advanced placement and/or continuing professional development;
6. ensuring that students transfer the course competencies to their personal ePortfolios.

This ePortfolio approach can be used to assess incoming students for advanced placement/standing. Prior learning credit can be awarded to students who can demonstrate, via an ePortfolio, the

competencies they have acquired from previous study or work experience, increasing the efficiency of both education and training programs.

In summary, the associated purposes of using standards-based ePortfolios for assessment of both formal education and non-formal training at KFU are:

- increasing use of learning technologies – moving towards an eCampus
- appropriate and reflective learning processes – improved learning processes
- authentic and self-assessment of learning – improved assessment of learning
- learning and practicing of important ICT skills – skills development
- adding to one's personal ePortfolio of acquired competencies - HCM

Fundamentally, research has shown that it is critical for faculty to have the opportunity and training to utilize personal ePortfolios before being expected to assist students.

2.3 Quality Assurance of Learning Programs and Training Services

Assessing learning using an ePortfolio becomes a form of quality assurance for teaching and learning at KFU, i.e., contributing to the Quality Assurance component of the DAD.

- The learning acquired by students from each learning object, module, course and/or program is evidence of quality learning outcomes.
- The cumulative learning of all students in a course can be used to assess the quality of the module or course.
- The cumulative quality of the courses can be used to demonstrate, in part, the quality of the University.

In a second and related way, the standards-based ePortfolio can be used for quality assurance for learning objects, courses, programs and services. Quality standards form the requirements side of the ePortfolio; digital evidence is provided by products and services under review to demonstrate the degree to which they meet each and all relevant standards. Some services can provide evidence of quality with quality marks or certification; however, many simply claim to be good. To ensure quality in the purchase and / or development of training services at DPD, the associated strategy involves:

1. developing comprehensive, consensus-based quality standards for each and all learning products and services developed and/or purchased (e.g., eLearning, training services) by DPD at KFU;
2. populating an ePortfolio tool with the standards, as requirements;
3. using the ePortfolio tool as a design rubric for new products and services;
4. using the ePortfolio tool as an evaluation tool for potential purchases (to be completed by vendors);

5. using the ePortfolio tool as a quality assessment tool for existing learning / training products and services;
6. using the ePortfolio tool for marketing KFU learning / skills development products and services;
7. continuously monitoring usage, measuring impact and making improvements.

This use of the ePortfolio provides simple, transparent, transparent and total quality assurance (QA) for KFU training and learning products and services.

The standards-based ePortfolio is the most common, and many tools are available. An important related issue is to provide secure, private, ongoing ePortfolio storage – i.e., digital storage space.

3. Using Demonstration ePortfolios

Demonstration portfolios are commonly used, e.g., by artists and others who market products and services. Digitizing the portfolio makes it into an ePortfolio of goods on offer, with associated samples, examples and quality criteria. Other examples of demonstration ePortfolio are personal home pages, digital storytelling and scrap booking, and lifelong learning ePortfolios.

At KFU, the Department of Skills Development (DPD) will assist learning clients to create demonstration ePortfolios for a variety of purposes, e.g., showcasing learning achievements, applications for tenure, employment application, demonstrating non-formal and workplace training. Similarly, the DPD will create our own ePortfolio of products and services, using an ePortfolio tool to:

- Inventory training resources – people and services - available through DPD;
- Manage DPD research and projects;
- Manage and promote KFU training/service competencies.

Ultimately, a very viable business for DPD could be training and ePortfolio development services.

To implement demonstration ePortfolios, the associated strategy involves:

1. Selecting and installing an ePortfolio tool that includes both a digital archive function and a purpose-driven presentation function;
2. Creating a digital archive (database) of DPD research and resources, e.g., case studies, best practices, events;
3. Creating a digital archive of KFU competencies, i.e., e-Faculty, courses and services;
4. Generating purpose-driven presentations for newsletters, clients, and special events;
5. Continuous updating and active, assigned participation by KFU personnel;
6. Monitoring usage, measuring impact and making improvements.

This use of demonstration ePortfolio contributes to the systematic management of DPD resources and the marketing of DPD capabilities to our clients within and outside the University.

4. Social Networking ePortfolio

Communicating is the basis of social networking; communicating to develop partnerships, collaborate on research, seek advice from colleagues, initiate teams and groups, and develop virtual communities. The social networking ePortfolio performs these functions digitally. Examples of social networking software include MySpace, Facebook, Ning.com, and blogging tools. At KFU, DPD will use such an ePortfolio tool to, e.g.: form the framework for a DPD portal; develop online communities of learners at KFU; manage committees and projects; and organize training and special events.

The associated strategy involves:

- Selecting and installing a social-networking ePortfolio tool that meets College security and privacy requirements;
- Populating the tool with opportunities to communicate – student to student, student to faculty, faculty to faculty, admin to students and faculty, potential students and clients to the University;
- Monitoring the usage, measuring impact and making improvements.

It is conceivable that many students are already using social networking tools, and this strategy applies educational goals to their initiatives. The managed use of social networking tools contributes to increased collaboration between members of the university community and to more effective use of ICT tools available for eLearning.

5. Implementing the ePortfolio Strategy

5.1 Implementation for Impact

Overall, this proposed ePortfolio strategy should be framed and undertaken as a research project to measure impact on, e.g.

- Student and faculty learning – both subject matter expertise and ICT skills
- Lifelong learning, virtual community building and University outreach
- Quality assurance of products and services
- DPD management effectiveness and efficiency
- Return on Investment in the ePortfolio approach
- And others to be discussed/determined.

5.2 Required Resources

First and foremost, we need to select an ePortfolio tool or service that meets our three purposes, if possible. Secondly, we need expertise to:

- Install and continuously trouble-shoot an ePortfolio tool, and to provide ongoing technical support;
- Train and mentor (1) faculty and then (2) students with both demonstration and assessment ePortfolios;
- Provide ePortfolio training workshops to outside clients; and
- Actively develop and manage the DPD portal – creating archives, presentations and communities.

Finally, we need adequate digital storage that is secure and enduring. This can become a fee for service for graduates and external clients in the future.

5.3 Summary of ePortfolio Possibilities at KFU

In the systematic development and implementation of a comprehensive ePortfolio strategy, the Deanship of Academic Development will contribute to:

- Improved teaching, research and community service by helping faculty develop and use explicit competencies through targeted and accountable training managed by an ePortfolio framework;
- Increased learning by giving students training, tools and supports to manage their own learning and take pride in achievements;
- Improved administration, management and leadership by helping individuals in those roles to target skills deficits and improve personal and organizational performance;
- Improved human resources management by identifying and utilizing the University's entire bank of human capital, by supporting Continuing Professional Development for career development, human and social capital development of all those associated with the University;
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