



UX Portfolio Scoring Rubric

What hiring panels score (and why your portfolio gets skipped)

Best for: UX learners building a first serious portfolio, career switchers trying to break into UX, experienced UX designers stuck in "experienced ux no job offer" mode

Big truth: Your case studies usually don't fail because the UI is ugly. They fail because the proof is weak.

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How hiring panels actually review portfolios



Let me be very honest. Hiring managers don't "read" portfolios. They scan them like busy people managing risk. Recruiters are known to skim fast. Eye-tracking research often cited from Ladders found an average initial resume scan of 7.4 seconds. Your portfolio gets the same behavior.

So panels are usually doing this:

- Quick scan of homepage
- Click 1–2 case studies
- Skim top sections
- Decide: "interview" or "pass"

If your first screen doesn't answer:

**What did you solve + what changed
+ what did you own?** ...you lose attention. This rubric is built to fix that.

The scoring mindset (what "good" looks like)

Hiring managers repeatedly say they want:

Full story

Not just final mockups

Thought process

How you approached the project

Real constraints

Not bubble projects

Clear outcomes

Not vague "improved UX"

Also: simple, usable portfolio structure beats fancy effects. Hiring managers want to scan quickly. So the rubric rewards: **outcomes, ownership, decisions, evidence, clarity**. Not buzzwords. Not long process essays.

How to use this rubric (2 ways)

1

Self-score before applying

- Score each case study using the rubric
- Fix the lowest 2 sections first
- Repeat

2







Ask a friend to score you (best)

Give them this rubric and say: "Score this like you're hiring. Don't be nice."

Rule: Don't argue. Just fix what they couldn't understand fast.

Scoring scale (use this everywhere)

Score each criterion from 0 to 5

-  — 0 = Missing
-  — 1 = Weak / unclear / generic
-  — 2 = Present but not convincing
-  — 3 = Solid / believable
-  — 4 = Strong / specific / clearly owned
-  — 5 = Exceptional / senior-level / proves impact

Then use the weights on the next page.

The rubric (100-point system)

Total Score = 100

1

1. Outcomes & Business Impact — 25 points

What changed because of your work?

2

2. Problem Framing & Clarity — 10 points

Is the problem specific and real?

3

3. Ownership & Role Clarity — 10 points

What did YOU own, exactly?

4

4. Decision Making & Tradeoffs — 15 points

Do you show judgment, not just activities?

5

5. Evidence Quality (Research + Data) — 10 points

Do insights have proof?

6

6. Solution Quality (UX thinking, not just UI) — 10 points

Does the solution match the problem?

7

7. Validation & Measurement Plan — 10 points

How do you know it worked (or would work)?

8

8. Storytelling & Communication — 5 points

Is it skimmable and human?

9

9. Craft, Accessibility, and Portfolio UX — 5 points

Is the portfolio itself usable, clean, and professional?

How to calculate your score (simple math)

For each criterion:

- Give a 0–5 rating
- Convert it into the weighted score

Quick conversion method

Weighted points = (Your score ÷ 5) × Weight

Example:

Outcomes & Impact score = 4/5

Weight = 25

Points = $(4 \div 5) \times 25 = 20$

Criterion 1: Outcomes & Business Impact (25 points)

This is the #1 reason experienced designers don't get offers. Panels want proof that you improved something meaningful.

What a 5/5 looks like

- Clear baseline → clear outcome
- Metrics or strong evidence (not vibes)
- Impact connected to user + business
- You explain causality: "We changed X, so Y improved."

Hiring managers literally say the portfolio should show the story and the impact you've had.

What a 2/5 looks like

- "Improved onboarding"
- "Enhanced usability"
- "Users loved it"

No baseline. No proof. No accountability.

Easy upgrade checklist

Add Impact box near the top:

- Baseline
- Change
- Evidence source
- Timeframe

If you lack analytics, use:

- task success rate (testing)
- error reduction
- support ticket themes
- before/after findings

Criterion 2: Problem Framing & Clarity (10 points)

The problem statement must be specific enough to measure.

5/5 problem statement example

"Mobile users dropped off at the address step because autofill failed and error messages were unclear."

2/5 problem statement example

"Users were confused."

What to include (fast)

- Who the user is
- The task
- The failure point
- The cost (user pain + business cost)

Criterion 3: Ownership & Role Clarity (10 points)

Hiring managers hate unclear ownership. They want to know: what you did, what you decided, what you influenced, what you shipped.

Indeed hiring managers mention it's a red flag when they only see final mockups without understanding how the candidate arrived there, and they want overviews including the candidate's role.

📄 5/5 role clarity format (copy this)

I owned: [feature/flow/experiment]

I did: [3–6 bullets]

I partnered with: [PM/dev/data/etc.]

Constraints: [time, tech, compliance]

Red flags (auto score drops)

- "We did..." everywhere but no "I owned..."
- claiming leadership without showing decisions

Criterion 4: Decision Making & Tradeoffs (15 points)

Senior UX is decision quality under constraints. NN/g recommends including candidate solutions and explaining thought process, showing you can navigate constraints and reality.

5/5 includes a decision log

For 3–6 key moments:

- Decision
- Options considered
- Evidence used
- Tradeoff accepted
- Risk + mitigation

2/5 looks like

- Long process list
- No clear reasoning
- No tradeoffs
- No "why"

Criterion 5: Evidence Quality (10 points)

Panels don't need perfect research. They need believable evidence.

5/5 evidence

- Clear method + sample + what you learned
- Findings tied to actual design decisions
- Not just "we did research"

2/5 evidence

- Tool list without insights
- Personas with no source
- Research that doesn't change anything

If you're a researcher-heavy profile, NN/g recommends showing impact and robust methodology, plus recency.

Criterion 6: Solution Quality (10 points)

This is not "is the UI pretty?" This is: **"does the solution actually solve the problem?"**

5/5 solution

- Direct link between insight → change
- Shows before/after logic
- Includes edge cases and error states
- Mentions accessibility considerations when relevant

2/5 solution

- Looks modern but doesn't address root cause
- No explanation of UX reasoning
- Only final screens with no captions

Criterion 7: Validation & Measurement Plan (10 points)

Even if the project didn't ship, you can still score high here.

5/5 validation

- baseline defined
- success metrics defined
- method described (A/B test, usability benchmark, funnel check)
- what you'd track after launch

3/5 validation

- some testing done
- limited measurement clarity

1–2/5 validation

- "We tested and it was good"
- no metrics, no plan

Criterion 8: Storytelling & Communication (5 points)

Hiring managers want a full story and clear process, told concisely.

5/5 storytelling

- skimmable sections
- short paragraphs
- clear headings
- strong "Snapshot" at the top
- captions under visuals
- human tone (not textbook)

2/5 storytelling

- wall of text
- generic design-thinking essay
- buried outcomes at the end

Criterion 9: Craft, Accessibility, and Portfolio UX (5 points)

Your portfolio is a UX product. Treat it like one. UX Design Institute advises keeping the portfolio simple and easy to navigate, and warns that fancy effects can disrupt usability for hiring managers.

5/5 portfolio UX






- fast to load
- clear navigation
- readable typography
- mobile-friendly
- PDF backup available
- no confusing animations

Easy checks

- Is the first screen understandable in 10 seconds?
- Can someone find your case studies in 1 click?
- Do images load reliably?

"Instant rejection" red flags

If any of these happen, you lose offers even with experience:

-  **No outcomes, no evidence, no accountability**
-  **The role is unclear or inflated**
-  **Case studies read like generic templates**
-  **Too many projects, too shallow (quantity over quality)**
-  **Only concept work, no real constraints (or you hide the constraints)**

NN/g explicitly notes that portfolios should show constraints and real-world design, not idealized scenarios.

Minimum passing score (what I'd call "interview-ready")

Use this as a benchmark

80–100: Strong

Interview magnet.

65–79: Decent, but risky

Needs sharper outcomes + decisions.

50–64: Looks like effort, not impact

You'll get ignored often.

Below 50: Rebuild

Rebuild your case studies using the Outcome-First template.

What matters most

If your Outcomes + Decision Making are weak, nothing else saves you.

One-page scoring sheet (copy/paste for each case study)

Case Study Name: _____

Criterion	Weight	Score (0–5)	Points
Outcomes & Business Impact	25		
Problem Framing & Clarity	10		
Ownership & Role Clarity	10		
Decision Making & Tradeoffs	15		
Evidence Quality	10		
Solution Quality	10		
Validation & Measurement	10		
Storytelling & Communication	5		
Craft & Portfolio UX	5		
Total	100		

Top 2 fixes I will do next:



We are UXGen Academy (Premium, Practical, Job-Oriented)

At UXGen Academy, we don't build portfolios like showreels. We build hiring proof:

outcome-first
case studies

decision logs
that sound
senior

measurement
thinking (even
without perfect
data access)

interview
storytelling that
connects UX to
business value

If you're stuck in "experienced ux no job offer," you don't need more tools. **You need stronger proof.**

Next step: Score your portfolio today



Pick your best 2 case studies



Score them using this rubric



If your Outcomes & Impact score is below 3/5, don't apply yet. Fix that first.

Recommended companion download: [Outcome-First UX Case Study Template](#)

Small reference

- [Indeed Design](#): UX Design Portfolio Advice from Hiring Managers (impact + storytelling + showing how you arrived at solutions).
- [Nielsen Norman Group](#): 5 Steps to Creating a UX-Design Portfolio (constraints, candidate solutions, real-world work).
- [UX Design Institute](#): What hiring managers look for in a UX portfolio (simplicity + scan-ability + 2–3 case studies).
- [Ladders eye-tracking study coverage](#): recruiters skim quickly (~7.4 seconds).

Need Help With Your UX Journey?

We're Here to Support You

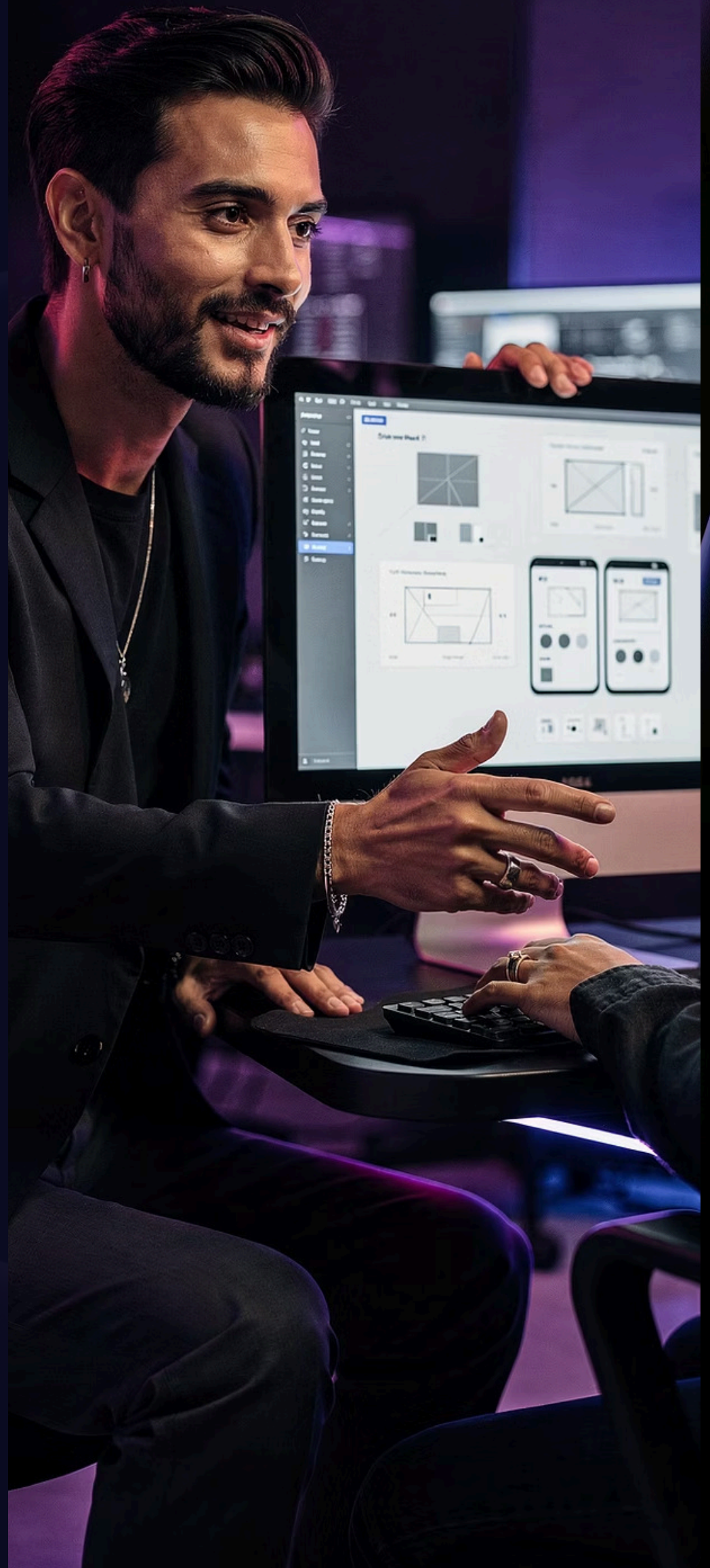
Learning UX research is a powerful first step. But real confidence and career progress often come from guided practice, real feedback, and expert mentorship. At UXGen Academy, we help learners like you transform theory into real skills — whether you're a beginner, switching careers, or upskilling for growth.

What We Offer

Our programs are designed to be practical, hands-on, and career-oriented, led by experienced UX professionals who've worked with global brands:

- **Industry-Focused UX & UI Courses** — Learn research, design, prototyping, usability testing, and more with real projects.
- **Live Mentor Support & Portfolio Guidance** — Improve your work with direct feedback from experienced UX practitioners.
- **Weekend & Flexible Learning Options** — Study without quitting your job or disrupting your routine.
- **Career & Career-Switch Support** — Build a portfolio, prepare for interviews, and gain the confidence to succeed.

Whether you're just starting out or preparing to level up your UX career, we're here to make that transition smoother and more effective.





About UXGen Academy

At UXGen Academy, we don't teach UX like a checklist of tools. We teach UX like a business skill.

Our curriculum is built around:

- job-ready outputs
- outcome-first case studies
- real-world constraints and stakeholder thinking
- measurement mindset (even when data access is limited)
- interview communication that sounds senior, not rehearsed

If you're tired of feeling stuck in the ux job market, start by fixing the only thing hiring teams trust: proof.

How UXGen Partners With You.

Academy + Studio Experience

At UXGen, learning isn't just theoretical — it's practical, connected to real industry practice. Here's how we support **your growth as a UX learner and practitioner** at every stage:

Strategic UX Learning & Skill Building (Foundation + Real Practice)

- Structured UX research training
- Hands-on usability testing & interview practice
- Understanding Churn and retention from a UX lens

UX Audit to Action

- Prioritised UX actions
- Roadmaps aligned to product goals
- Design system & UI improvements

Implementation Support. From Classroom to Real Projects

- Guided UX design and prototyping
- Collaborate like a pro with product & engineering teams
- Ongoing measurement & optimisation mindset

Why UXGen Academy?

At UXGen Academy, we don't just teach UX theory — we prepare you to think and act like a real UX professional. You'll learn how to solve product problems with **clarity, data, and human insight** so you transition from student → confident practitioner.

Here's what you gain from learning with us:



Business-aligned UX Thinking



Actionable priorities that move KPIs



Faster impact with structured UX frameworks



Hands-on collaboration with product teams

Quality & Job Oriented UX Mentorship & Portfolio Review Session

As a part of your learning journey with **UXGen Academy**, we're offering a **complimentary 30-minute 1-to-1 UX guidance session** - designed to help you move from *confusion to clarity* in your UX path.

This is not a sales call. This is a **mentor-led support session**

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Where learners become confident UX professionals.



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