Doctor of Philosophy in Theology

Villanova University | Department of Theology and Religious Studies

Portfolio Manual

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1 The Portfolio

1. The Portfolio is an academic archive, a comprehensive, organized and cumulative electronic record of the breadth and depth of a student’s accomplishments over time in coursework, research, teaching, and other academic and professional experiences in the program. The student’s continuation in the doctoral program is based on three reviews of the materials included in the Portfolio. The Essays written for the reviews are focal points of the included materials. These essays invite personal reflection and evidence the student’s integration of their educational experiences in service of their post-graduation vocation as informed by Villanova’s Augustinian character. In these reviews, doctoral faculty assess the student’s accomplishments and goals and discuss with the student possible modifications or additional work needed to facilitate continued progress in the program. The Review Meeting is not a comprehensive examination or a summative assessment activity but a formative assessment activity. Thus, the ethos of the conversation intends reflection, synthesis, and further learning that enriches the student’s understanding of their chief theological and pastoral concerns.

2 Learning Goals

2.1 First (Integration) Portfolio

2. Focusing on the areas of non-specialization, the First Portfolio demonstrates the student’s ability to

   - **Goal 1:** Analyze faith/culture relationship(s).
     - Objective A: Identify faith/culture relationship(s), with attention to the experiences of diversity/inclusion, power, privilege, and marginalization.
     - Objective B: Use scholarly methods for the interpretation of diverse religious/theological texts and related media.

   - **Goal 2:** Evaluate the Christian theological tradition.
     - Objective A: Appraise the vocabulary, sources, beliefs, historical developments and diversity within the Christian tradition, with attention to experiences of power, privilege, and marginalization.
     - Objective B: Assess the reciprocal interaction of practices and beliefs arising from the Catholic and Augustinian traditions with diverse cultural, ecumenical/interfaith, and/or local/global contexts.

   - **Goal 3:** Apply knowledge.
     - Objective Communicate effectively the relevance of theological/religious practices, concepts, and beliefs for personal, communal, societal, and global living, in service of transformative action.
2.2 Second (Synthesis) Portfolio

3. Focusing on the areas of specialization, the Second Portfolio demonstrates the student’s ability to

   Goal 1: Evaluate faith/culture relationship(s)
   Objective A: Evaluate faith/culture relationship(s), with attention to the experiences of diversity/inclusion, power, privilege, and marginalization.
   Objective B: Use scholarly methods for the interpretation of diverse religious/theological texts and related media.

   Goal 2: Demonstrate research aptitude
   Objective A: Explain the major trends, issues, and inquiry standards in one’s research specialization(s).
   Objective B: Integrate one’s position in relation to one’s research specialization(s) into a coherent framework of understanding.

   Goal 3: Synthesize knowledge
   Objective A: Communicate effectively the relevance of theological/religious practices, concepts, and beliefs for personal, communal, societal, and global living.
   Objective B: Articulate a vision for inquiry in the Catholic Augustinian tradition as a basis for transformative action in the world.

2.3 Third (Evaluation) Portfolio

4. Focusing on a student’s research accomplishments, the Third Portfolio demonstrates the student’s ability to

   Goal: Evaluate knowledge
   Objective A: Critically evaluate one’s professional growth and development in one’s research specialization(s).
   Objective B: Clarify one’s intended contributions to theological inquiry in the Catholic Augustinian tradition as a basis for transformative action in the world.
   Objective C: Formulate a cogent account of one’s vision of oneself as a member of the professional community/ies of one’s research specialization(s).

3 First (Integration) Portfolio

5. The First Portfolio Review serves as integrative examination for all students completing the first phase of the doctoral program. The materials in the Portfolio document the student’s general, broad knowledge in three areas of non-specialization through course work and other academic experiences in the program. At the time of taking the First Portfolio Review, students must be in the process of completing a minimum of 48 credit hours of course work (including
transfer credits). In addition, students who register for the Review must be in Good Academic Standing.

3.1 Review Board

6. In the semester preceding the Review, the student establishes a Board consisting of one faculty member from each of the three areas of non-specialization. The Doctoral Program Committee appoints a facilitator who moderates the Review Meeting.

7. TRS Graduate Studies faculty may limit their service on Portfolio Review Boards to a maximum of three during any given semester (including service in both the Master’s and the PhD programs). Any faculty serving on zero or one Portfolio Review Board will be considered eligible to serve as Facilitators and, as needed, may be asked to function in that capacity for up to three Review Meetings.

3.2 Registration and Scheduling

8. The Review is administered during the week following the spring semester recess. Any variation in this schedule must be approved by the Doctoral Program Committee. Students submit their Portfolio electronically on the penultimate Friday preceding the official spring semester recess.

9. Full-time students register formally for the Review no later than December 1 of their third semester in residence. Part-time students register no later than the first week of classes in the semester in which they are completing 48 credit hours of course work. Along with the registration form students submit the names of their Review Board members and the date and time of the Review. It is the students’ responsibility to contact Board members to identify a date and time for the Review. Once a date and time have been identified, students contact the Administrative Assistant to secure a location. If students do not comply with this schedule, they may be excluded from the Portfolio Review.

3.3 Review Meeting

10. A Review Meeting serves as the platform for students to explicate the material included in their portfolios. The student uses the stated Learning Goals of the Review as the guide for preparing for the Meeting. Students meet with their Review Boards for no longer than 70 minutes. The Review begins with a Portfolio Presentation by the student (15 minutes in length). The Presentation focuses on the student’s Integrative Essay. It provides context and explicates the choices a student has made in writing the essay, briefly summarizes the main points, illustrates its implication(s) and concludes with the questions the student has for their Review Board Members.

11. The following constructive conversation probes the extent to which students meet the Learning Goals of the Review and serves as an occasion for the further development of the thoughts
12. An appointed Facilitator initiates each step of the Review Meeting, keeps the process on track, and facilitates the dialogue between student and board members.

13. At the end of the Portfolio Review Meeting, the board evaluates the student’s performance during the Portfolio Review Process. The evaluation is based on the two essays submitted for the Portfolio Review and the student’s performance during the Portfolio Review Meeting (presentation and conversation). Each student is then assigned one of three grades: pass with distinction; pass; or fail. For graduation from the program, a passing grade is required. The Facilitator submits the evaluation to the Administrative Assistant who informs the Program Director and sends the result of the Review to the Office of Graduate Studies, which officially notifies the student.

3.4 Failure of the Review

14. In the event of a failing grade, the student may request from the Adviser to retake the Review. In such a case, the Doctoral Program Committee appoints a new Review Board. The final decision will be based upon the verdict of the newly constituted Board. The following conditions apply:

15. Students may not retake the Review a second time if they fail to submit their Portfolios by the deadline without prior notification of a serious situation that prevents them from submitting the Portfolio; or submit incomplete Portfolios. In these cases, paragraph 17 applies.

16. A student who is permitted to re-take the Review Meeting must do so during the same semester by arrangement with the Board members. The re-take will be scheduled no earlier than one week after receiving the grade and no later than during the penultimate week of regular classes.

17. A second failure to pass the Portfolio Review results in the termination from the doctoral degree program (see the relevant Office of Graduate Studies Policy). The Doctoral Program Committee will recommend whether a terminal M.A. or M.T.S. degree may be awarded.

18. Students who violate the University’s code of Academic Integrity in any part of their Portfolio fail the whole Portfolio Review and will be handled according to the University’s disciplinary procedures.
3.5 Portfolio Materials

3.5.1 Section 1: Student Information

- Current Curriculum Vita.
  Current unofficial Villanova transcript.

3.5.2 Section 2: Progress Reports

Evaluation by the Adviser: year 1.

3.5.3 Section 3: Essays

- A copy of the original Application Essay from the admissions file.
  Analytical Essay, 1000 words in length. A critical examination of the student’s role and place in their coursework and profession, taking into consideration their original responses to the Application Essay prompts formulated at the time of applying for admission to the program.
  Integrative Essay. A scholarly essay, 4000 words in length, which thematizes faith engaging culture. In the essay, the student evaluates the ways in which the various pieces of their educational program (courses, readings, papers, colloquia, service experiences, etc.) fit together with the program’s emphases on sound research methods; interdisciplinarity and integration; cultural contexts; the relevance of theology in today’s world; and theological knowing in the Augustinian tradition as both speculative and practical, and distinctive in its emphasis on the union of mind and heart. Each student writes the essay with a special focus on the three areas of non-specialization.

3.5.4 Section 5: Course Documentation (Areas of Non-Specialization)

One artifact (textual form or another medium) from each course taken in the three Areas of non-specialization, and one artifact from the area of cultural theories/methods.
Students admitted with transfer credits include the approved Course Equivalency Form.

3.5.5 Section 7: Research Documentation (Optional)

One of the following items:

i. Scholarly manuscript (author or co-author) published or accepted for publication, which may include a book chapter.
ii. Comprehensive and critical literature review published or accepted.
iii. Paper proposed for, or presented at, a professional conference.

4 Second (Synthesis) Portfolio

19. The Second Portfolio Review serves as qualifying examination for all students completing the second phase of the doctoral program. The materials in the Second Portfolio are reflective of the students’ overall broad and deep knowledge of their areas of specialization acquired from reading, course work, research, and other academic experiences in the program. At the time
of taking the Review, students must have completed a minimum of 69 credit hours of course work. Full-time students normally meet this requirement in the seventh semester of residence. In addition, all students must be in good academic standing.

4.1 Review Board

In the semester preceding the Review, the student establishes two Review Boards, each consisting of two faculty members of the faculty of their chosen Area of Specialization. The Doctoral Program Committee appoints a Facilitator who moderates the Review Meeting. TRS Graduate Studies faculty may limit their service on Portfolio Review Boards to a maximum of three during any given semester. Any faculty serving on zero or one Portfolio Review Board will be considered eligible to serve as Facilitators and, as needed, may be asked to function in that capacity for up to three Review Meetings.

4.2 Registration and Scheduling

20. The Review is administered during the first two weeks of classes in the fall semester. Any variation in this schedule must be approved by the Doctoral Program Committee. Students submit their Portfolios electronically on the first Friday of August. All members of the area faculty will have the opportunity to read a student’s portfolio.

21. Students register for the Review no later than April 1 of the semester preceding the Review. Along with the registration form students submit the names of two faculty members serving on each of the two Review Boards and the dates and times of the Reviews. It is the students’ responsibility to contact all Board members to identify a date and time for the Reviews. Once dates and times have been identified, students contact the Administrative Assistant to secure a location. If students do not comply with this schedule, they may be excluded from the Portfolio Review.

4.3 Review Meeting

22. Two Review Meetings, one in each of the student’s areas of specialization, serve as platforms for students to explicate the material included in their portfolios. The student uses the stated Learning Goals of the Review as the guide in preparation for the Review Meeting.

23. Students meet with each Review Board for no longer than 90 minutes. The review begins with a Portfolio Presentation by the student (15 minutes in length). The Presentation focuses on the student’s Area-Knowledge Evidence Essay. It provides context and explicates the choices a student has made in writing the essay, briefly summarizes the main points, illustrates its implication(s) and concludes with the questions the student has for their Review Board Members.

24. The following constructive conversation probes the extent to which students meet the Learning Goals of the Review and serves as an occasion for the further development of the thoughts
a student has formulated in their Area-Knowledge Evidence Essay. The conversation is structured in the following way: It begins with Board Members formulating positive feedback by stating what they found meaningful and thought-provoking in a student’s materials (10 minutes); then students ask their questions (20 minutes). During the final portion (45 minutes), Board Members ask the students questions that help them to further develop their ideas and provide constructive critique.

25. At the end of the Portfolio Review Meeting, the board evaluates the student’s performance during the Portfolio Review Process. The evaluation is based on the Area-Knowledge Evidence Essay submitted for the Portfolio Review and the student’s performance during the Portfolio Review Meeting (presentation and conversation). Each student is assigned one of three grades: pass with distinction; pass; or fail. If board members do not arrive at consensus, the facilitator will cast the deciding vote based on the student's performance during the review meeting. For graduation from the program, a passing grade is required. The Facilitator submits the evaluation to the Administrative Assistant who informs the Program Director and sends the result of the Review to the Office of Graduate Studies, which officially notifies the student.

26. For continuation in the Ph.D. program, the student must pass both Review Meetings.

4.4 Failure of the Review

27. In the event of a failing grade, the student may request from the Adviser to retake the Review. In such a case, the Doctoral Program Committee may appoint new Review Board members. The final decision will be based upon the verdict of this second Review Board. The following conditions apply:

28. Students may not retake the Review a second time if they fail to submit their Portfolios by the deadline without prior notification of a serious situation that prevents them from submitting the Portfolio; or submit incomplete Portfolios. In these cases, the student will be dismissed from the program (see the relevant Office of Graduate Studies Policy).

29. A student who is permitted to re-take the Review must do so during the same semester by arrangement with the Board members. All re-takes will be scheduled during the official week of final examination. A second failure to pass the Portfolio Review results in the termination from the doctoral degree program (see the relevant Office of Graduate Studies Policy). Paragraph 17 also applies.

4.5 Portfolio Materials

- All elements included in the First Portfolio Review.

4.5.1 Additions to Section 1: Student Information

Current Curriculum Vita.
Current unofficial Villanova transcript.
4.5.2 Additions to Section 2: Progress Reports

Evaluation by the Adviser: years 2 and 3.
Graduate Studies Office notification of having passed the First Portfolio Review.

4.5.3 Additions to Section 3: Essays

Two Area-Knowledge Evidence Essays, one for each area of specialization, each 4000 words in length. Each scholarly essay demonstrates breadth of familiarity with, and depth of understanding of, the literature in the area (texts read for courses and selected from the Area’s official reading list); examines the students’ position in relation to the area and to research trends and methods in the area; integrates their perspectives into a coherent framework of understanding; analyzes the relationship between faith and culture from the perspective of the area; and advances a vision for inquiry in the Augustinian tradition as both speculative and practical.

4.5.4 Section 4: Area Knowledge Reading Lists

Two reading lists, one for each area of specialization, each consisting of two parts:

i. Part 1: A list of texts from the Area’s official Reading List identified collaboratively, yet individually, with each of the two Review Board members. Official Area Reading Lists may be obtained from the departmental webpage. Procedure: During the semester in which the student registers for the Portfolio Review, before April 1, the student collaborates with each Board member on selecting up to four texts (per Board member) from the official reading list that complement the texts the student read for their classes.

ii. Part 2: Up to three texts of the student’s choosing.

4.5.5 Section 6: Course Documentation (Areas of Specialization)

One artifact (textual form or another medium) from each course taken in the two Areas of specialization.
One artifact from each course on Augustine.

4.5.6 Additions to Section 7: Research Documentation

Two (cumulative!) of the following items:

i. Scholarly manuscript (author or co-author) published or accepted for publication, which may include a book chapter.

ii. Comprehensive and critical literature review published or accepted.

iii. Paper proposed for, or presented at, a professional conference.
5 Third (Evaluation) Portfolio

30. The Third Portfolio Review serves as the final review of the students’ accomplishments before submitting their dissertations. Students who submit their portfolios for the Review must be enrolled in the Heart of Teaching Program. Full-time students normally meet this requirement after completing the tenth semester of residence. In addition, all students must be in good academic standing.

5.1 Review Board, Scheduling, and Review of Student Learning

31. The Review is administered during the first two weeks of classes in the fall semester. Any variation in this schedule must be approved by the Department Chair. Students submit their Portfolios electronically by August 15. All members of the doctoral faculty will have the opportunity to read the student’s Portfolio.

32. The Doctoral Program Committee (minus the Department Chair) constitutes the Review Board, chaired by the Adviser. The Board examines the student’s Portfolio and probes the extent to which they meet the Learning Goals of the Review. All Board members evaluate the student’s performance with respect to these Outcomes and on the basis of the material submitted in the Portfolio; no Review Meeting will be held. Each student is assigned one of three grades: pass with distinction; pass; or fail.

33. For continuation in the Ph.D. program, the student must pass the Review. The Adviser submits the evaluation to the Administrative Assistant who sends the result of the Portfolio Review to the Office of Graduate Studies, which officially notifies the student.

5.2 Failure of the Review

34. In the event of a failing grade, the student may request from the Department Chair to retake the Review. In such a case, the Department Chair appoints a new Board to examine materials. The final decision will be based upon the verdict of this new Board. If that decision is negative, the student may not retake the Portfolio Review a second time and the student will be dismissed from the program (see the relevant Office of Graduate Studies Policy). The following conditions apply:

35. Students may not retake the Portfolio Review a second time if they fail to submit their Portfolios by the deadline without prior notification of a serious situation that prevents them from submitting the Portfolio; or submit incomplete Portfolios. In these cases, the student will be dismissed from the program (see the relevant Office of Graduate Studies Policy). Paragraph 17 also applies.

5.3 Portfolio Materials

- All elements included in the Second Portfolio Review.
5.3.1  Additions to Section 1: Student Information

Current Curriculum Vita.
Current unofficial Villanova transcript.

5.3.2  Additions to Section 2: Progress Reports

Evaluation by the Adviser: years 4 and 5.
Evidence of fulfillment of all language requirements.
Graduate Studies Office notification of having passed the Second Portfolio Review.

5.3.3  Additions to Section 3: Essays

Evaluative Essay, 1000 words in length. A critical evaluation of sections six through nine of the portfolio explaining how the material included in these sections is indicative of the student’s professional growth and development in the chosen areas of specialization, professional goals, and intended contributions to theological inquiry in the Augustinian tradition.

5.3.4  Additions to Section 6: Course Documentation (Areas of Specialization)

One artifact (textual form or another medium) from each course taken in the two Areas of specialization since the last Portfolio Review.

5.3.5  Additions to Section 7: Research Documentation

Four (cumulative!) of the following items:

   i. Scholarly manuscript (author or co-author) published or accepted for publication, which may include a book chapter.
   ii. Comprehensive and critical literature review published or accepted.
   iii. Paper proposed for, or presented at, a professional conference.


5.3.6  Section 8: Dissertation Documentation

Original Dissertation Proposal.
Revised Dissertation Proposal (if applicable).

5.3.7  Section 9: Education Documentation

Statement of Teaching Philosophy.
Undergraduate Course Syllabus.
Assignments.
Sample lesson plans.
Rubrics.
Teaching observation logs.
Teaching evaluations.

6 Portfolio Materials. Table of Comparison
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<tr>
<th>First Portfolio</th>
<th>Second Portfolio</th>
<th>Third Portfolio</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Section 1: Student Information</strong></td>
<td>All elements included in the First Portfolio Review.</td>
<td>All elements included in the Second Portfolio Review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Current Curriculum Vita.</td>
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<td>• Current unofficial Villanova transcript.</td>
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<td><strong>Section 2: Progress Reports</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Evaluation by the Adviser: year 1.</td>
<td>• Evaluation by the Adviser: years 2 and 3.</td>
<td>• Evaluation by the Adviser: years 4 and 5.</td>
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<td>• Graduate Studies Office notification of having passed the First Portfolio Review.</td>
<td>• Evidence of fulfillment of all language requirements.</td>
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<td>• Graduate Studies Office notification of having passed the Second Portfolio Review.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Ph.D. Program Committee Evaluation of the Dissertation Proposal.</td>
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<td>• Dissertation Progress Review Report.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Section 3: Essays</strong></td>
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<td>• A copy of the original Application Essay from the admissions file.</td>
<td>• Two Area-Knowledge Evidence Essays, one for each area of specialization, each 4000 words in length. Each scholarly essay demonstrates breadth of familiarity with, and depth of understanding of, the literature in the area (texts read for courses and selected from the Area's official reading list); examines the students’ position in relation to the area and to research trends and methods in the area; integrates their perspectives into a coherent framework of understanding; analyzes the relationship between faith and culture from the perspective of the area; and advances a vision for inquiry in the Augustinian tradition as both speculative and practical.</td>
<td>• Evaluative Essay, 1000 words in length. A critical evaluation of sections six through nine of the portfolio explaining how the material included in these sections is indicative of the student's professional growth and development in the chosen areas of specialization, professional goals, and intended contributions to theological inquiry in the Augustinian tradition.</td>
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<td>• Analytical Essay, 1000 words in length. A critical examination of the student's role and place in their coursework and profession, taking into consideration their original responses to the Application Essay prompts formulated at the time of applying for admission to the program.</td>
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<td>• Integrative Essay. A scholarly essay, 4000 words in length, which thematizes faith engaging culture. In the essay, the student evaluates the ways in which the various pieces of their educational program (courses, readings, papers, colloquia, service experiences, etc.) fit together with the program's emphases on sound research methods; interdisciplinarity and integration; cultural contexts; the relevance of theology in today's world; and theological knowing</td>
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in the Augustinian tradition as both speculative and practical, and distinctive in its emphasis on the union of mind and heart. Each student writes the essay with a special focus on the three areas of non-specialization.

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<th>Section 4: Area Knowledge Reading Lists</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Two reading lists, one for each area of specialization, each consisting of two parts:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) Part 1: A list of texts from the area’s official Reading List identified collaboratively, yet individually, with each of the two Review Board members. Official Area Reading Lists may be obtained from the Administrative Assistant. Procedure: During the semester in which the student registers for the Portfolio Review, before April 1, the student collaborates with each Board member on selecting up to four texts (per Board member) from the official reading list that complement the texts the student read for his or her classes.</td>
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<td>b) Part 2: Up to three texts of the student’s choosing.</td>
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<th>Section 5: Course Documentation (Areas of Non-Specialization)</th>
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<td>• One artifact (textual form or another medium) from each course taken in the three Areas of non-specialization, and one artifact from the area of cultural theories/methods.</td>
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<td>• Students admitted with transfer credits include the approved Course Equivalency Form.</td>
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<td>Section 6: Course Documentation (Areas of Specialization)</td>
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| • One artifact (textual form or another medium) from each course taken in the two Areas of specialization.  
• One artifact from each course on Augustine. | • One artifact (textual form or another medium) from each course taken in the two areas of specialization since the last Portfolio Review. |

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<th>Section 7: Research Documentation</th>
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<td>Optional – One of the following items:</td>
<td>Two (cumulative!) of the following items:</td>
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| • Scholarly manuscript (author or co-author) published or accepted for publication, which may include a book chapter.  
• Comprehensive and critical literature review published or accepted.  
• Paper proposed for, or presented at, a professional conference. |  
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| • Original Dissertation Proposal.  
• Revised Dissertation Proposal (if applicable). |  |

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<tr>
<th>Section 9: Education Documentation</th>
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| • Statement of Teaching Philosophy.  
• Undergraduate Course Syllabus.  
• Assignments.  
• Sample lesson plans.  
• Rubrics.  
• Teaching observation logs.  
• Teaching evaluations. |  |