# Graduation with Leadership Distinction E-Portfolio Content Guide

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<th>GLD Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Web description and related artifacts*</th>
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| **About Me** | An introduction to you and your portfolio.  
  - Include information such as major, anticipated graduation date, areas of interest, personal attributes, career or personal goals.  
  - Provide an introductory statement summarizing the overall message that you want the e-portfolio to communicate (i.e., what does your work in this pathway demonstrates about you?).  
  - Provide an overview statement on how your portfolio is organized. | One page  
  No artifacts required, but a photo with caption is recommended |
| **Key Insights** | Broadly describe 3-4 “takeaways” in relation to your major field of study, general education learning, and/or plans for the future based on your experiences within and beyond the classroom. Include how your engagement beyond the classroom has influenced what you believe to be important and how that relates back to what you studied in class. A key insight is grounded in study and academic work and learning from beyond the classroom experiences (e.g., community service, research, internships, study abroad, peer leadership). | Typically each insight is presented on a separate page—an overview page of all key insights may be included;  
  At least 2 substantive artifacts for each key insight required: 1 WTC and 1 BTC |
| **In-depth Analysis** | Analyze a concept, topic, issue, or field of study in consideration of multiple perspectives, theories, facts, disciplines, and/or experiences. (This section should focus on something different from your 3-4 key insights.) | Typically one page  
  At least two artifacts |
| **Leadership** | Describe how you have applied (or plan to apply) what you have learned through your pathway to lead. Clearly refer to learning described in your key insights and in-depth analysis and how that learning impacted your decisions in your proposed recommendations/solutions. | Typically one page  
  At least two artifacts |

**Note on Optional Sections:** Additional sections can be added. Students often include a section on awards, recognitions, or creative projects such as performances, exhibits, presentations, or publications.

*Artifacts* are items uploaded to your e-portfolio that illustrate your engagement in beyond the classroom experiences or provide evidence of your knowledge or skills as demonstrated in class or through projects, such as:

- Papers, projects, or other assignments
- Committee minutes or organization reports
- Programs or websites from an event you helped lead or performed in
- Reviews of your performance by supervisors or others
- Photos/videos/scans of your work
- Links to blogs, discussion groups, websites that you developed or participated in

Note on photos: While photos can enhance the aesthetics of your e-portfolio and help communicate your message, they are not considered substantive artifacts in and of themselves. Captions and explanations are important when including photos.

> You need artifacts from BOTH class work and beyond the classroom experiences!

**Organization, appearance, and text:**

Information should be well-organized, professionally presented, and reflect thoughtful effort. Take care to ensure:

- Information and analyses are relevant to the section in which they appear
- Points are presented logically and described in sufficient detail to be reasonably understood
- There are no grammatical or spelling errors

Review your e-portfolio carefully to see if the pieces fit together, all links work, and the text and artifacts clearly complement one another as you intended.
As you write, provide details clearly explaining your key points. Be specific in describing your role, your experiences, and the connections you see across experiences. Remember the reader does not have your context. See the GLD Wording Prompts document to help you get started.

Rather than listing experiences, the text in your e-portfolio should describe the significance of your core experiences, enhancement activities, and required GLD course work. It is important that your e-portfolio clearly articulate key learning from these experiences with sufficient detail to convey the depth of your involvement, understanding gained, and application to leadership.

Examples of the kinds of connections that could be explained in the e-portfolio:

- For a Sociology major collecting interview data in a community as part of a research project: The interview experience might have helped you understand the value of perspective gained from face-to-face interviews, the importance of framing questions correctly, and the limitations of collecting reliable information in the field. These highlights could be explained using examples from your interview experience described in comparison with standard research practices. In the Leadership section of the e-portfolio, you could describe how you will apply what you’ve learned to your future research pursuits.

- For a Political Science major who has led campus orientations or student groups: Consider the skills you developed and used in leading student groups such as learning to pay attention to the needs of your “audience” and describing main points with familiar language. You could discuss parallels with strategies used by political leaders or advocates of specific causes as studied in Political Science. This would demonstrate your understanding of these practices in a broader context. You could address how you will apply such skills to your work in the future in the Leadership section.

Following are specific guidelines for each of the three learning and application sections.

**Key Insights: What I learned / the “Big Picture”**

In this section, describe 3-4 key insights in relation to your major field of study, Carolina Core courses, and/or other course work related to your goals or future plans. Insights should be based on your experiences within and beyond the classroom. A key insight is NOT an “aha” moment that you put together from general life experience alone (e.g. as you sit around the table with friends or family). A key insight is grounded in study and academic work as it informs purposeful experiences that you have engaged in to enrich your education (e.g., community service, study abroad, peer leadership, internship or work-based experience related to your field of study, a research project or fine arts performance). While personal growth is important (e.g., “I am more confident”), key insights focus on in-depth learning.

Key Insight examples:

- Understanding cultural differences is important to effective communication
- Clear evidence is key to building a persuasive argument
- People often have strengths that are not readily apparent, but can surface given support
- Children think differently than adults
- Both quantitative and qualitative assessment contribute to understanding
- Technology has had a major impact on how people gather information
- Teamwork enhances outcomes

The focus in describing a key insight is on how your engagement beyond the classroom has influenced what you believe to be important and how that relates back to what you studied in class. Be sure you describe specific elements of your beyond the classroom experiences and how they relate to the concepts you are describing. Include how some aspects of your beyond the classroom experiences are consistent with and/or contradictory to course experiences.

Two different ways you could approach this section:

1. Begin with your major field of study or general education learning related to your pathway
What are the most important/relevant/interesting/useful ideas from your field or related fields (from your perspective)?

How did your experiences beyond the classroom influence your understanding of these principles?

For example:
- Which experiences reinforced your ideas from class and which contradicted them?
- What questions did your experiences raise for you as a major in your area?
- How did you resolve these questions or are some still remaining?

OR

2. Begin with your beyond the classroom experiences.

What were the most important/relevant/interesting/useful aspects of your beyond the classroom experiences?

How did your classroom work/major influence your understanding of what you were experiencing?

For example:
- How did these experiences inform your understanding of concepts, principles, or areas of study in your major?
- How did they support or contradict your understanding from your courses?
- What questions did your experiences raise for you as a major in your area?

Artifacts:
It is important to include samples of your work as artifacts to illustrate your knowledge, skills, and thinking in relation to the key points you are making in the text. These could be (but are not limited to):
- Papers that demonstrate your understanding of concepts or analysis of experience.
- Links to a blog or other website you created
- Scanned evaluations or feedback from supervisors or reviews from other sources
- Photographs with captions (that describe the significance of what is pictured) which might illustrate such experiences as
  - your involvement in an important project or study away
  - a poster presentation or performance

Be sure to refer to each work sample/artifact in the text and explain WHY you included it (i.e., why it is particularly representative or significant in your learning and, perhaps, how it relates to other experiences).

In-depth Analysis: How my experiences work together

In this section, you demonstrate your ability to make connections across multiple perspectives, theories, facts, disciplines, and/or experiences. Select a concept, issue, or topic that you did NOT use as one of your key insights.

- Explain how your thinking about the concept/issue/topic takes into account a variety of factors (i.e., perspectives, theories, facts, disciplines, and/or experiences).
- Describe experiences from inside and outside the classroom and how they aided your thinking.
- Note similarities and differences between the contributions of various factors and cite underlying factors when possible (e.g., the reasons why one view may have developed in a particular way as opposed to another).
- Share how the development of this in-depth understanding
  - Has enhanced your critical thinking skills and/or
  - Is significant in or representative of your overall college experience.

Include why this issue/concept/topic is particularly significant to you. Possibilities include articulating

- How each experience, discipline, or course added a new dimension to your thinking—for example, perhaps a particular experience raised new questions and helped you see something that initially seemed simple and straightforward as having complexity (e.g., different perspectives, other possible solutions) you had not considered before you were directly engaged in the situation/problem/context.
- How your thinking changed or grew overtime. This might have been through beyond the classroom experiences, courses, or major projects or performances.
• A significant point in time and experience when you reached a new level of understanding including your description of all the pieces that came together and what you consider most significant
• How different perspectives influenced your analysis of one concept
• How a problem or situation could be understood through the lens of various disciplines and how each adds another dimension. Describe how you came to understand that each perspective was useful—was it a particular class, experience, or individual that influenced your view?
• The impact of underlying influences or contexts on particular theories or perspectives.

Artifacts of your work:
See the description of samples of your work for the previous section. This is the same idea, but the work, photos, or other artifacts you choose to share are focused on the key concept(s) or idea(s) you are analyzing in this section. This could include
  • Products you created over time (papers, projects, performances) that demonstrate the progression of your understanding
  • Products from different courses or experiences that are related to the major concept
  • Photographs with captions, videos, blogs, or websites that illustrate your involvement in beyond the classroom experiences that influenced the development of your understanding of the major concept/idea.

Be sure to refer to each work sample/artifact in the text and explain WHY you included it (i.e., why it is particularly representative or significant in your description of the complexity of the concepts/ideas being analyzed).

**Leadership: How I have or will apply what I have learned to leadership**

Think about what you have learned through your within and beyond the classroom experiences. What learning was so significant that you chose to highlight it in your key insights and in-depth analysis? Now consider how you could apply that knowledge and skills to inform decisions and solve problems in the future.

This section describes **how you have applied (or plan to apply) what you have learned through your pathway to lead.** Specifically, you will describe **how you will apply what you have learned** to address a substantive initiative, issue, problem, or goal related to your pathway.

Here are two possible approaches:
1. Begin by thinking about the key things you have learned and consider ways that you can apply them to problems/issues/situations that you are facing or are important to you. OR
2. Begin by thinking about a problem/issue/situation and then think about how what you have learned applies to this situation.

See further information below and an example in the table. **Choose to address ONE: A OR B.**

**A. Report on a leadership activity**
1. Statement of the problem/issue: Clearly describe the initiative, issue, problem or goal and provide a **brief context or relevant background such as “historical” context (are there significant events that led to this situation?) or perspectives of various stakeholders.**
2. Solutions/Recommendations: Briefly describe the general approach you recommend to addressing the problem/issue. Explain why you thought this course of action would be successful. **What was your rationale? How were your choices based on what you learned in both courses and beyond the classroom experiences?**
   **Note:** You might think about 1 and 2 in reverse. **Start with what you learned (e.g., key insights) and think about how you applied that learning to a situation you are facing.**
3. Implementation: Describe how you implemented the solutions in ways that are consistent with what you have learned. Did it go as planned? **What unforeseen issues arose? Did you modify your original plan during implementation?** You might describe ways in which you did and/or did not meet your goals. **How do you know? What information did you use to assess your plan? How did the experience that you had in implementing the plan cause you to rethink what you had learned in class or experienced previously as you described in your rationale? What would you differently? Why? What did you learn from the implementation that you will apply in future situations?**
**B. A plan to lead in the future**

1. **Statement of the problem/issue:** Clearly describe the initiative, issue, problem or goal and provide a *brief* context or relevant background such as “historical” context (are there significant events that led to this situation?) or perspectives of various stakeholders.

2. **General Solutions/Recommendations:** Briefly describe the general approach you recommend to addressing the problem/issue. Explain why you think this course of action will be successful. What is your rationale? How are your choices based on what you learned in *both* your courses and your beyond the classroom experiences?

   **Note:** You might think about numbers 1 and 2 in reverse. Start with what you learned (e.g., key insights) and think about how you could apply that learning to a situation that would be relevant to you in the future.

3. **Detailed Plan:** Outline a detailed plan to implement one or more of the recommendations such as describing tasks that needed to be completed, why each is important (including references to your what you have learned), who is responsible, and when each task should be completed. Make sure your plan is consistent with the identified issue and recommendations. This could be done as an attachment. You might describe a process for analyzing the success of the plan. How will you know if the project has met its goals? Who will provide input? What data will you collect? What are your criteria for success? *What do you hope to learn from this experience that will build on what you have already learned or that relates to your future plans?* Note: If part of the plan has already been implemented, share what you have learned, so far.

**Artifacts:** Post artifacts that clearly communicate your plans, provide support for your recommendations, and any available implementation materials or results. These might include a research report or review of the literature related to your recommendations; a project report; program support materials/handouts; a communication plan; blueprint for change. Explain *WHY* you included each artifact—describe its significance in text or a thoughtful caption.

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<tr>
<th>Leadership Section</th>
<th>What to write about in each section</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Identifying the problem/issue</strong></td>
<td>Sample issue: Bullying. Provide a definition and statistics on its harmful effects. Provide your particular context: Describe the history in the community you are working in (or plan to work in) . . . perhaps that bullying incidents have been an increasing issue and that community members have expressed concern. Share specific incidents or conversations which provide relevant background information.</td>
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<td><strong>General recommendations WITH your rationale</strong></td>
<td>Recommendations for “bullying” might include (1) gathering members of the community to talk about the problem and having them brainstorm solutions and (2) leading an information campaign to raise awareness on the harmful effects of bullying and what people can do. You might cite what you learned from a class about resources that are available and recommended approaches. Include <em>why</em> a meeting with community members is important. You might describe an approach that you saw used during an internship experience and describe what you saw as the <em>benefits and limitations</em> of such an approach (and thus why you chose to incorporate part of that approach, but not all of it). <em>Describe why</em> you think the solutions you recommend will work for this particular community. Do you have experience or knowledge that supports your approach (especially as reflected in your key insights or analysis section)?</td>
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| **Plan or Implementation (3)** | If describing implementation include:  
- Who you brought together (e.g., 10 members of the community for a 90- minute meeting on x date)  
- How you led the discussion  
- Results (e.g., the group agreed on 3 steps to address bullying in the community).  
- Specific actions you took to share the information with the broader community.  
- How these actions are consistent with and build on what you have learned and experienced.  
- Results: You might write that met your goal of a shared plan for the community and how the plan was *similar to or different* from examples you had learned about in class or BTC. You might share that the flyers you posted seemed to have little impact and describe why you plan to use social media instead in the future.  
- What you learned, e.g., a new understanding of the complexity of bullying including deeper understanding course content that had not been as meaningful to you before this experience. |
| | If sharing a plan for the future include detail for each recommendation, such as:  
- Community discussion: Who you will bring together, when, and how you will encourage participation; goals/agenda for the meeting; materials you will provide. Describe how your plan builds from what you have learned in your within and beyond the classroom experiences.  
- Information campaign: You might note that the campaign will be planned based on the results of the community meeting, but that it might include the distribution of flyers, use of social media, etc. that will highlight how people can help. Tell why you chose this approach (i.e., relate it to what you’ve learned).  
- Describe how you will evaluate success after your steps are implemented. Perhaps a follow-up meeting or e-mail to community members who participated? List what you will ask them. Make sure the information you collect will help you evaluate your goals.  
- *Describe what you hope to learn from implementation of this project that relates to your professional development or future.* |