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DETAILED CAREER HANDBOOK · 2026 EDITION

GitHub Security Portfolio Project Showcase Guide

Repository architecture, READMEs, sanitized lab evidence, secure code, tests, licenses, automation, and recruiter-friendly presentation.

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Detailed pages	Project patterns	Portfolio system

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How to use this guide

A strong security portfolio demonstrates judgment and communication, not just tool output. Never publish secrets, live targets, customer data, or instructions that create unnecessary harm.

> **Professional-use notice:** Security testing must stay within systems you own or have explicit written authorization to assess. Standards summaries are educational aids, not certification, legal, or audit advice.

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Portfolio Strategy

Choose a small set of role-relevant projects with visible depth.

Purpose: Choose a small set of role-relevant projects with visible depth.

Working checklist

01 · Audience
Define target roles and the questions hiring teams need answered.

02 · Selection
Prefer completed, documented, tested projects over many forks.

Practical workflow

Stage	Action	Evidence / output
Prepare	Confirm scope, prerequisites, versions, access, and a rollback path.	Written scope and baseline
Execute	Apply the smallest safe change or test, one variable at a time.	Commands, screenshots, or notes
Validate	Compare expected and observed outcomes; investigate uncertainty.	Result with timestamps
Improve	Document lessons, ownership, maintenance, and the next measurable action.	Reusable playbook or portfolio artifact

Profile README Architecture

Create a concise landing page with role direction, proof, and navigation.

Purpose: Create a concise landing page with role direction, proof, and navigation.

Working checklist

01 · Sections
Intro, focus areas, featured projects, skills evidence, learning, contact.

02 · Tone
Specific, current, truthful, and easy to scan.

Practical workflow

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Repository Structure

Use predictable folders for source, tests, docs, samples, and assets.

Purpose: Use predictable folders for source, tests, docs, samples, and assets.

Working checklist

01 · Baseline
README, LICENSE, .gitignore, requirements/lock, tests, SECURITY where useful.

02 · Naming
Descriptive repository and files; avoid “final-final-v2”.

Practical workflow

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High-Quality README Template

Explain problem, architecture, setup, safe use, validation, and limitations.

Purpose: Explain problem, architecture, setup, safe use, validation, and limitations.

Working checklist

01 · First screen
Purpose, screenshot/diagram, key outcome, and navigation.

02 · Depth
Design decisions, alternatives, test evidence, lessons, and roadmap.

Practical workflow

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Lab Write-up Pattern

Document legal practice without leaking flags or copy-pasting walkthroughs.

Purpose: Document legal practice without leaking flags or copy-pasting walkthroughs.

Working checklist

01 · Structure
Objective, environment, reasoning, evidence, remediation, reflection.

02 · Boundaries
Follow platform rules and delay/omit solutions where required.

Practical workflow

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Security Automation Project

Show inputs, outputs, errors, rate limits, tests, and responsible-use controls.

Purpose: Show inputs, outputs, errors, rate limits, tests, and responsible-use controls.

Working checklist

01 · Engineering
Typed interfaces, logging, dry-run, configuration, and fixtures.

02 · Safety
Explicit scope, safe defaults, no embedded credentials, and limits.

Practical workflow

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Detection & SOC Project

Present telemetry, hypothesis, rule, test data, investigation, and tuning.

Purpose: Present telemetry, hypothesis, rule, test data, investigation, and tuning.

Working checklist

01 · Artifacts
Diagram, sample events, query/rule, tests, dashboard, case report.

02 · Evaluation
Positive/negative cases, false positives, coverage, and limitations.

Practical workflow

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Secrets, Privacy & Repository Security

Protect credentials and sensitive evidence before every push.

Purpose: Protect credentials and sensitive evidence before every push.

Working checklist

01 · Prevention
.gitignore, environment examples, secret scanning, synthetic data.

02 · Response
Revoke exposed secret; removing commit history alone is insufficient.

Practical workflow

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Licensing, Attribution & Forks

Clarify what is yours and respect original authors and platform terms.

Purpose: Clarify what is yours and respect original authors and platform terms.

Working checklist

01 · License
Choose a compatible license and explain limitations.

02 · Attribution
Cite sources and clearly distinguish original work from adaptation.

Practical workflow

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Polish, Releases & Maintenance

Make projects easy to evaluate and trustworthy over time.

Purpose: Make projects easy to evaluate and trustworthy over time.

Working checklist

01 · Quality
Working links, badges with purpose, screenshots, diagrams, tests, release notes.

02 · Routine
Quarterly archive/update decisions and pinned project refresh.

Practical workflow

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Evidence-Based Portfolio

Show what you can do through sanitized, original, reviewable work.

Purpose: Show what you can do through sanitized, original, reviewable work.

Working checklist

01 · Selection
Choose 4–6 projects relevant to the target role.

02 · Story
Explain problem, constraints, decisions, evidence, and outcome.

03 · Safety
Remove secrets, customer data, live targets, and unsafe operational details.

04 · Maintenance
Keep setup, screenshots, tests, licenses, and links current.

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Application Tracking Worksheet

Treat the search as a measurable improvement process.

Purpose: Treat the search as a measurable improvement process.

Working checklist

01 · Pipeline
Track role, company, source, date, stage, contact, and follow-up.

02 · Fit
Map requirements to evidence and note honest gaps.

03 · Experiment
Change one résumé/profile variable and compare response.

04 · Review
Weekly: response rate, interview rate, feedback, and next action.

Practical workflow

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Interview Story Bank

Prepare truthful examples before interviews.

Purpose: Prepare truthful examples before interviews.

Working checklist

01 · Structure
Use situation, task, action, result, and learning.

02 · Coverage
Prepare teamwork, ambiguity, failure, conflict, improvement, and technical depth.

03 · Evidence
Use metrics only when you can explain how they were measured.

04 · Practice
Answer aloud, shorten jargon, and invite clarifying questions.

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30–60–90 Day Plan

Demonstrate how you would learn, deliver, and improve responsibly.

Purpose: Demonstrate how you would learn, deliver, and improve responsibly.

Working checklist

01 · First 30
Understand systems, people, priorities, procedures, and success measures.

02 · Days 31–60
Own bounded work, improve documentation, and request feedback.

03 · Days 61–90
Deliver a measurable improvement and propose the next priority.

04 · Guardrail
Do not promise transformations without context, access, or team agreement.

Practical workflow

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Professional Ethics & Growth

Build a durable career through trust, communication, and continuous learning.

Purpose: Build a durable career through trust, communication, and continuous learning.

Working checklist

01 · Authorization
Never test employers, recruiters, or public systems without permission.

02 · Accuracy
Separate demonstrated experience from exposure or coursework.

03 · Communication
Report uncertainty early and write for the audience.

04 · Development
Review skills quarterly and choose one focused growth objective.

Practical workflow

Stage	Action	Evidence / output
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Keep learning. Keep building.

Use this guide as a working plan: practise, document evidence, review outcomes, and improve the next iteration.

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