

The Top 20 Questions to Ask When Considering Eportfolio/Assessment Products

1. What is the financial stability/viability of the vendor?
2. What is the likelihood that the vendor will be sold or go out of business? What will happen if this happens after you've already started using the product?
3. How long has the vendor been in business? How long has the product been available?
4. Is it possible to speak with individuals at other institutions that are using the product? Does the vendor have references?
5. How many other institutions are using your product? Are those institutions similar to ours? Are they using them in ways we plan on using to use the product?
6. How many other institutions are using any innovative features? For how long?
7. How extensively have the innovative features been tested?
8. How flexible is the product to accommodate various assessment formats (e.g., rubrics, checklists, surveys, rating scales, etc.)?
9. What is the value of the product to the different users?
10. What challenges might different users of the product present/encounter?
11. What is the learning curve for the different groups to learn the product?
12. Is there sufficient training and materials provided by the vendor to learn the product and system?
13. Are these products readily available to all users?
14. What is the level of knowledge/experience assumed of users of product materials and manuals?
15. Are these materials sufficient for training a true novice to use the product—or do they assume an existing level of competence with the product?
16. Do you have the time/resources to work with a vendor to clarify and improve a complex/sophisticated product, or do you need a simpler product that works quickly (yet lacks some desirable features)?
17. Is the vendor trying to tell you how to do assessment, or is the vendor trying to help you with the technology?
18. Is leadership at my institution supportive of our efforts in Eportfolio/ Electronic Assessment?
19. What is the purpose behind the purchase of the product? Certain products are better than others in terms of eportfolio design and reporting.
20. Will the product need to interface with other technologies already used by the institution? Blackboard, Peoplesoft, etc.? What is the cost to purchase, implement, and sustain the Eportfolio/ Assessment Product? Who will assume these costs? Students? Only the departments that are using the product? Will the cost be included in the institution's fiscal budget?