FITT

Forum for International
Trade Training

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Portfolio Development Guide
Introduction & Instructions

Introduction

This Portfolio Development Guide has been developed as a tool to assist individuals in their pursuit of the Certified International Trade Professional (CITP) designation through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). A successful Portfolio will provide an individual the opportunity to apply to FITT for equivalent FITTskills credit(s) based on past experience, professional development and/or education. You can apply to receive credit for one or more of the six FITTskills courses.

Portfolio Assessment – Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is a portfolio?**
  A portfolio submitted to FITT is a record of your learning gained from work experience, personal development and/or education as it relates to international trade competencies. The portfolio is developed by you to support your claim of competence and request for credit(s) toward the CITP designation based on your work experience and/or education. Please refer to the Portfolio Checklist for a complete description of the portfolio contents.

- **Who will assess my portfolio?**
  Members of the FITT Certification and Accreditation Committee (CAC) will assess your portfolio. The CAC is made up of five to seven qualified, unbiased international trade practitioners. Assessors evaluate each submission according to the CITP competencies which are mapped to the FITTskills program.

- **What if I am not satisfied with the assessment of my portfolio?**
  If a credit applied for is not granted, the CAC will identify the areas in which you require additional learning or experience. The reason for not granting a credit could also be due to incomplete or insufficient information within the portfolio. You may re-apply for credit at any time (fee applies). The CAC may request additional materials to further help demonstrate your skills and knowledge in relation to the CITP competencies.

- **What are the fees to submit a portfolio?**
  The portfolio submission fee is $275.00 plus HST/GST as applicable. This fee will include the cost of transferring your approved credit(s).

- **How will I find out the results of my portfolio submission?**
  The results of your Portfolio will be communicated to you in writing once your Portfolio has been reviewed. Portfolios are assessed once per month.

- **When can I apply for the CITP designation?**
  To qualify for the CITP designation, you must have a minimum of one year professional international trade experience and hold a FITT Diploma or equivalency thereof. You must agree to the Standards of Ethical Conduct, maintain membership in good standing by paying annual dues, and engage in ongoing professional development.

Before you Begin

Depending on how many credits you are applying for, completing the portfolio can be time consuming. Read this document carefully and use the self-assessment section of the "Competency Self-Assessment and Evidence Grid" to evaluate your knowledge of the CITP competencies. The self-evaluation process will help you assess your strengths and weaknesses and help to determine if you should submit a portfolio.

We encourage you to contact info@fitt.ca if you have any questions before you begin filling out the application form.

Preparing your Submission

FITT has certified international trade professionals since 1993 through the FITTskills program. The FITTskills program satisfies the educational requirements for the CITP designation and is based on the CITP competency profile. The CITP is a professional designation and individuals who hold it demonstrate a mastery of the aforementioned competencies. To prepare for your Portfolio submission you must evaluate yourself against the competencies and demonstrate your mastery of the competencies through building and submitting a portfolio. Your portfolio is a record of your learning gained from work experience, personal development and/or education and will be evaluated by the CAC.

The following steps will help you prepare your submission:

- **Step 1: Competency Self-Assessment**
  Complete the "*Step A: Self-Assessment*" section of the Competency Self-Assessment and Evidence Grid. Rate your knowledge of each competency. Choose "0" if you do not have experience in a particular area and 5 if you are an expert.

  One of the most difficult tasks is deciding what to include in your portfolio. The art of building a portfolio is a learning process in itself and typically includes the following stages:

  - familiarization with the CITP competencies for each FITTskills credit you are seeking (review the "Competency Self-Assessment and Evidence Grid")
  - a self-assessment of your abilities and your knowledge related to the CITP competencies for which you are seeking credit
  - identifying sources of help and guidance
  - identifying appropriate sources of evidence
  - compiling the evidence
  - presenting your Portfolio for assessment

- **Step 2: List Supporting Evidence**
  The evidence you provide must be categorised in five different areas within the Competency Self-Assessment and Evidence Grid under *"Step B: List Supporting Evidence".* The following examples for each category are provided as a guideline only:

    1) Educational → transcripts, certificates, diplomas, course descriptions related to international trade
    2) Projects and Reports → course tests, projects, assignments or strategies
    3) Professional Experience → workplace products or assessments, job descriptions, work history, resume
    4) Letters of Verification
    5) Other

  Define your evidence by indicating which category it belongs to (see examples above). You may refer to your resume, job descriptions, projects/reports you have completed, courses you have taken, description of your experience in the area, and so on. When necessary attach specific evidence as an appendix to your portfolio.

  Complete the evidence grid for those credits you are applying for only. Evidence for each credit must be provided – see section "Evidence for your Portfolio" for detailed information.

- **Step 3: Organizing Your Supporting Documentation**
  Present your supporting documentation in a professional manner. This step is important to ensure that the CAC is able to fairly assess your portfolio. Please follow the guidelines under *Portfolio Checklist* to avoid unnecessary delays in processing your submission. The way in which you organise your supporting documentation is important. The CAC should find everything easy to follow and evidence should be clearly labelled. The CAC should be able to easily understand the relevance of the evidence and it should be directly mapped to the appropriate course competency on the Competency Self-Assessment and Evidence Grid.

  When you have organized all your supporting documentation in one file, please **upload with your application form**. See section below titled ***Portfolio Checklist*** for documentation needed and further instructions.

- **Step 4: Submitting Your Portfolio**
  Review all information entered in the form, upload your supporting documentation, complete the payment section and click "Submit" when ready.

Portfolio Checklist

Documents to upload with your Portfolio

- ❑ Cover Letter: summarize the goal of your submission and your involvement in international trade business activities related to the CITP Competency Profile
- ❑ Resume
- ❑ Detailed and current job description (if applicable)
- ❑ Additional supporting documentation and evidence

Supporting documentation format guidelines

- ❑ Use a minimum of two (2) to a maximum of five (5) pages of evidence per core competency

❑Limit your supporting documentation to sixty (60) pages or less

❑Clearly label each document

❑Include all parts in a single document

Supporting documentation and evidence

❑Is relevant to the CITP competency you are requesting credit(s) for

❑Has met most of the criteria for each credit you are applying

❑Has not breached confidentiality of any sensitive information

❑Follows the guidelines of two (2) to five (5) pages of evidence per core
    competency per credit being requested; grammar consistency

❑Is laid out in a clear and consistent way

❑Is easy for CAC members to understand and follow when assessing your Portfolio

Evidence for your Portfolio

Competence is being able to perform to the professional standard required for the CITP designation. Your evidence must demonstrate that you can apply this knowledge in international trade.

The amount of evidence required will depend on a number of factors. Minimum would be two items of evidence per competency, provided this meets the competency criteria outlined within the evidence grid for each course you are applying for credit. A single item of evidence is unlikely to demonstrate your competence in a particular area. A number of items collected over a period of time may be required.

Is there evidence of knowledge and application?
Knowledge and application are critical to competent performance. You must be able to demonstrate that you have the appropriate supporting knowledge and understanding related to the CITP competencies. The CAC may want to ask you some questions when you submit your Portfolio to verify knowledge and understanding relating to the CITP competencies which you are seeking. FITT will notify you if further information is required.

Authenticity of the evidence in your Portfolio
The CAC must ensure that all of the evidence is your own work. It may be necessary for the CAC to ask questions about the evidence that you have provided or to collect further evidence in order to confirm that the content of your Portfolio is authentic.

Letter of Verification
In some cases a Letter of Verification will help confirm the authenticity of your evidence. There is a Letter of Verification template that you can use which you can find at the end of this document.

Letters of Verification can provide an indirect, authenticated account of your performance in the world of international trade, as it relates to the specific CITP competencies for the course(s) you are seeking credit. They may be collected from colleagues, supervisors, managers, customers or suppliers. Letters of Verification should:

- be specific to the competencies in question
- give a brief description of the circumstances and context of the observation
- give a brief description of the background and qualifications of the individual signing your Letter of Verification (verifier)
- give a brief background of the observed activity

- identify aspects of the competence demonstrated and how this relates to the CITP competency being requested

Letters of Verification may be used in a variety of ways in attesting to your performance. Sometimes they may simply authenticate a piece of work as having been produced by you. In other cases, they may provide an account of your performance and include comment on it in relation to the CITP competencies. It is important that verifiers are familiar with the competencies being assessed, and are able to comment authoritatively on your performance and competence in those areas.

Sufficient Evidence

Sufficient evidence has been achieved if:

- all of the competencies within each of the FITTskills courses that you are applying for credit have been correctly addressed;
- your evidence is authentic;
- your performance is consistent and can be demonstrated over a period of time;
- you can demonstrate that you have the relevant knowledge and understanding and can apply it to international trade; and
- you have included two (2) to five (5) pages of evidence for each competency within the FITTskills course you are requesting a credit for.

Types of Evidence

The best practice in the assessment of prior learning indicates that diverse sources of evidence should be used to support one's claim of competence. Each credit has a list of identified competencies to be met with at least two (2) to five (5) types of evidence (documentation) from any of the categories below to support your request for credit.

Types of Evidence		
Knowledge Evidence	**Performance Evidence**	**Evidence of Prior Learning**
Gathered from any or all of the following sources: - tests, reports, documents - designs - products - projects or assignments - testimonials from employers / teachers	Gathered from any or all of the following sources: - observation in workplace - workplace examples - simulations - skill tests - job description - performance appraisal - testimonials	Gathered from any or all of the following sources: - certificates, diplomas - transcripts - course outlines and descriptions related to international trade - workshop and conference outlines or descriptions

The evidence you provide is categorised in five different areas within the **Competency Self-Assessment and Evidence Grid**, examples for each category are provided as a guideline only:

Educational → transcripts, certificates, course descriptions
Projects and Reports → course tests, projects, assignments or strategies
Professional Experience → workplace products or assessments, job descriptions, work history, resume
Letters of Verification
Other

The Evidence Grid

The evidence grid is a means of outlining your competencies associated with each FITTskills credits you are applying for. More importantly it is a method used to organize and communicate to the CAC

specifically what your evidence is and where it can easily be found within your portfolio. The evidence grid outlines several competencies required for each FITTskills credit. It also reflects the major learning outcomes of the curriculum within the FITTskills program and ultimately the CITP professional competencies.

You should aim to provide at least two different sources of evidence for each competency within a FITTskills credit. This will help the CAC to build a total picture of your skills and abilities.

The following provides an example of how to use the **Competency Self-Assessment and Evidence Grid**:

How to Complete the 'Competency Assessment' Form

Competency	Step A Self Assessment						Step B List Supporting Evidence
	NIL					Expert	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Identifies pricing strategies and methods	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	**Educational:** Successfully completed two week marketing course (e.g. at University of Toronto). See Appendix one for course description
Designs a Marketing Plan	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	**Professional Experience:** Was team leader for Marketing Plan project (e. g. at FITT). See résumé.

Rate Yourself

Refer to Evidence

Portfolio Tips

- ✓ Approach building your portfolio as you would a resume and/or preparing for a comprehensive job application.
- ✓ Look professional and be organized – reviewing your portfolio should be easy for the CAC. A well organized portfolio will demonstrate your competencies most effectively.
- ✓ Be accurate by providing the necessary background information. Give numbers, show results, give facts; not opinions or impressions.
- ✓ Be succinct, yet descriptive. Remember you must demonstrate your mastery of the CITP competencies. Avoid information that does not add to your claim.
- ✓ In general, quality is better than quantity.
- ✓ Show your mastery of the competencies – read the CITP competencies to make sure your evidence demonstrates your mastery of the competencies.
- ✓ Do not duplicate information.
- ✓ Use the Competency Self-Assessment and Evidence Grid as a tool to refer to supporting documentation which applies to more than one credit.
- ✓ We recommend a maximum of five pages of evidence for each core competency.
- ✓ To keep your submission manageable and within the page limitations, you may want to provide a summary list with a brief point form description of work related reports and projects that support your claim instead of including full documents. The CAC will request more detail as necessary.
- ✓ Providing evidence for education or professional development can be more concrete. For example, course descriptions, transcripts and program outlines can be useful as evidence.
- ✓ Providing evidence of professional experience will require additional details to demonstrate your competence such as report summaries, job descriptions, a summary of special projects, letters of reference and performance appraisals.

Optional Letter of Verification – CITP Competencies

Candidate's Name:_____

FITT Member Number:_____

1. **Declaration**: I have read and understood the CITP core competencies and am able to state that the above candidate can meet the following competencies:

   ❑ Feasibility of International Trade
   ❑ International Sales and Marketing
   ❑ International Trade Finance
   ❑ Global Value Chain
   ❑ International Market Entry Strategies
   ❑ Products and Services for a Global Market

2. **Evidence to support the above statement**: I am able to state this because:

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. **Verifier Details**:

Name: _____   Designation: _____

Qualifications: _____   Telephone: _____

Relationship of Verifier to Candidate:
_____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Signature (Verifier): _____   Date: _____

Signature (Candidate): _____   Date: _____

Please Note: A FITT representative may contact you to confirm your testimony.