

Portfolio Process for Alternative Education (952) Licensure

The Portfolio Process

What is a portfolio?

Portfolios can take many forms and be used for many purposes such as development, showcase, or assessment. The purpose will in large part dictate the format, content, organization, and intended audience of the portfolio. Although very different in purpose, most portfolios have these common threads:

- work or production samples to illustrate a competency or competencies
- explanation of samples and why they were chosen
- self-assessment
- reflection

Why use a portfolio to assess student work?

The portfolio process allows you (the student) to be in control of the means of demonstrating competency. It provides for creativity and uniqueness to be part of and enhance that demonstration. Finally, it shows personal ownership of knowledge, skills, ideas and behaviors learned. In many cases, the actual development of the portfolio generates additional learning or clarifies understanding, so the process itself is educative.

Why use a portfolio to assess in this program?

Because a portfolio is student generated, this means of summative assessment is more consistent with the vision and objectives of the various AEPL (MSEPD, TAES certificate, WI-952 licensure) programs than standard forms of assessment and evaluation. The AEPL programs strive to give teachers the tools to step outside the traditional limitations and actions of schools; it encourages them to become independent thinkers and advocates for their students. A portfolio assessment is not only the best way to measure the program's individualistic emphasis on learning; it also serves as a model for designing assessment in alternative settings. Additionally, the portfolio may also be incorporated partly or wholly into a professional development plan for licensure renewal.

The Portfolio Requirements

Artifacts and Narratives (demonstrating the Wisconsin Teacher Standards)

Choose at least one artifact from each of the AEPL Program licensure courses (SECNDED 705, SECNDED 706, SECNDED 708, and SECNDED 709). Include these artifacts in the physical portfolio along with short narrative statements (one per artifact) that describe each artifact and demonstrate competency in the Wisconsin Teacher Standards. Each narrative should include an explanation of why you chose this artifact for inclusion in the portfolio. You are encouraged to choose excellent examples of your work as well as artifacts that were poorly done or received negative feedback originally and explain what insight you gained through the experience. Artifacts themselves will not be assessed or graded.

Philosophy Statement

Students must include a personal statement of philosophy of teaching in alternative educational settings. Things to consider in your philosophy are:

- Why you want to teach in alternative education
- How the mission of alternative education differs from that of traditional education
- What you believe are the best ways to teach content specific knowledge (Think about some of your best lessons. What did you do to make them work? How did you structure the lesson? Why?)
- What are the teaching approaches you favor and why you use these approaches (Give examples from classes that you have taught.)
- How you create a classroom environment that enables all students to learn (Think about classroom management and individualized instruction/meeting the needs of all students.)
- Overall goals for your students
- What it means to be a professional education and a good colleague
- How you plan to continue to grow as a professional

As you identify the elements that are key to your philosophy, cite research that has influenced you in your understanding and your insights.

Evidence of Clinical Experience

Include a brief description of your experience in alternative education since entering the AEPL program. Be sure to articulate how you applied the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching in alternative education that you gained from participating in the four licensure courses. (Consider including insight into a child's behavior or learning method, analysis of an action taken or an instructional design or experience, description of an action research project, etc.) This narrative should be shared and analyzed with another teacher, a school administrator, or a university supervisor connected to the site. The signature of the consulting educator at the bottom of the narrative indicates that consultation took place.

If you are not currently teaching in an alternative education setting, you may meet this requirement in any of a number of ways:

- Enroll in Formal and Informal Learning Environments (SECNDED 707)
- Contact educators and administrators in your school or district to set up an opportunity to spend some time in an alternative setting within or connected to the district
- Collaborate with fellow students in the program who are working in alternative settings to visit in their classrooms, making sure to get appropriate administrative permission
- Contact your local school district for an opportunity to volunteer in alternative programs
- Work with one of the AEPL program faculty members who can facilitate a placement

Structure and Format

Since this is an on-line program, your portfolio must be in a digital format. This may include the use of PowerPoint (or other presentation programs), Websites, or commercial portfolio packages. You are free, however, to choose the format, structure, and style of presentation as long as your portfolio contains the required elements and organization is evident.

The Wisconsin Teacher Standards

The Wisconsin Teacher Standards are provided here to guide you in the selection of your artifacts. You need not address all ten standards in each artifact narrative, but each of the ten must be addressed at least once in the portfolio.

1. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.
2. The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.
3. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
4. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
5. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
6. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
7. The teacher plans and delivers instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curricular goals.
8. The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.
9. The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
10. The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

A final word of advice

As a professional, how you present yourself is critically important. When you prepare your portfolio artifacts, narrative statements, and philosophy statement, be sure to pay attention to...

- organization of content (Make it pretty!)
- organization and clarity of ideas (Make it logical!)
- idea development (Make it make sense! Be sure to explain your points, give examples from your experience and from the professional literature, etc.)
- usage and mechanics (Spelling counts!)