

# Creating a Research Portfolio Narrative

## Planning Ahead for Academic Advancement

### **What is a Research Portfolio Narrative?**

*Your research portfolio narrative will bring together the key information about your research results and your capabilities and experience as a researcher and scholar. The well written narrative will address the significance and impact of your work while articulating the relevant connections between your research projects and outcomes to date. Include a brief summary of factual information about your research grant awards, contracts, studies, clinical trials, and funding history.*

*Remember to note the funding trajectory and sources by including local, regional, national and international work you have conducted and the sponsors that have supported your work. Wherever possible, it helps to anchor the reader by describing your research and scholarship in a thematic context. This will enable most readers to connect how each project or even your research questions or key aims have contributed to a bigger picture (or a richer answer to a fundamental question).*

*V. Williams (2014)*

### **The Research Portfolio Narrative**

Similar to the way in which a laboratory journal can organize your records and describe the materials, methods and results of an experiment, the research portfolio narrative similarly organizes an overview of your research and scholarship over time. A research portfolio narrative provides a picture of your research agenda, capabilities, results and recognition received for your competence and creativity. Your research portfolio narrative also complements and supplements information available in the curriculum vitae.

Beginning to build your research portfolio narrative is a fairly straightforward task, yet it may require focus and time to assemble these important materials and artifacts of your research in a meaningful way. There are various ways to outline and assemble a research portfolio so the following is intended to serve only as an example. This approach is

not the only way it can be done, however it includes most of the key elements that would be of interest in a peer-feedback, peer-review or recognition context.

*Keep in mind that the research portfolio narrative's purpose is to provide concrete yet descriptive information, usually for colleagues, who are interested in your work for a specific reason. Interest may originate during the review of materials for academic advancement, or it may be related to consideration of your work for local, regional, or national/international recognition. In this age of translational and team-based science the research portfolio may serve as an introduction to potential research collaborators in another field of study. Lastly, the academic portfolio has a self-reflective purpose, too. The assembly of selected research artifacts to include in your research portfolio indicates your own qualitative review and assessment of progress and integration of these research projects over time.*

*With these potential uses in mind it is important that your research portfolio narrative include sufficient information to be self explanatory as well as briefly exploratory regarding the fit within a larger context. The research portfolio narrative may be reviewed strictly as a self-contained document – completely separate from any direct conversation with you. In this context your research portfolio may be the only substantive document available that offers a rich and comprehensive overview of the developmental arc and significance of your research to date. Unlike your curriculum vitae, which is more of an index to your work over time, the research portfolio is the full, yet well-edited story of your research trajectory and achievements to date.*

### **Research as a Component of Your Faculty Role**

As noted in the sidebar the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center defines two components of your work relative to research and scholarship. Research, as the first of these, has as its focus the systematic original investigation of an area. Scholarly



At the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center the Faculty Handbook (2012) defines research and scholarship as follows:

**Research**, is the development, validation and dissemination of new knowledge. The term research as used here is understood to mean systematic, original investigation directed toward the expansion of human knowledge or the solution of contemporary problems.

**Scholarly achievement** is understood to mean significantly original or imaginative accomplishment within the framework of the academic unit. Examples of scholarly achievement might also include synthesis of new ideas as gleaned from published data, technology transfer successes, patent awards, new application of information technology to improve education or health care, etc.

OUHSC Promotion and Tenure Policy, Section 3.5.2 Professional Activities of the Faculty

achievement is separately defined and includes items that would fit Boyer's definition of scholarship that includes application, integration, and teaching. With these overarching definitions in mind, consider the following headings and the associated questions as a guide to developing your research portfolio narrative.

### Research Agenda Synopsis

The synopsis serves as an introduction to your research. It may speak directly to the significance of work in this area, your expertise, and the relevance of your work within the University community. In this context, keep in mind that your work as an educator who introduces learners to research through your laboratory, clinical expertise, or work in the profession makes a unique contribution to the educational experiences of those learners. Some aspect of your teaching philosophy that relates to preparing learners for future evidence-based practice, or work as a research scientist or clinician scientist may be briefly summarized in this section as it relates to engaging learners through your research or research techniques.

### Research objectives

State, or describe your research interests and objectives. Describe the potential and achieve significance of your research. Describe the acquisition and current breadth and/or depth of your research expertise and competence. You may include reference here to the environments of your research, those who have mentored you, or research, modalities and techniques that are particular to your area of discipline or professional expertise.

### Research Achievements

List the **competitive research grants** and contracts you have been awarded by year. Indicate the sponsor and the amount of direct costs assigned to the grant or contract. This provides an indicator of scale and the



investment made in pursuing your research question or specific aims. Indicate your role on the grant, which may include principal investigator, co-principal investigator, investigator or some other area of specific expertise that marked your distinctive contribution to the research. Briefly describe the significance or impact of each project.

- **List your publications**, peer-reviewed articles, chapters, books, conference presentations, and invited presentations. Include activities at the local, state, regional, national, and international level.
- Select items of particular relevance from your curriculum vitae and describe them in context of either **journal impact factor** or use a **citation map** (for information about citation maps see the Web of Science: [http://images.webofknowledge.com/WOK46/help/WOS/h\\_citation\\_map.html](http://images.webofknowledge.com/WOK46/help/WOS/h_citation_map.html)). Individual impact factors for the journals Cell, Nature, and Science are located on their websites and the Science Gateway website notes the relative rankings by impact factor for a variety of scientific journals: <http://www.sciencegateway.org/rank/index.html>). Reference the quality of journals in which your articles have appeared or the publishing houses of your books or chapters. This information will provide the reader of your research narrative with a commonly used external benchmark for the quality of your work. If other external benchmarks are more appropriate, state them.

List the **works of learners who you have mentored** through research, including post-graduate, graduate, and professional students by year that they were engaged with your research. Include any awards received by these learners, or you, such as best paper or poster. Indicate the destination of these learners in terms of their current appointments or any distinctions achieved also indicating the year.

Describe other **activities relevant to your research achievements**, noting them by date, and naming the intramural or extramural sponsor.

### Research Leadership

Describe the **development of your research team**, including junior colleagues and technical or other research staff whom you have recruited. Note any team achievements; participation or leadership on any translational science, team science or interprofessional research team.

Identify any relevant **endeavors indicating commitment to research integrity**, or quality with institution wide, national or international focus. Note research enterprise leadership titles.

Indicate any **assistance provided to others** with research grant writing, reviewing research grants applications, either internal (such as through the institutional review board) or external (such as study sections or grant review panel membership) for public, nonprofit or proprietary organizations.

### Supporting documentation

Append an index and examples of supporting documentation in your portfolio, which could include any of the following:

- Award or funding notifications.
- Invitations to make guest or named presentations/lectures, or deliver seminars or conferences.
- Invited book chapters, books, research or science related commentary or other publications.
- International invitations to speak or teach.
- Invited memberships to academic or professional societies.
- Awards and recognition for outstanding research or creative achievement. For named awards, if not obvious from any brief descriptor attached to the award title, provide brief explanation of the award purpose or history and if illustrative note a few of the previous recipients.
- Intellectual property or patents resulting from research or creative work. Be sure these are also listed in your curriculum vitae.
- Feedback summaries from colleagues, former students or research beneficiaries serving as exemplar evidence of your contributions to understanding or enhancing knowledge in the area of your research.



**For additional information** about the OUHSC academic advancement process or to register for the "Preparing for Academic Advancement" Workshop in Oklahoma City or Tulsa, contact the office of:

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