What Makes Evidence Credible in a Portfolio?

It shows what a student did, how they thought, and how they improved.

Portfolios of Evidence are widely used in work-integrated learning (WIL). Their educational value depends on how they are designed, what students collect, and how that evidence is assessed.

Four Tests for Credible Evidence

SAQA-registered assessor unit standards describe four established tests for evidence:

Appropriate & Valid

Does the task suit the learning outcome, and does the evidence show it was achieved?

Authentic

Is the work the student's own? Can a supervisor explain precisely what the student contributed?

Sufficient

Does the evidence cover the required criteria and show consistent performance? ***Quality matters more than page count.***

Current

Does the evidence show what the student can do now? Recent, dated observations can help establish this.

Authentic evidence vs. authentic assessment

- Authentic evidence establishes whose work it is.
- Authentic assessment concerns how closely assessment reflects real workplace practice.

Lessons from the research

- Link evidence to learning outcomes.
- Design reflective tasks that build on students' WIL experiences.
- Involve workplace partners meaningfully, with clear criteria.

Six Questions for Designing or Reviewing WIL Portfolios

01 **What should students demonstrate?**
Are the learning outcomes and assessment criteria clear, including the knowledge, skills, judgement and behaviours students need to develop?

02 **What opportunities will they need?**
Will workplace activities give students meaningful opportunities to demonstrate these outcomes?

03 **What evidence should they collect?**
Which work samples, observations or explanations will demonstrate what they have learnt and can do?

04 **How will supervisors confirm what each student did?**
Can they say specifically what the student did and how it relates to the learning outcomes, particularly in team tasks?

05 **How will feedback support learning?**
Will students receive feedback, reflect on their decisions and have opportunities to demonstrate improvement?

06 **Is the evidence sufficient and current?**
Is there enough recent evidence to assess students against the required standards?

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Sources: Scholtz (2020); Lasen et al. (2018); SAQA (2014); SAQA Unit Standard 115755.