E-Portfolio Technical Evaluation Questions
Virginia Tech

General Implementation Questions
What language is the application implemented in?

Is the source code available?

What license is the source code released under? Is it open source?

What environment was it written for/developed in (e.g. Tomcat, Jboss)?

What platform was it originally developed on (e.g. Linux, Windows, Sun)?

If the product is available as an open source project, how is the project managed?

Database Questions
Does it use a relational database? An XML database?

How does it communicate with the database?

Does it require any particular database server type (e.g. Oracle, MySQL)?

Are there any problems with placing the eportfolio database on a separate server?

High Availability Questions
Is the application designed to be run across multiple servers?

If so, how does the application manage sessions?

Storage Questions

Can you use a Network Attached Storage device with the system?

How do user quotas work within the system?

Standards Compliance Questions
Is there a standard API that tools can use to publish content to the system?

Is there a way to export an e-portfolio?

User Interface Questions
How do users publish content to the server?

How do users manage access to their portfolio?

Can external content be incorporated into an e-portfolio?

Integration Questions
Can the application communicate securely with an external LDAP server for authentication and authorization?

Are there APIs or some more specific mechanism for integrating the application with a portal framework such as uPortal?

Does it support a way to pull data from an ERP like SCT Banner (e.g. certifications, degree information, courses taken – things that wouldn't be in a directory)?

Can it interact with Web Services?

Does it provide any Web Services that could be used to publish data into the system or extract a user's e-portfolio?

Does it support any Instructional Management Systems (IMS) specifications?

Does it support any Open Knowledge Initiative (OKI) specifications?

Does it support Liberty Alliance/Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML)?

Does it provide hooks for single sign-on integration?

Administration Questions
How is the application administered?

Can administration be delegated (e.g. could a departmental representative manage e-portfolio capabilities for his or her department)?

Search Questions
Can users search their collection of content? If so, what content types are indexed?

Do they search content or metadata about content, or both?

Is there a public search interface?

Content Management Questions
How is content stored in the system?

Does it support rights management standards (e.g. XrML, XACML?)

What metadata types are supported (e.g. Dublin Core, others)? Does it support shared taxonomies/ontologies (e.g. XFML, DAML/OIL)

Does it provide publishing templates for various standard types of documents (e.g. resumes, curriculum vitae)

What kind of content is supported? How is it stored (filesystem or database)?

Does it support workflow? Digital signatures?

Publishing Questions
What web server(s) is the system compatible with?

What desktop publishing tools does the system support? Can you publish to it from say Dreamweaver, Frontpage?

Collaboration Questions
Is there a discussion forum mechanism?

Are there other synchronous or asynchronous communication tools supported or built in? (e.g. chat, whiteboards, annotation/comments)

Can users create groups or use group information from a directory?