UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Scoil na hAiltireachta agus an Dearaidh Táirgí
School of Architecture and Product Design

Applicant Portfolio Guidelines

LM076 Bachelor of Science in Product Design and Technology

LM099 Bachelor of Architecture

Table of Contents

Who needs to submit a portfolio? 2
What you must include in your Portfolio 2
General Portfolio Requirements 2
Applicant Portfolio Assessment Criteria 3
What we would like to see in your Written Statement 4
What we would like to see in your examples of work 4
CAO Application and Portfolio Submission Deadlines 5
Submission Instructions 6
Frequently Asked Questions 7
Contact Us 10

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Scoil na hAiltireachta agus an Dearaidh Táirgí
School of Architecture and Product Design

Who needs to submit a portfolio?

For entry in **Academic Years 2027/2028**, all applicants to the LM076 Product Design and Technology and LM099 Architecture courses must submit a portfolio as part of the application process. **If you are applying to both courses, you must submit a separate portfolio for each course.** Use your best judgement to tailor the portfolio to each course.

All submitted portfolios will be assessed and applicants may be awarded up to **200 additional points** on top of their CAO points. For example, if you receive 350 points in your Leaving Cert and 150 for your portfolio, your total CAO points amount to 500.

What you must include in your Portfolio

Examples of your work	Please include ANY work in ANY medium completed for ANY purpose that you think shows your design ability. All work must be original. Collaborations must be clearly labelled, specifying your contributions.
Statement of Interest	In your own words, explain why you want to study architecture or product design. Reflect on how the portfolio supports this ambition: 2–3 paragraphs (max. 500 words). Include the statement in your portfolio, ideally as the first page.

General Portfolio Requirements

Format	A PDF of 12–15 pages, with clear images and readable text. The Statement of Interest will not count towards the overall page count.
File size	Preferably below 20 MB. This is a recommendation rather than a strict limit.
Authorship	You must confirm that the submitted portfolio is your own, original work. The UL portfolio submission portal will prompt you with a tick box.

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Scoil na hAiltireachta agus an Dearaidh Táirgí
School of Architecture and Product Design

Applicant Portfolio Assessment Criteria

Your portfolio will be assessed against five criteria which you can see below. The examples explain how you might show them.

Assessment Criteria	What we are looking for	How you might show it
Imagination and Creativity	Creative and innovative thinking; the ability to conceptualise original and unconventional ideas, forms and structures.	Through the development of design concepts, product designs, models, or exploratory work in ANY medium. Aim to include your developmental work as this will help illustrate your creative thinking.
Visual skills	An ability to communicate visually; to bring ideas, scenarios, spatial understanding and perspective, or complex information to life through various techniques and media.	Include hand-drawn sketches, observational drawings, technical drawings, pencil and ink drawings, watercolour, gouache and oil paintings, prints, photographs, collages, composition studies, digital work, etc.
Making Skills	An ability to transform ideas into physical models and prototypes through making and crafting.	Include photographs of anything made by hand: models, sculptures, prototypes, furniture, pottery, clothing, repairs and fixes, etc.
Range and Variety	Curiosity and a desire to explore, experiment, learn and innovate within a variety of design-related fields.	Work across a wide range of approaches and methods. Aim to show work from beyond taught Art and DCG class projects.
Critical Reflection	An ability to evaluate problems and design challenges from multiple perspectives, to assess impact and to make well-reasoned judgments.	In your personal statement as well as in the careful curation and layout of your portfolio, add brief captions that explain each example. Show what worked and what didn't, what you changed and what you learned along the way.

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Scoil na hAiltireachta agus an Dearaidh Táirgí
School of Architecture and Product Design

What we would like to see in your written statement

Write a Statement of Interest of up to 500 words explaining why you want to study your chosen course. You could describe what interests you about the course, a project or experience that influenced you, and what you would like to explore further. Use your own words and be specific.

If you are applying to both Product Design and Technology as well as Architecture, you must complete a separate application for each course. Each application must include its own Statement of Interest, tailored to that course, with a maximum of 500 words per statement.

What we would like to see in your examples of work

Your portfolio should demonstrate creativity as well as visual and making skills. It should reflect your potential for success in the chosen course of study. It is a key component of your application, offering an opportunity to express your unique perspective and enthusiasm for design. The range and variety of work should go beyond your Art, DCG or Engineering school projects.

Where possible, show how your ideas developed from your first thoughts to your final piece. This may include research, brainstorming, rough work, early sketches or models, and different versions. Highlight projects that integrate design with technology, engineering, art, or any other relevant field. Show what worked and what didn't, what you changed and what you learned along the way. Use short notes to help us follow the story of your work and understand your decisions.

Present your work clearly

Curate your portfolio carefully. Select your strongest and most relevant work. Chose examples that best represents your skills and interests, and group related pieces so we can follow each project from its first idea to the final result. Use high-resolution photographs or scans and readable text, with short captions to explain your ideas and to reflect on your decisions. Include rough work and experiments to show how your thinking developed.

Write useful captions

Add captions to explain the key ideas of your work: What was I trying to do? What materials or methods did I use? Reflect on your work process: What did I change, and why? What did I learn? **You do not need to answer every question for every piece.**

If you want to use videos

If you want to show a video, upload it to a video-sharing platform and include a link in your PDF, ideally beside a still image from the video. Check the link to ensure it is working and that the assessors will be able to open it!

Product Design Mini-Project (for Product Design applicants ONLY)

If you do not have a portfolio, you may submit the mini-project instead. If you have a portfolio but feel it needs more work, you can include the mini-project to strengthen your submission.
Download the PDT mini-project brief

We look forward to reviewing your work!

CAO Application and Portfolio Submission Deadlines

Check both the CAO application and the portfolio submission deadlines for your application period. Ensure your submission meets the stated deadline. You must submit your portfolio within the corresponding submission window.

Application period	CAO deadline	Portfolio submission portal opens	Portfolio submission portal closes
Standard application	01 February 2027	11 March 2027	01 April 2027
Late application	01 May 2027	10 May 2027	24 May 2027
Change of mind	01 July 2027	05 July 2027	15 July 2027

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Scoil na hAiltireachta agus an Dearaidh Táirgí
School of Architecture and Product Design

Submission Instructions

Step 1 – Apply for your course through CAO

Add LM076 Product Design and Technology, LM099 Architecture, or both to your CAO application by the relevant CAO deadline. Your CAO application and your portfolio submission are separate steps. Completing one does not complete the other.

Step 2 – Use the UL portfolio submission portal

UL will provide the submission portal details after your CAO application (see dates below). Follow the instructions for your application period. **If both courses are on your CAO application, you will have to submit two separate portfolios.**

Step 3 – Confirm your authorship

When uploading your portfolio on the UL portal, you will be prompted to tick a box confirming that you are the author of the portfolio you are about to submit. You will not be allowed to continue with your submission without confirming your authorship.

"*I confirm that my portfolio submission is entirely my own original work. I understand that any form of plagiarism, misrepresentation, or breach of academic integrity is contrary to University of Limerick regulations. I acknowledge that, should any such issue be identified, my submission may be deemed null and void. I also confirm that, where AI tools have been used in any capacity, their use has been clearly and transparently acknowledged*."

Step 4 – Submit within the correct window

Submit your portfolio during the window that applies to your application. You cannot choose a later window simply to gain more time or improve a portfolio already submitted for the same course.

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Scoil na hAiltireachta agus an Dearaidh Táirgí
School of Architecture and Product Design

Frequently Asked Questions

Where do I submit my portfolio?

Once you have applied through the CAO, you will receive a link to the portfolio submission portal from UL's Academic Registry Office. Please refer to the **"Application and Portfolio Deadlines"** section of this document for the relevant dates.

How do portfolio points affect my CAO application?

Up to 200 portfolio points are added to your Leaving Certificate points and offers are made based on the combined total. For example: **If you earn 450 Leaving Cert points and 90 portfolio points, your combined score will be 540 points**.

Is there a minimum score required to pass the portfolio assessment?

Yes. A portfolio scoring 80 points or higher (equivalent to 40% or more) is considered successful. Applicants with a successful portfolio will have those points added to their Leaving Certficate points.

What were the previous CAO points for these programmes?

For entry in AY 2026/2027, LM076 Product Design and Technology 451 CAO points and for LM099 Architecture 625 CAO points. However, since the portfolio now contributes up to 200 additional points, these points may vary.

Can I improve my portfolio and submit it again?

No. You cannot resubmit a portfolio for a course you have already applied for in an earlier CAO application period.

Example 1: You have applied for Architecture in the Standard application round

If you applied to Architecture in the Standard CAO round, you cannot submit a revised portfolio to Architecture during the Late Application or Change of Mind periods. Your original Architecture assessment remains in place.

Example 2: You would like to also apply for Product Design during later CAO rounds

If you originally applied to Architecture only, you may submit a revised portfolio for Product Design when adding Product Design during an eligible later application period. Product Design must be a course you have not previously applied for.

The revised portfolio will be assessed in full for Product Design. The new score applies only to Product Design and will not replace your original Architecture score. Remember to update your Statement of Interest for the newly added course.

Example 3: You would like to apply for both courses in the Standard application round

If you included both Architecture and Product Design in your standard application, you cannot resubmit your portfolio to either course during a later application period.

Which application window applies to me?

Standard application	Use the portfolio window for courses included in your standard CAO application.
Late application	Use the window applicable to an eligible late application. This is not an extension for standard applicants.
Change of mind	A portfolio may be submitted for a course newly added at this stage. It is not a chance to resubmit for a course you applied for earlier.

Will I be told my portfolio score?

Yes. Applicants will receive an email with their portfolio score. However, we cannot offer feedback on individual submissions or review portfolios in advance of submission. Results are issued in time for the CAO Change of Mind period, allowing applicants to improve and resubmit their portfolio for another course if they wish.

Why has the portfolio been reintroduced?

After being suspended during the Covid period, the portfolio has been reintroduced for entry into the architecture course in AY 2026/2027. It is designed as an opportunity for applicants to **demonstrate their creativity, curiosity, and design thinking**, qualities that are not always reflected in CAO points.

Do I need to include work from certain school subjects?

No. There are **no required subjects**. While Art, DCG, or Construction Studies can be helpful, students who have not taken these subjects are still fully eligible to apply. What matters most is creativity, motivation and the ability to apply design thinking. For any general or course specific subject requirements, please refer to LM076 Product Design and Technology and LM099 Architecture on the UL website.

Can I include projects I made as part of my courses in School?

A balanced portfolio is recommended, ideally containing both:

- **Taught work** such as Art, DCG, or Construction Studies projects.
- **Independent work**, such as creative projects, observational sketches, or design explorations developed outside of formal schoolwork.

As a general guideline, half of the portfolio might come from taught work and the other half from personal or independent projects.

Applicants should **expand upon or re-interpret school projects**, explaining further which particular aspects of the work they found most interesting or relevant to demonstrate their motivation for including the piece rather than submitting them unchanged as direct copies.

What kind of work should I include in my portfolio?

Include work that is the strongest depiction of what represents and motivates you.
Careful curation of your portfolio is as important for your submission as the work itself as it shows your critical eye and judgement.

Think of the portfolio as an opportunity to showcase all the things you are interested in and into which you have invested time and effort. Try as many different things as possible:

- Different media and techniques (drawing, painting, water colour, photography, collage, crochet, pottery, etc.).
- Different genres (portraits, landscapes, abstract compositions, op art, graphic design).
- Different speeds (from quick sketches to painstakingly careful renderings).
- Different sizes (something tiny, something large, something long, etc.). Try different combinations.
- Explore the same subject in multiple ways. For example, a (self) portrait as a photograph, a drawing, a collage, in black and white, in a combination of two or three colours, as a print, in multiples (like Andy Warhol).

Is it better to include more artistic or technical work?

Both are valuable. DCG and other technical projects are useful as they demonstrate analytical and problem-solving abilities. Art-based work often shows greater individuality and expression, which is highly appreciated.
The key is quality and originality, not quantity.
For Product Design Only: Applicants can complete the PDT mini project to help bolster their portfolios.

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Scoil na hAiltireachta agus an Dearaidh Táirgí
School of Architecture and Product Design

What is the Mini Project? (For Product Design applicants only)

Applicants for Product Design and Technology can complete the Mini project outlined on website for LM076. It is an alternative for applicants who don't have enough material to create a portfolio. The mini-project can be submitted either as your entire portfolio or as a supplement to other work the applicant has produced. The Mini-Project brief can be found here.

How should I prepare for the portfolio submission?

Applicants are encouraged to start gathering and curating their work early. Most current leaving cert students are already well-positioned to assemble a strong portfolio using existing school projects and personal creative work.

We are currently not in a position to offer any portfolio preparation workshops. However, you can view a sample portfolio here which may provide you with some ideas and inspiration.

Can I visit the school for an in person conversation or to view the studios ?

Yes. The school of Architecture and Product Design welcomes visitors. To arrange a studio tour or meeting, please contact the respective Course Director by email in advance.

Contact us

General Application and CAO Queries:

Visit the UL Admissions Website

Bachelor of Science in Product Design and Technology:

Assoc. Prof. Niall Deloughry - Send Email

Bachelor of Architecture:

Assoc. Prof. Jan Frohburg - Send Email

Other Queries:

school.design@ul.ie