Guide to your portfolio work, 12 hp

The PhD programme at the Faculty of Medicine

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Purposes of the portfolio

The portfolio is a personal tool for documentation and continued reflection, on your academic and practical activities during your PhD studies. These activities occur within twelve areas. You can approach the portfolio as a diary. The main purpose of your reflective work is to achieve outcomes of the PhD education that are not met /accomplished solely by your thesis work. Further, active reflective work will improve the quality of your individual study plan, the thesis, and the PhD education as a whole. This reflective work can also facilitate writing and updating your CVs, for academic advancement and job applications.

Assessment and examination of the portfolio

There are three different ways in which your portfolio work will be assessed:

1. You are encouraged to share and discuss selected parts of your portfolio with your supervisor in connection with your appraisals and the yearly revision of your study plan. Your portfolio reflections constitute an excellent basis for refinement and improvement of your plan. Note that there is no requirement to show the portfolio to your supervisor if you prefer not to, but make sure to discuss your insights and conclusions with him/her.

2. At the half time review, you are required to submit your portfolio to the external opponents for assessment. The required format is a link to a Mahara viewing page, which you send them along with the rest of your documentation two weeks prior to the seminar. Alternatively, if you are not using Mahara for your portfolio work, a pdf file is also acceptable. The opponents will assess your portfolio work and discuss it with you during the meeting that follows your half-time seminar. They can also give comments directly in the portfolio page. When you have made relevant changes in your portfolio, send the updated version to the assistant head of the department with responsibility for PhD studies. Give a frank and clear account of your activities and reflections within all the twelve categories. If you lack experience within one or several categories – report this as well. The quality of your reflections is more important than the quantity; what matters is that it is clear that you are on your way of reaching the intended learning outcomes.

3. When you apply to defend your thesis (3 months in advance), your portfolio must have been approved by your assistant head of the department with responsibility for PhD studies. Create a version of your portfolio (viewing page in Mahara or a pdf document) that you feel demonstrates that you have reached the goals of the portfolio course and of the PhD degree as a whole. Thus, you are required to present reflections within all twelve areas. The quality and clarity of your reflections are more important than the quantity; your documented experience and reflections connected to these should together support that you have reached the goals.

1 A list of who is the assistant head with responsibility for PhD studies in your department can be found here: http://www.med.lu.se/intramed/forska_utbilda/doktorandHandledare/kontakt
The principle for assessment is that you select activities and reflections within in each area that you would like to share for assessment and discussion. In Mahara, you can create a viewing page containing relevant parts of your portfolio. Select the parts that illustrate the progress of your portfolio work and that you have fulfilled the goals for the portfolio course and the PhD degree. Thus, the portfolio is a means for achieving the outcomes and also forms a basis for examination. It is therefore likely (and encouraged) that your portfolio journals (Mahara) contain many more reflections than needed as a basis for examination.

Personal and/or presentable reflections.
To maximise the value of your portfolio work, allow yourself to make personal reflections; the portfolio is a strong tool for self-reflection. When the portfolio is to be assessed, you may need to revise, modify or select your texts to make them readable and presentable to someone else. The different types of texts are created in distinct sections of the Mahara tool; “Journals” are personal and, if you prefer, ONLY read by you, “Pages” are created from your selection of (revised?) texts and are shared.

Principle of portfolio work and assessment (in Mahara)

LEARNING PORTFOLIO
(MAHARA: “CONTENT”)
Journals (one per category)
- Journal entries.
This part is for personal documentation and reflection. Make a journal entry for every activity. Add a reflective or descriptive text if needed. Attach supporting documents.
Diary style (personal).
Likely to include much more than required to demonstrate attainment of outcomes.

ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIO
(MAHARA: “PAGES”)
Display page for sharing; with supervisor, at half time, at dissertation etc.
This is how you share the information in your portfolio.
Contains your selection of activities and reflections within each category.
Presentation style: texts need to be presentable/suitable for others to read.
Experiences and reflective/descriptive texts should support (progress towards) attainment of learning outcomes in a clear and structured way.

How to work with your portfolio

When?
To fulfil the purposes of reflective work and to maximize the value of the portfolio, you should get started immediately after admission to the PhD programme and aim for continued portfolio work throughout your PhD studies. As a rough guideline, make portfolio entries at least once per month and/or document and reflect every time you have for example attended a course, seminar, journal club or any other activity listed within the categories below.

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How?

Mahara
The faculty offers a web-based tool, Mahara, that can facilitate your portfolio work. Using Mahara is not compulsory, but strongly recommended since it has many advantages compared to simple text documents. Advantages include:

- access to your portfolio via Internet.
- functions to attach files.
- create pages consisting of your selection of activities and reflections.
- created pages can be electronically shared.

Reflection and documentation within twelve areas.
You are required to document and reflect on your activities within twelve different areas of your PhD studies. These areas are in turn linked to different learning outcomes of the portfolio course and of the PhD programme as a whole. It is both your accumulated experiences AND your ability to reflect on these and on your own learning process that is assessed, so ensure that you have a good balance between activity and reflection. You can choose to reflect in Swedish or in English.

In the next section below you will find the following:
Each area described in depth; the learning outcome(s) you are expected to accomplish by reflective writing; examples of relevant activities to document and reflect upon; suggested questions/statements to help you get started to think reflectively.

1. Research process

Learning outcomes Degree of Doctor:
- demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well as to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations autonomously and critically.
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames and to review and evaluate such work.
- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge.
- demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics.

Learning outcomes Portfolio Course:
On completion of the course, the third-cycle students shall be able to:
- identify and analyse challenges and issues in their own and others’ research, and propose ways to solve or manage these issues
- independently formulate a project plan including research issue, method and time plan

Here you are to reflect on the general process of research, as well as on the nature and progress of your PhD project. This area is important to consider at the very beginning.
of your PhD studies and when you are to do the yearly revision of your individual study plan. The questions/statements listed below will most likely be asked by the opponents at your half-time seminar and defence.

**Activities to document and reflect on:**
Research project plans that you have written/designed or contributed to.
Applications for research funding, travel funding or postdoc funding.
Planning/project meetings.

**Examples of documents to attach:**
Project plans.
Applications

**Questions/statements to help you get started with reflective thinking and writing:**
Which is the overall aim of my thesis project?
Has it changed and in that case how? Is there a need to change it and why?
What is my research question? Does it need to be adjusted?
Am I addressing a relevant problem? Why? Why not?
Will my result reach international impact?
What are the general principles for how a research project should be carried out?
What experiences do I have from writing research proposals?
What components are needed to execute a project? Are there any missing in mine?
Is my project progressing in line with what is described in my individual study plan?
How can I revise my project plan (as specified in the individual study plan) to improve the quality of my research?
Which challenges or problems have I encountered in my project? How did I solve them?
Am I developing towards autonomy as a scientist? In which ways? Can I give examples to demonstrate this?
Do I need to learn more about the research process? How could I do that?

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2. Research methodology

**Learning outcomes Degree of Doctor:**
- demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to **plan and use appropriate methods** to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames and to review and evaluate such work.
- demonstrate the ability to **identify the need for further knowledge**.

**Learning outcomes Portfolio Course:**
On completion of the course, the third-cycle students shall be able to:
- reflect on the choice of method, and on strengths and weaknesses of the methodology applied in in their own research project
- describe the strategies used to obtain the knowledge required within the general subject and its methodology

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Here you are to reflect in general terms on the research method adopted and describe the choice of method and approach to resolve an issue.

**Activities to document and reflect on:**
Methods courses, statistics training.
Research project plans that you have written/designed.

**Examples of documents to attach:**
Course certificates.
Protocols developed by you.
Project plans – methods descriptions.

**Questions to help you get started with reflections:**
Is the methodological approach relevant for my research question(s) and the project?
If not, how can it be improved?
Is the approach realistic (for example time-wise)?
Can I use new modern technology and equipment or establish contact with other research groups to improve the approach? Which ones? How?
Should the research material be expanded?
Which methods courses did I take? What did I learn? Have I reflected upon what I learned and did this change my strategies, and if so, how? Am I in need of further training?
In which way(s) could I achieve broad knowledge about methods?

3. **Subject expertise**

**Learning outcomes Degree of Doctor:**
- demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up-to-date specialized knowledge in a limited area of this field, and
- demonstrate the ability to **identify the need for further knowledge**.

**Learning outcomes Portfolio Course:**
On completion of the course, the third-cycle students shall be able to:
- describe the strategies used to obtain the **knowledge required within the general subject** and its methodology

Here you are to reflect on the extent to which you have achieved general and specialised expertise in your subject.

**Activities to document and reflect on:**
Relevant courses.
Journal clubs.
Papers and books read.
Other activities through which you have increased your subject knowledge, for example clinical- or undergraduate teaching.

**Examples of documents to attach:**
Course certificates.
Programmes for seminar series, journal clubs ad conferences.

**Questions to help you get started with reflections:**
What is the background and rationale for my project?
How would I put my project in a larger, for example clinical, context?
Which (out of the five) subject am I admitted to PhD studies in?
How can I achieve *broad* knowledge within this subject, vs *specialized* knowledge within a more limited part of the subject?
Which subject(s) is relevant for me to study and how could I do that?
Have I studied the literature as specified in my individual study plan?
Do I need to use additional information channels? Which ones?
Which journals and research articles are most important/in focus for my research project?
Which courses and other components can increase my subject expertise?
What is my learning process like and how can I identify the ideal conditions/environment for my learning?

4. **Publication**

**Learning outcomes Degree of Doctor:**
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames and **to review and evaluate such work.**
- demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to **present** and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and **writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general.**

**Learning outcomes Portfolio Course:**
On completion of the course, the third-cycle students shall be able to:
- independently take responsibility for all the stages of the **publication process**

Here you are to reflect on the publication process and strategies for presenting and publishing your results.

**Activities to document and reflect on:**
Your publications.
Review tasks.
Relevant courses (for example the PhD course Scientific communication).

**Examples of documents to attach:**
Course certificates.
Your published papers.

**Questions to help you get started with reflections:**
What type of journal do/will I publish in (specialised/general, high/low impact)?
What is my target group(s)?
Who decides on the choice of journal? How can I contribute to this decision?
Have me and my co-authors/supervisors agreed on a plan for publication of my results? Is it clear from the individual study plan? Is it realistic?
How many, and what type of publications do I need for my thesis?
What is my contribution to and role in the execution of the article? What are the roles of my co-authors?
Authorship: what is required for authorship?
What are my experiences when it comes to reviewing the work of others?
Have I taken any courses that helped me understand the publication process and how have I implemented what I learned?

5. Teacher training and experience

Learning outcomes Degree of Doctor:
- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge.
- demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in some other qualified professional capacity

Learning outcomes Portfolio Course:
On completion of the course, the third-cycle students shall be able to:
- reflect on their development of teaching skills and how they have used them to support the learning of others and adapted their teaching to different target groups, for example the wider society

Here you are to reflect on your role, education and development as a teacher.

Activities to document and reflect on:
Teacher training courses.
Teaching experience, including supervision of undergraduate students in the laboratory and other teaching situations.
A “teaching situation” can be interpreted as any situation, within or outside the classroom, in which your role is support the learning of others, for example students, patients, new staff or research colleagues.

Examples of documents to attach:
Course certificates.
Course evaluations.
Teaching material that you developed (lectures, cases etc).
Master- or bachelor theses that you supervised.

Questions to help you get started with reflections:
How could I investigate (and thus show) if my teaching supports student learning?
Does my individual study plan include teaching or teacher training? Why? Why not?
What type of teaching would be suitable and valuable for me (subject, level etc)?
Have I taken any teacher training course and which are required and/or relevant?
What was the most important knowledge gained from my teaching courses?
Have I used this knowledge in my teaching and did it lead to improvements? How did I document and/or notice that?

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How have I developed as a teacher?
What is my teaching philosophy?
Have I taken part in teaching- or course/syllabus development? How did I go about?
How did I document the results of the development?

6. Conferences and seminars.

**Learning outcomes Degree of Doctor:**
- demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general.
- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge.
- demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in some other qualified professional capacity.

**Learning outcomes Portfolio Course:**
On completion of the course, the third-cycle students shall be able to:
- present and discuss research and research findings with collaborators and at conferences and seminars, and reflect on the quality and authority of the delivery
- reflect on the significance of collaboration, conferences and other research interactions for the quality of research and their own development of expertise

Here you are to reflect on your participation in conferences and seminars.

**Activities to document and reflect on:**
Conferences that you have attended as well as presentation of abstracts/posters.
Seminars that you have attended and/or presented at.
Seminars/conferences that you have organized.
Relevant courses (for example oral communication and scientific communication)

**Examples of documents to attach:**
Course certificates.
Posters or talks that you presented.
Conference- and seminar programmes.

**Questions to help you get started with reflections:**
What type of conferences would be suitable for me? Which one would I specifically like to go to?
Is attendance of conferences and seminars specified in my individual study plan?
Which were the main take-home messages of the last conference I attended?
How was the quality of the presented research?
Have I implemented/used any of the knowledge I gained? How?
Who did I connect with and did this expand my network?
What are my plans/goals for the next conference (e.g. ask more question, talk to more people)?
How can I improve my presentations?
Have I improved my posters and presentations as a result of courses I took? How?
What do I need to do to be invited as a speaker?
What have I learnt from a particular seminar? Who did I meet? How have I used the knowledge gained from it?

7. National and international cooperation with the research community.

**Learning outcomes Degree of Doctor:**
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames and to review and evaluate such work
- demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general.

**Learning outcomes Portfolio Course:**
On completion of the course, the third-cycle students shall be able to:
- present and discuss research and research findings with collaborators and at conferences and seminars, and reflect on the quality and authority of the delivery
- reflect on the significance of collaboration, conferences and other research interactions for the quality of research and their own development of expertise

Here you are to reflect on your interaction with the research community, for example national and international collaborations.

**Activities to document and reflect on:**
Who do you interact and/or collaborate with locally?
Who do you interact and/or collaborate with nationally?
Who do you interact and/or collaborate with abroad?

**Examples of documents to attach:**
Grant applications for spending time abroad.
Reports from visits to other groups/laboratories.

**Questions to help you get started with reflections:**
Do I have enough (or too many) collaborations?
What are the advantages and potential disadvantages of collaborative projects?
When does an interaction become a collaboration?
Who initiates and manages collaborations (me, my supervisor?)?
What is my role in the collaborations that my project involves?
Are collaborations described in my study plan?
Am I planning to spend time in a foreign laboratory during my PhD? Which one?
Why? How could I go about if I wanted to do this?
What have I gained and learnt from my collaborations?
8. Cooperation with wider society

**Learning outcomes Degree of Doctor:**
- demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general.
- demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in some other qualified professional capacity.
- demonstrate specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.

**Learning outcomes Portfolio Course:**
On completion of the course, the third-cycle students shall be able to:
- reflect of the possible uses and routes for implementation of their own research results in wider society, and identify opportunities and risks associated with such use
- reflect on their development of teaching skills and how they have used them to support the learning of others and adapted their teaching to different target groups, for example the wider society

Here you are to reflect on your interaction with society at large and the potential use or risk of your research.

**Activities to document and reflect on:**
Relevant courses.
Popular science summaries and other descriptions of your research.
Contact with patients’ associations
Popular science publications.
Visits to upper secondary schools.
Public visits/displays at the university.
Press releases.
Participation in various media.
Patents/innovations.

**Examples of documents to attach:**
Course certificates.
Popular science summaries and other texts.
Press releases.
Written material developed to inform patients/study participants.
Links to media where you have appeared.

**Questions to help you get started with reflections:**
How can my research benefit individuals and/or society as a whole?
Could the results of my research be misused? How?
How would I describe/explain my research to different target groups?
Have I participated in any media? What was my experience? What would I do differently next time?
How do I go about if I would like to share my research results with the public?
Is there a commercial potential in my research? In which way?
How would I go about if I wanted to commercialize my research?
What do I know about patenting?

9. Ethical issues

**Learning outcomes Degree of Doctor:**
- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge.
- demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics.
- demonstrate specialized **insight into the possibilities and limitations of research**, its role in society and the **responsibility of the individual for how it is used**.

**Learning outcomes Portfolio Course:**
On completion of the course, the third-cycle students shall be able to:
- reflect of the possible uses and routes for implementation of their own research results in wider society, and identify opportunities and **risks associated with such use**
- make research **ethics assessments**, assess the need for **ethical review**, and reflect on the meaning of **academic integrity**, providing examples from their own thesis project

Reflect on ethical judgements and issues that relate to your work.

**Activities to document and reflect on:**
Relevant courses or seminars that you have attended (e.g. research ethics course) Ethical permit applications that you have written or contributed to.

**Examples of documents to attach:**
Course certificates.
Ethical applications and permits.
Data management plans (that describe ethical aspects).

**Questions to help you get started with reflections:**
How are applications for ethical review drawn up (when, who does it, who decides etc)? Would I be able to write one?
Is there an ethical permit for my projects? What does it cover?
What defines research fraud or misconduct?
Have I ever encountered or suspected research fraud? Where would I turn if I did?
What is ethically correct when it comes to co-authorship?
Have I ever participated in an ethical debate (formal or ad-hoc)? What was it like?
What can I do to prepare?

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10. Career development

**Learning outcomes Degree of Doctor:**
- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge.

**Learning outcomes Portfolio Course:**
On completion of the course, the third-cycle students shall be able to:
- identify their own **strengths and weaknesses**, and reflect on **different career paths** and the knowledge and skills required for them

Reflect on what you need for your career development and prospects for reaching the goals you have set.

**Activities to document and reflect on:**
Career development seminars.
Job fairs.
Participation in mentor programmes.

**Examples of documents to attach:**
Materials, exercises etc from career seminars and fairs.

**Questions to help you get started with reflections:**
- What skills and competences do I possess?
- Which are my main strengths?
- What do I enjoy doing?
- What are my career goals and how can I prepare for these?
- What is required to pursue an academic career?
- Are there opportunities for support, such as seminars or mentor programs, to assist me?

11. Supervision/supervisor(s)

**Learning outcomes Degree of Doctor:**
- demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and **support the learning of others both through research and education** and in some other qualified professional capacity.

**Learning outcomes Portfolio Course:**
On completion of the course, the third-cycle students shall be able to:
- reflect on their own development towards **independence, particularly vis-à-vis their supervisors**

Reflect on the supervision you receive and your own role as a supervisor.

**Activities to document and reflect on:**
Meetings with your supervisor(s) – time and main outcomes.
Your own supervision tasks.

**Examples of documents to attach:**
Questions to help you get started with reflections:
What type of input do I get from my supervisor? Is the amount of input appropriate?
Have I development my independence towards my supervisor? How?
How would I describe my own role in the relation between me and my supervisor?
What is the role of my co-supervisor?
Do I have or need a mentor? Which mentorship programs are available?
How would I like to develop the relationship with my supervisor(s)? How could I do this?
How would I describe myself as a supervisor? How could I improve?

12. Administration, organisation and leadership.

Learning outcomes Degree of Doctor:
- demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in some other qualified professional capacity.
- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge.

Learning outcomes Portfolio Course:
On completion of the course, the third-cycle students shall be able to:
- demonstrate understanding of and participation in administration, organisation and management of research and education

Reflect on your activities in different working groups, boards and committees.

Activities to document and reflect on:
Membership of boards and/or committees.
PhD student council work.
Seminars/conferences that you have organized/lead.
Other types of administrative or organizational work, for example responsibility for schedules, meetings, equipment or other materials in a section, clinic or laboratory.

Examples of documents to attach:
Seminars/conferences programmes that you developed.
Schedules or routines that you developed/was responsible for.

Questions to help you get started with reflections:
In which way could administrative work be valuable for me?
What have I contributed with in my administrative work? How could I increase my contributions?
What is my future plan with regard to engagements on boards and committees? Is it defined in my individual study plan?