



Society of  
Graphic Designers  
of Canada

Atlantic Chapter

Société des  
designers graphiques  
du Canada

chaîpître de l'Atlantique

## Portfolio FAQs, Tips and Criteria

To be awarded the status of Professional (MGDC) or Licentiate (LGDC) requires a portfolio review. The awarding of the statuses of Student, Graduate or Associate do not entail portfolio reviews.

Membership Application and Portfolio Submission forms can be downloaded from the Atlantic Chapter section of [gdc.net](http://gdc.net) web site, or by contacting to the GDC Atlantic Membership Chair.

To obtain additional information or to arrange a portfolio review, contact the GDC Atlantic Membership Chair.

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# Portfolio

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How are portfolios reviewed?**

The portfolio review process is a confidential process where only the Membership Chair is aware of the identity of the applicant. Portfolios are reviewed by a Review Committee, appointed by the Membership Chair, consisting of three MGDC members. It is the Membership Chair's responsibility to act as a moderator in the review of the work submitted, while not participating in that review, and to safeguard that applicant's identity so it is not known to the committee. Each member of the Review Committee reviews the portfolio individually, without discussion, and judges the portfolio as a body of work. As each committee is a volunteer, the members comprising the committee change every review session.

### **What kind of work should I submit in my portfolio?**

Any design work, other than student assignments, that demonstrates your ability to couple image and text in a manner that communicates well, is appropriate for the intended audience/purpose, displays aesthetic quality, and is competently executed.

### **How many years of professional work experience do I need to apply for LGDC? For MGDC?**

It is recommended that LGDC applicants acquire a minimum of 1 year of work experience before applying, and that MGDC applicants acquire a minimum of 5 years.

### **I specialize in production, photography or illustration rather than graphic design. Should I apply for LGDC or MGDC status?**

If this is the case consider applying as an Associate member. This membership category is designated for designers, production artists, and any professionals working in a related discipline, and does not require a portfolio submission.

### **How do I upgrade my membership from LGDC to MGDC?**

LGDC members need to submit a new application form and portfolio to become an MGDC member.

### **What if I have been away from the Chapter, can I renew my previous LGDC or MGDC status?**

If your membership renewal lapses beyond 2 years, then you are required to submit a new application form and portfolio.

## Portfolio Submissions Tips

Prepare your portfolio in the same manner as you would for a potential employer — in a clear, concise, and professional visual presentation.

Always include a resume along with your application — list your work experience (past & present), schooling (specific names of certificates or degrees received), and the dates associated with each item.

Fill out the application form completely — print clearly, and be as detailed as possible. The review committee wants to know exactly what your role was in creating the piece. What was the intended message? Who was the intended audience? Were you the designer? Were you the art director? Were you responsible for the production? Did you collaborate with another designer?

Clearly label each submission with the corresponding number to that in your application form (submission 1, 2, 3, etc.).

Avoid submitting work on loose pages — a folder with plastic sleeves is best.

For print design submissions, try to include the final printed product.

For web site design submissions, include the URL if the site is live, as well as printed screen captures (in case of server or technical malfunctions).

For CD ROM submissions, ensure the disk is viewable on PC and Mac platforms.

## Portfolio Submission Criteria

The measure of professional design, for purposes of the acceptance of an Applicant's portfolio as recommendation of professional status in the Atlantic Chapter, is:

- not based on upon "Style", as this is subjective, except insofar as it is considered that the specific style employed is at conflict with what is judged to be good strategy in appealing to the target audience;
- demonstrative of a creative concept of merit, judged likely to appeal to the target audience in a way likely to achieve the client's desired ends;
- demonstrative of an intelligent application of available resources, with due weight given to the cost of work relative to the benefit the client may be expected to receive; in this area particular attention must be given to the premise that a measure of design is that the effective application of limited production resources can be indicative of a high level of design ability;
- demonstrative of a successful application of design to the improvement of the client's interests;
- not containing material of a nature considered to be demeaning to any person or group towards which prejudice is generally not permitted in our culture;
- not containing any plagiarism of the work of others.

In the final analysis, the decision of the Portfolio Review Committee will be made in an objective frame of mind, and they will take every care possible to ensure that they have dealt fairly with the applicant, but also with the high standards to which the Chapter subscribes.

Portfolio pieces are judged on five main areas: strategy, typography, use of imagery, implementation and presentation; and must achieve an average score of 3 out of 5 points in each area. If your portfolio does not receive an average score, you will be contacted by a GDC Membership Chair who will discuss with you how to improve your portfolio. You will be able to re-submit for a future review. The Chair is the only person who will know your identity in this process.