



Queen Margaret University  
EDINBURGH

## Tutor guide to QMU's ePortfolio: an overview of tools

This guide includes:

- An introduction to the ePortfolio
- An overview of the tools available within the QMU ePortfolio system:  
PebblePad

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The QMU ePortfolio system has a number of electronic tools which will provide an individual, private online space for you and your learners to record, store and structure evidence that demonstrates learning achievements and abilities. The software we are using at QMU for our ePortfolio is called PebblePad. This system is available to all learners studying at QMU. If you wish to see learners' work developed in the ePortfolio, you, as the tutor will need to ask learners to share this with you or to publish it to the Gateway (an online assignment dropbox).

This guide provides a brief description of the tools available in QMU's ePortfolio. It is divided into sections to correspond with four of the five main areas in PebblePad:

- create new
- view
- tools
- upload file

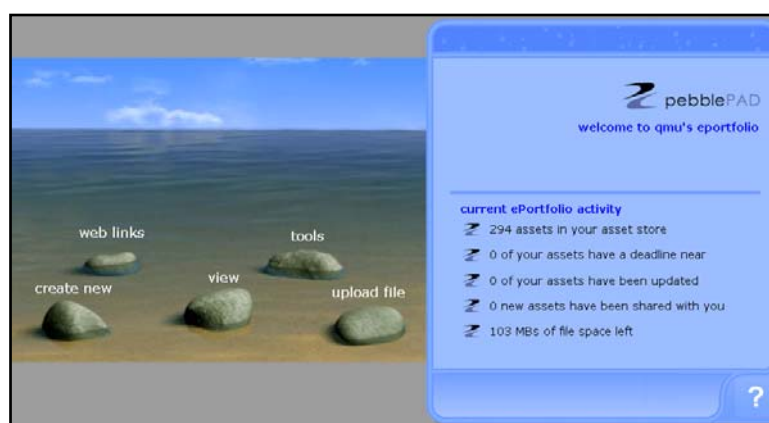


Figure 1: the PebblePad interface

The web links area has pre-selected web links, chosen by the institution, so is not discussed further in this document. If you would like further links to be added into the web links, please contact [eportfolio@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:eportfolio@qmu.ac.uk)  
 Descriptions of the tools are arranged alphabetically within each section below.

| 1. The create new area |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Tools                  | Function  |
| <b>Ability</b>         | The Ability asset enables the learner to record skills, report on things they feel confident about and reflect on how they have achieved these abilities: is there anything they have learnt from acquiring these abilities which could help them in the future to learn other abilities? Recording and reflecting on abilities is important, as it can support and evidence claims that learners make, for example, in assessments and may help with applications for employment or further study as part of a Webfolio. Learners may refer to records of abilities prior to an interview to refresh their memory and provide examples that could be drawn upon in an interview. |
| <b>Achievement</b>     | The Achievement asset allows learners to record anything they have been successful with or are proud of. This   |

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|                     | could be an academic achievement such as passing a module or an examination, or a non-academic achievement, for example, being the captain of the rugby club. Learners should record any achievement which they think may be useful in the future as part of a Webfolio.   |
| <b>Action plan</b>  | Action Plans allow learners to create plans which will help them to achieve a particular outcome or goal. This may be a long or a short-term goal and it may be individual or for a group. Learners may wish to create a plan to help complete a project or develop areas that they would like to improve in.  |
| <b>Activity</b>     | This tool can be used to record development type activities such as workshops, seminars or other attended events. The tool allows learners to record reasons for undertaking an activity, as well as knowledge and skills gained and any impact the activity may have had on learning, development or future actions. There is an area for reflection and the facility to assign a start and finish date for the activity. It is also possible to record time spent on an activity – useful if required as evidence for CPD.           |
| <b>Activity log</b> | Similar in design to a blog, but the main difference is that this displays assets in chronological order – oldest at top. The activity log also records and displays the hours recorded on any asset and provides a cumulative figure.<br><b>Please note:</b> the activity log has to be selected to appear in the create new menu: tools > my settings > preferences. When selected this will also appear in the 'send to' menu to enable assets to be added to the log.  |
| <b>Blog</b>         | Blogs are an online learning journal presented as a single web page. Entries are presented in date order. The blog is entirely private, but could be shared if required. The blog may be used for recording events, reflections or experiences - for example, when students are on placement or developing a piece of research. There is a facility for uploading attachments when making a new post. The learner can post entries directly to a Blog or post existing assets using the "Send to Blog" option on overview or end pads. |
| <b>CV</b>           | The CV building tool provides a facility to create a CV by drawing upon information entered into the About Me section, as well as from other PebblePad assets. Content of a CV is customisable; information about personal details, current studies, education, employment, skills, achievements, personal statement, and references can be included. (Please note: not the most rigorous of tools).   |
| <b>Experience</b>   | The Experiences asset allows learners to record any event or experience which is significant to them. This is usually a record of any experience which may be useful in the future as part of a Webfolio. It is worthwhile encouraging your learners to record experiences even if   |

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|                 | they appear rather mundane, as in the future they may prove to be extremely significant.  |
| <b>Form</b>     | Many different types of paper-based forms can be transferred to the ePortfolio system. Forms can be created with a variety of options including different sized boxes for written answers, multiple-choice entries and multi-column tables. These can be filled in and saved to the learner's PebblePad. If appropriate you may wish to encourage your learners to attach files as they complete a form, to provide a range of evidence. Just like all standard PebblePad assets, once you have completed a form it can be saved, shared and linked within PebblePad. On some occasions, if there are a lot of forms, these can be grouped into a webfolio and then released to learners. |
| <b>Meeting</b>  | The Meeting tool allows learners to record significant meetings they have had with other people. Learners might want to record meetings they have had with mentors, advisors or with colleagues working on projects with them. The Meeting tool provides a very structured area to develop a record of a meeting and asks learners to complete not only the outcomes of the meeting, but also the resources required and to reflect on the meetings. A tutor may ask to see these as evidence of student group meetings.  |
| <b>Profile</b>  | Profiles are self-evaluation questionnaires that allow the learner to audit their current knowledge, skills and abilities. Profiles can be created based on subject knowledge, or skills, or they may be based on professional standards from external organisations. When a learner completes a profile they respond to questions and ability statements with scales ranging from 1-2 through 1-9 and with short text and long-text answers. After having completed a profile, if appropriate, a learner may be able to link evidence to highlight their abilities, or create action plans which help develop new skills.  |
| <b>Thought</b>  | The thought asset can be used to record reflections, ideas or notes. PebblePad provides four options for recording thoughts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>journal</b> is a simple two-stage process for quickly recording basic descriptive details</li> <li>• <b>reflective journal</b> is a four-stage process which provides space for reflection</li> <li>• <b>what?</b> Is a three-stage process which provides a more structured approach to reflection</li> <li>• <b>reflective cycle</b> is a four-stage process which provides greater structure for reflection and forward planning.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Webfolio</b> | A Webfolio is an evidence-based web site about a student's learning. They can contain any number of pages which can be added to, edited or deleted at any time.   |

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|  | <p>Pages may also contain links to web sites and other assets within your ePortfolio.</p> <p>A Webfolio can be used in many different ways in the learning environment, for example, it can be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to move a paper-based portfolio online;</li> <li>• to show evidence of prior learning;</li> <li>• for personal academic tutoring;</li> <li>• to show evidence of a student's work throughout the year.</li> </ul> <p>In some cases a webfolio may be used as a promotional tool for students.</p> |
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| <b>2. The view area</b> |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Tool</b>             | <b>Function</b>   |
| <b>Deadlines</b>        | By selecting this option from the view menu, the learner will see all the assets that have a deadline date approaching. This will help students to prioritise their work.   |
| <b>Gateways</b>         | The Gateway is a type of online submission dropbox where learners can submit work for tutors to view. If appropriate tutors can then grade and return submissions to the learner with feedback. In addition, the Gateway can be used by the tutor to circulate materials to learners.   |
| <b>Search</b>           | You can also search for a particular asset that you have created in the ePortfolio system by clicking on the search option. This will open up a pad that allows you to search for particular details of that asset. You can search for your own asset or a shared asset, by selecting the appropriate choice at the top of the search pad. There are four search criteria: Asset type, Tag, Keyword, and Date Created.                                |
| <b>My assets</b>        | This will show all the items stored in an individual's PebblePad account. The assets are ordered with the most recent assets at the top of the pad. By clicking on one of the heading titles, such as type, title or date, the assets will be reordered by the criteria selected. The assets can be displayed either in ascending or descending order. If there are more than 50 assets stored, click the arrow at the bottom to view each set of 50. |
| <b>Received</b>         | This will list all the assets that have been shared with the learner. Sharing allows the learner to show their assets or collections to selected people. When assets are shared with others they can choose the level of access provided e.g. view or copy.   |

| <b>3. The tools area</b> |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Tool</b>              | <b>Function</b> |
|                          |                 |

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| <b>About me</b>     | The <b>About Me</b> section of PebblePad enables the learner to enter information about their current studies and qualifications, as well as personal details such as contact addresses and phone numbers. Once entered, this information can then be used to create a CV using PebblePad's CV building tool.   |
| <b>Export</b>       | PebblePad supports a number of export options to allow learners to move their ePortfolio assets to other installations of PebblePad, or to other ePortfolio systems using the IMS ePortfolio format. The assets will be exported in a zip archive file. If being moved to another PebblePad system, the zip does not need to be unzipped. If being moved to another ePortfolio system, the learner may be required to 'unzip' the file first.   |
| <b>Form builder</b> | Only tutors can create forms. There are a variety of options, including different sized text fields, multiple-choice entries and multi-column tables. These can be filled in and saved to the tutor's PebblePad before being released to the learners through a Gateway.  |
| <b>Import</b>       | A learner can Import an ePortfolio package or individual assets from another version of PebblePad. They can also import from other systems as long as the assets and portfolios are the same format as PebblePad (IMS ePortfolio format.)   |
| <b>My community</b> | My Community allows the learner to manage people with whom they share assets. People can be added to My Community using <b>Add a Contact</b> . If there are a number of people with whom the learner would like to share assets, they can Create Groups.  |
| <b>My settings</b>  | Preferences within PebblePad enables the learner to select a range of options to customise the way PebblePad looks and works. By using the available options they can change the colour for just about every element in the interface. Your <b>Theme</b> enables customisation of the main screen in PebblePad. Photos can be added, and background colours and custom text chosen to customise PebblePad. The <b>Preferences</b> options allow the learner to configure how PebblePad works for them. This includes whether sound effects play, the notifications PebblePad sends out, what options are set for the quick share group, as well as adjusting size of screen and font. This is particularly important for visually impaired students who will need to customise the interface. |
| <b>My tags</b>      | Tags are designed to group assets together to enable quick location of items, which can then be added to a Webfolio. New tags can be added via the end pad as assets are created or edited.   |
| <b>Profile</b>      | Profiles are self-evaluation questionnaires that allow the learners to audit their current knowledge, skills and abilities. A tutor can develop a profile builder for their   |

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| <b>builder</b> | students to check if they have met the necessary level of skills, competencies, or knowledge for a particular module or programme. It should not be used as a module evaluation form |
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| <b>4. Upload files area</b> |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Tools</b>                | <b>Function</b>  |
| <b>Gallery</b>              | The quickest way to create a collection of images, called an <b>image gallery</b> within PebblePad, is by using the gallery upload option. First create a zip file containing only the appropriate files and then upload this single zip file to PebblePad. When the upload is complete PebblePad will extract the files from the zipped archive and save them as individual files into the learner's asset store. |
| <b>Multiple files</b>       | The quickest way to get a large number of files into PebblePad is by using the <b>multiple files</b> option. First create a Zip file containing the files that need to be uploaded and then upload this single Zip file to PebblePad. When the upload is complete PebblePad will extract the files from the zipped archive and save them as individual files in the learner's asset store.                         |
| <b>Single file</b>          | Upload <b>single file</b> allows individual files to be directly uploaded into the ePortfolio. These may be files that support the abilities, experiences, or achievements that have been recorded.  |
| <b>Website</b>              | To upload a Web site to PebblePad, first create a Zip file containing all the files that make up the web site. Upload this Zip file to PebblePad. When this is complete PebblePad will treat the zipped archive as a single file. However, if this is linked to in a Webfolio or viewed, the whole site will be displayed as a stand-alone site.   |