



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LINCOLN**

'From potential to reality – the development and use of an e-portfolio in social work education'.

SRHE Annual Research Conference 2015  
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**Background**

- Placements are integral to the social work qualifying programmes
- Students produce portfolios to evidence practical and academic competence during placements; traditionally paper portfolios were used which were cumbersome and prone to damage/loss
- Evidence that e-portfolios enhance digital skills (Abrami & Barrett, 2005; Barrett, 2000; Heath, 2002, 2005; Wade et al., 2005; Wall et al, 2006).
- Digital skills are fundamental for information management in social work practice (Rutter & Brown, 2012; Seymour & Seymour, 2011)
- E-portfolios develop communication and problem solving skills (Abrami & Barrett, 2005; Canada, 2002), which are apposite to professional practice
- E-portfolios are known to facilitate the provision of assessment feedback (Abrami & Barrett, 2005; Ahn, 2004; Lorenzo & Ittleson, 2005)




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**The University of Lincoln social work e-portfolio**

- Piloted and introduced over a 2 year timescale
- Wordpress platform
- Accommodates the practice and academic assessments involved with placements
- Being adapted for other purposes across the University




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**Student feedback: Ease of use and accessibility**

- I find the e-portfolio extremely useful as everything is in one place and I do not have to keep track of paper files (S1)
- The e-portfolio is really easy to use and the different sections are easily identifiable with guidance as to what needs to be included in each part. (S2)
- I think once you get used to the eportfolio it is easy to use and navigate. (S3)
- I really like the online portfolio due to being able to access it everywhere; you don't have to worry about whether you have remembered to bring your work with you on placement. It is always accessible. (S4)




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**Student feedback: Evolving and dynamic**

- I find it incredibly useful that you can copy and paste from word and particularly find the new feature regarding missed signatures helpful as I missed a few signatures last year and had to request the portfolio back. (S1)
- The improvement made to allow for hyperlinks and italics etc will be of benefit when it comes to adding the reference list. (S3)
- Finally, I like the fact that it is still a work in progress. Comments that were made by ourselves last year have been taken onboard and put into place this year. (S4)




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**Student feedback: Supports teaching and learning**

- ... my contact tutor has been able to read through work I have uploaded prior to the learning agreement meeting and mid-point review. This has enabled all parties to be prepared for these meetings and allows for a quicker, more straight-forward meeting. (S2)
- It's easy to post material to for the observation planning and journals and the notifications if anyone has commented on the journals is also a good idea. I also like how there is a link to take you to the breakdown of the different pcf's. (S3)




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### Student feedback: Multiple users

- Having the e-portfolio has proved useful for practice educators, on-site supervisors and contact tutors to be able to keep track of the work I am producing and collate all comments in to one place. An example of this is that I can publish a reflective journal from my own home, my practice educator can then read this and upload a comment in time for me to read through before further discussion at supervision later in the week. (S2)
- It is good that it can be accessed by the student, practice educator and contact tutor at anytime. (S3)
- Also, having it accessible online means that tutors, practice educators and supervisors can digitally sign it rather than chasing people to get a physical signature. (S4)




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### Feedback from Practice Educators

- Initially anxious about using an online system however thorough training, guidance and support was offered. The site is easily accessible allowing for constructive feedback to be given quickly.
- Allows for an overview of how the student is building up their portfolio and offers a structure for the Practice Educator and Student to follow
- Easy to post comments and have discussions on reflective journals and direct observation planning
- More opportunity for students to demonstrate the professionalism framework (PCF1) as they have responsibility for a large proportion of completing forms and inputting information
- Signing off of work and forms is easily navigated and a check list is provided which details which pages are to be signed




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### Feedback from Practice Educators

- Saves time having to organise paper documents, you are only ever working from one page which is easily updated. You don't end up with paper documents from various stages of a learning agreement
- The structure of the e-portfolio including the tabs and headings are clear and easy to navigate around. This e-portfolio is way ahead of other online portfolio's that I have used through other Universities
- I felt really 'at home' using the e-portfolio after the first use, it is a major step forward in making things easier for the practice educator to monitor students work and to keep well organised – I would not want to go back to the old style of portfolios.




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## The e-portfolio

### Advantages

- Ease of simultaneous access for multiple stakeholders
- Transportable
- Could not be lost or damaged
- Easy to edit and update
- Very quick feedback from practice educators
- Can be used at times to suit the student/placement staff
- Multimedia tools can be used

### Disadvantages

- Time intensive for administrative tasks
- Resistance from practice educators and staff to the introduction of new technology
- Inevitably there have been unexpected issues (e.g. how to accommodate re-sits for academic work)




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## DEMONSTRATION




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## The Future

- Receive and act on feedback from users
- Continue to develop and refine
- Consider other uses for the eportfolio platform

Any questions please feel free to contact;

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