

MPSA Portfolio Assignment

Create a portfolio that showcases your work throughout the MPSA programme. **The portfolio, a collection of your work and an insight into the knowledge you have acquired, must be threaded with reflective and critical thinking, self-assessment of your skills, your knowledge and your approach to solving security issues.** If applicable, it must connect with your work (what you do every day) and must also address the conceptual aspect of your studies (creative solutions for African problems). You must include artifacts (digital or other) and relevant elements from the modules and experience.

Your portfolio must reflect on where you are regarding the objectives of the course as you indicate how the modules have addressed them. Please address the themes and questions of the modules in your portfolio. If you have produced extra work, a presentation on specific area of interest to you. This is the place to showcase it.

The best grades will be attributed to portfolios that demonstrate:

- Easy and clear organization (of the contents and the binder)
- Critical reflections on the contents of the course, your assignments, class activities and experience in the field. Such reflections should reflect class discussions, presentations and activities, your understanding of the materials (journal articles, reports, videos, films, cartoons, etc.) on Moodle and integrate various readings (not only those that appear on Moodle).

Please, **find below a few suggestions** about how you may organize your portfolio. Remember that you may do differently (*for example reorder the modules provided you can make a case for it, address themes by clusters, divide your portfolio into knowledge, practical skills and their application in your employment and beyond, etc.*), but not less than suggested.

Presentation and Materials to Submit

1. You'll use 20 minutes to present the preliminary highlights of your portfolio and learning experience to the class in the last week of Module 5, even if your portfolio is physically due two months later.
2. Turn in your portfolio binder two months after the last module. The supporting documents must be in a separate folder organized for easy use.

Portfolio Contents Suggestions

Choose one of the following options

Option One

Organize your portfolio as you like it, as long as you are able to

1. Convey what you know
2. Show evidence of the breadth of your peace and security knowledge

3. Demonstrate what you have done
4. Critically reflect upon your learning experience
5. Make critical connections between the course, your learning experiences and your work.

Just make sure you back up your statements with properly cited evidence from class readings, presentations or readings of your own.

Construct the portfolio the way you want (include photos, shows, cartoons, conversations, etc.) You may interview professionals about peace and security. *Remember that doing something original does not mean just doing anything.* Your text needs to be readable, the use of your pictures or other graphics need to be relevant, etc.

Option Two

(You are not limited to the following suggestions. Although this sounds like a linear proposition, please make sure you establish the links between the modules to determine their connections and relevance to one another)

For each module here are some questions you should attempt to answer:

- What have you specifically learnt through readings, discussions, interactions projects, etc.? Provide clear examples.
- What class activities (select just the most significant ones) have you been part of and what has been their impact on your learning?
- What have you done in terms of assignments?
- How did the experience change or did not change your perspectives or behavior?
- How have you applied/will you apply the knowledge you acquired to your workplace or what do you intend to do with it in the future?
- In which areas do you intend to further your knowledge?

Various Sections

Introduction

Provide the context of the portfolio and introduce its contents (not that of the course itself); Present a short summary/reflection on the portfolio itself and your preparation as a peace and security professional in terms of knowledge, skills and disposition.

Module 1: Peace and Security in Africa: Theoretical Approaches, Institutions/Practices and Introduction to Country Case Study

- Summarize what you have learnt in this module, indicating your preferred theories or concepts in understanding peace and security in Africa and why?
- Please indicate the learning moments (the Ah Ha! moments) as they relate to readings, field trips, assignments, presentations by resource persons the activities that had an impact on your learning

- Provide a one-two page reflective analysis of the module, on what you intend to do with this knowledge or experience, how you would apply it in the future.
- Indicate the areas in which you will pursue your knowledge in the topics developed in this module
- Reflection on distance assignment

Module 2: Causes, Dynamics and Consequences of Violent Conflict: Country Case Study

- Please indicate what is/are your preferred framework(s) for understanding violence in Africa and especially in the country you have studied?
- Select a couple of other African countries and demonstrate how similar framework(s) may or may not apply.
- Explain how gender issues may be important in understanding the dynamics and causes of violence in the case of the country you are studying, using feminist perspectives if you have been exposed to it.
- Reflection on distance assignment

Module 3: Conflict Analysis and Early Warning

- What have you learnt about conflict analysis through the exercise you conducted?
- Summarize what you think it takes in terms of practical skills to write a good conflict analysis report?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the AU Early Warning systems?
- How does it compare to other Early Warning systems on the continent?
- What are your reflection on distance assignments?
- Provide a short critique of the report that your team produced

Module 4: Conflict Prevention and Early Intervention

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of “soft” interventions?
- What critical conditions need to be met for “soft interventions to work?
- What, in you, would make a good or bad mediator?
- Make sure you incorporate your reflections on the resource persons’ presentations
- Why have mediation efforts succeeded or failed in your simulation?
- Reflection on distance assignment

Module 5: Peace Support Operations, Peace Building and Post conflict Reconstruction

- Provide a brief account of the complexity of peace building, using examples from your case study;

- What have you learnt about the process of PSO?
- In your opinion, what practical advice – strategic, technical, would you provide professionals involved in post-reconstruction efforts:
- What practical recommendations would you give soldiers preparing for a deployment? What would you insist on?

Understanding yourself, peace and security

- You have been exposed to different professions, but why did you choose peace and security? What joys and frustrations do you intend to have/have you had in the profession?
- What is the link between you (your upbringing, your story) and peace and security?
- How do you view security at a national, continental and global level?

Conclusion

What you have learnt? What you wish you had focused on more and why? What was absent and that you will work on?

What you will do with you have learnt in your current employment and in the future?

What will be your own contribution to solving Africa's peace and security problems in a creative way?

Artifacts

Artifacts are pieces of evidence that document the knowledge, experience that you have gone through. They are provided to demonstrate the quality of your work and represent the basis on which you critiques are based.

Suggested Artifacts to be selected for inclusion in the portfolio:

- In-class work
- Individual assignments
- Group assignment (also indicate) your contribution to the group
- Distance assignment
- Videos (Internet links) and other materials (journals). Anything mentioned must be backed by evidence.
- If you use examples from work, please make sure you include them in your portfolio.