

The 2022 Product Design Portfolio Review

What is portfolio review?

Portfolio review is a way to evaluate your product design ability and knowledge of design concepts based on work from the foundation level courses. Portfolio review assures that students have acquired a basic understanding of essential design knowledge and are prepared to move on to more advanced coursework. Students must pass portfolio review in order to be accepted to the major, continue on with their coursework, and complete the degree.

Why do students have to go through portfolio review?

Product/industrial design is a highly competitive and demanding professional discipline. Future professionals need to gain experience in presenting their work to others and in having their work reviewed. In order to maintain appropriate class sizes in upper division studios, it may be necessary to limit enrollment in the full major through the portfolio review selection process.

When is portfolio review?

Portfolio review will occur at the end of the spring semester during finals in Rapson Room 31. Every student participating in the review will be assigned a 15-minute timeslot on a specific day. All pre-product design students will receive notification via email of an exact timeline.

What are the pre-requisites for participation?

To participate in portfolio review, a student must be a Pre-Product Design major in the College of Design with a minimum grade of C- in required courses and have a suggested overall GPA of at least 2.50. A minimum of 22 credits must be completed or in progress to be eligible to participate in the review. All credits must be completed prior to admission to the major. The 22 credits required are:

PDes 2701: Creative Design Methods
PDes 2702: Concept Sketching
PDes 2703: Concept Visualization and Presentation
PDes 2777: Product Form and Model Making
Des 2101: Design and Visual Presentation
Phys 1101W, Phys 1301W, or Phys 1401V: Physics 1
Math 1271, Math 1371: Calculus 1 or Stat 3011: Statistical Analysis

How do I apply for portfolio review?

Application information will be sent via email to all pre-product design students. You will be given a link to submit your application online. Within a week of submitting the application form, you will be assigned a presentation time for one of the days of the review. This application form is not the same as your portfolio submission. You will submit your portfolio at a later date. As part of this application process, you will also be asked to select one of two tracks for your major (integrated product development or user experience). You can always change your track designation at a later date if you like, but you will need to choose one at this time.

What is the format for the review?

Students will be expected to present their work using 5-7 pages of a PDF file on a screen. Students are also expected to show some physical prototypes (discussed below). To expedite the process and reduce the risk of presentation software errors, the PDF is to be submitted online several days in advance on Friday May 6th at noon. The exact deadlines will be shared with all the applicants. The faculty will load the PDF onto a computer for sharing the presentation in Rapson 31. During the review, students will present their work and can change slides with the provided slide changer. The total number of PDF pages is discussed below and there are specific items the faculty will be expecting to be included. To minimize confusion, the words “slide” and “page” are synonymous as each page of your PDF portfolio is another slide. Students will only have 5 minutes total to introduce themselves and walk through all of their slides. Students should be able to explain their design process and design decisions; however, there is not much time to go into detail for all projects. There will be 5 minutes for questions/discussion. The presentation and discussion may occur at the same time over a total of 10 minutes. It is likely that the reviewers will ask 2-3 questions. Other students are not allowed in the room during your presentation and will wait outside the room until it is their turn to present. The expected attire is smart casual or business casual.

What should I prepare for portfolio review?

In general, you will be presenting some work from your classes as well as the results of a specific design challenge assigned approximately 2 weeks prior to the portfolio submission date. In all cases, you should design your slides and consider layout, legibility, image quality, and your own personal expression. The pages should feel like they are all part of the same portfolio. Your display of work should be unified and demonstrate your understanding of foundational concepts and show your strengths as a designer. Any physical models should be well photographed. You should begin preparing your portfolio prior to the design challenge assignment. The faculty are interested in seeing process and so for each component, you should present your conceptual planning, research, early sketches *etc.* in addition to your final images. All pages must have titles/labels and your full name. You will be presenting the work on a screen in 16:9 aspect ratio. Please use the 16:9 aspect ratio and landscape orientation for all your slides. The first three items below are required to be in the portfolio. Students may also present one or two additional slides of other work. The total number of pages will be 5-7. Each page should clearly display the student's name. Please do not include a cover page.

1) PDES 2703 Concept Visualization and Presentation 1 (1 page)

You should select your best work from PDES 2703 and use this page as an opportunity to showcase your sketching and rendering ability. The faculty will also be looking for evidence of evolution of ideas from early sketches and thumbnails to more final concept drawings. The faculty want to see that you can draw objects in perspective and apply shading to make them look realistic. The faculty want to clearly see your ability to produce hand-sketches on paper as well as renderings.

2) PDES 2777 Product Form and Model Making (1 page)

You should select your best work from PDES 2777 and use this page as an opportunity to showcase your physical prototyping ability. The faculty will be looking for evidence of evolution of ideas from initial sketches as well as your ability to photograph your work. The faculty will also want to see the physical prototypes that you made in this class.

3) Design Challenge (3 pages)

Each year, students going up for review will be given a different design challenge approximately two weeks prior to the review. This challenge will require students to apply their skills toward developing a new product concept (*e.g.* develop a new bicycle accessory, redesign the portable space heater, rethink the experience of making tea). Students will be expected to present market and user research, conceptual sketches, refined sketches, renderings, and a physical model. The faculty will be looking for your ability to apply skills taught in the introductory classes (2701, 2702, 2703, 2777) in a short amount of time. The faculty will also be looking for creativity and an understanding of design process. The first page should be your user and market research. The second page should be entirely hand sketches of a variety of ideas (not digitally drawn). The third page should feature a rendering and image of the physical model of your final idea.

4) Optional Additional Work (2 pages)

These pages can include content from other PDES classes, work from internships, other non-academic design or artwork, or information about yourself and your interest in the program.

How is this evaluated?

Students will be evaluated on the quality of their work in the portfolio (perspective drawing, 2D rendering, physical modeling), their presentation skills (verbal and visual), their design process, and their creativity. GPA in program classes will also factor into the evaluation; however, grades in courses alone do not determine if a student will pass or fail the review. Students will be expected to answer questions and engage in a discussion with the faculty about their work and their interest in the field of product design. The goal is for faculty to determine if the student has a grasp of the fundamental skills and the ability to convey conceptual design ideas.

Who is on the review panel?

The review panel is made up of 5-8 instructors and industry representatives.

When will I find out the results?

Within two weeks of the final session of portfolio review, you will be notified by email of the review decision. There are two possible outcomes: 1. Pass; 2. Fail.

What happens once I have passed portfolio review?

After passing portfolio review you will be considered a Product Design major, and you will be eligible for those classes that require passing portfolio review as a prerequisite. As a Product Design major, you will be expected to participate in the annual winter showcase event.

What happens if I failed portfolio review?

If you fail the review, you are invited to revise work and prepare for the review the following Spring. Portfolio reviews are only in spring semesters. It is possible to fail the initial portfolio review, revise work, and pass the review the second time. Students who do not pass the second review will not be eligible for portfolio review again and will be required to change majors. If you do fail, you should meet with your advisor to determine your next steps or to receive assistance in changing your major.

As portfolio review occurs after registration opens, what should I be registering for?

There will be enough reserved seats in the core Fall PDes classes for all students who get admitted into the program. These classes are PDES 2771 Product Design Studio 1, PDES 2704 Concept Visualization and Presentation 2, and PDES 3704 Computer Aided Design Methods. All students entering the major take these three classes together. You may want to register for placeholder classes in the case that you do not pass portfolio review. It is always helpful to meet with your advisor if you are unsure about registration.

What if I have other questions?

If you have questions related to your eligibility and class registration, please make an appointment to see your advisor. If you have general questions about the review itself, please contact the program director and attend the portfolio review information sessions. The student group PDMN will also be holding sessions for practice and feedback. Look for emails related to that.

What are all the important dates?

Applications Due Online – Thursday, March 24th at 4pm.
Design Challenge Emailed to Applicants – Wednesday April 20
Final Portfolios (PDFs) Due Online – Friday May 6th at noon
Portfolio Review - between 8am and 6pm on Monday May 9 and Tuesday May 10, Rapson 31