

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

for the award of

BA (Hons) Photography

Managed by the Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment

Delivered by the School of Arts

Date approved:	October 2018
Applies to students commencing study in:	September 2019

RECORD OF UPDATES

Date amended	Nature of amendment	Reason for amendment

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Awarding body:	Oxford Brookes University
Teaching institution and location:	Oxford Brookes University, Headington Campus
Language of study:	English
Final award/s:	BA (Hons)
Programme title:	Photography
Interim exit awards and award titles available:	Certificate in Higher Education, Diploma in Higher Education, Diploma in Higher Education (Photography), BA
Brookes course code:	
UCAS code:	TBC
JACS code:	W640: Photography
HECoS code:	100063: Photography
Mode of delivery:	Face to face/on-campus (full-time) Face to face/on-campus (part-time)
Duration of study:	Full-time: expected duration 3 years, maximum duration 8 years. Part-time: expected duration 6 years, maximum duration 8 years.
Subject benchmark statement/s which apply to the programme:	Art and Design (February 2017); and Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies (2016)
Professional accreditation attached to the programme:	None currently attached.
Apprenticeship Standard:	Not applicable.
University Regulations:	The programme conforms to the University Regulations for the year of entry as published/archived at: http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/

SECTION 2: WHY STUDY THIS PROGRAMME?

Photography offers a wealth of creative and professional opportunities to graduates able to grasp its fast-evolving technologies, its driving role in social connectivity and commentary, and its growing cultural and commercial status.

BA (Hons) Photography has been designed to open up this exciting, demanding field, offering you a supportive, practice-based learning environment that nourishes your ideas, skills and confidence.

The curriculum balances study and hands-on practice in three complementary areas – creative, technically-adept photographic practice; critical & historical approaches; and professional standards & methods.

In your own practice and through study of others, you learn to appreciate how photographs tell stories and help us to remember. You consider how photographs enable us to view and think through past and current affairs, experiencing much of what is great, but also most terrifying about our world. You debate how we encounter ‘the other’ - other people and other places - through photographs; and explore ways in which we build friendships, networks and connections by sharing the photographs we take when documenting our lives (or versions of our lives). You investigate how we buy things because of photographs and sell things through them; and analyse ways in which photographic artworks cast new light on people, bodies, places and things, challenging us to rethink the ways in which we look.

The course is positioned at the intersection of fine art and documentary photography.

- The emphasis on art photography encourages experimentation and risk taking - vital in the development of original and compelling new work across genres and sectors.
- Combining this with ideas from documentary photography opens your work up to issues of narrative, media and cultural contexts.

The programme is structured around a sequence of six photography projects (each one a module), enriched with integrated Histories and Theories and Professional Contexts modules.

- The Photography Projects focus on the development of your practice, voice and identity as a photographer.
- The Histories and Theories modules are linked to your practical work, bringing depth, intelligence and contextual insights to your practice. They play an important part in ensuring that you develop a range of ‘soft’, transferrable skills, and graduate confident, articulate and culturally aware, prepared for a wide range of career opportunities.
- The Professional Contexts modules are about the process of translating great ideas and creative work into realisable professional propositions. They will help you think through who, and where, your work is for, and what different professional environments require. You will learn technical skills including printing, mounting and digital content management, professional skills in time and budget management, legal and ethical concerns, and flexible skills in pitching, negotiating and collaborating.

The first year is a year of ‘grounding’, providing you with foundational skills and insights into fundamental aspects of photographic practice and theory.

The second year is a year of 'specialisms', in which you'll engage with photography in a range of cultural and industrial contexts, developing a sense of your own particular interests and career trajectory. It also includes a set of four optional modules that progress your developing photographic practice through the demands and opportunities presented by specific fields: fashion or brand work, editorial photography or international development. These modules enable you to experience the rigours of professional practice and start developing the creative and professional skills necessary to succeed in these areas.

The final year is made up of modules that encourage your confidence and independence as you prepare for life after graduation. It culminates with an in-depth critical analysis, and an intensive period of self-directed production in which you showcase your creative and professional development by producing a high-quality, original portfolio of work.

Throughout, the programme emphasises the development of 'soft skills', particularly in communication, collaboration and problem-solving, which are fundamental to working in photography and the creative media. At the same time, your confidence, self-direction and independence are fostered as you undertake individual research tasks and projects.

The course is delivered through a variety of learning approaches, starting with introductory seminars, crits, presentations and workshops, through specialised skills intensives and masterclasses, to increasingly self-directed work and student-managed productions.

Studio spaces and technical resources are configured to emulate professional working practices and to support creative learning.

Course tutors have extensive, complementary expertise as practitioners, with connections that introduce a range of opportunities including visits, mentorships and work experience. Staff profiles are available via the following link: <http://arts.brookes.ac.uk/staff/index.html>

The course also has strong links with photographic thinkers and makers, nationally and locally, who offer a rich network of expertise and support, bringing invaluable first-hand accounts of professional life and offering perspectives on your developing projects.

Through this ongoing, dynamic dialogue with photographic professionals, practitioners and thinkers, the course currency is continuously monitored and updated so that it remains at the forefront of developments and opportunities.

2.1 The Programme aims to:

1. Encourage students to develop creative confidence, critical thinking and professional practices in photography.
2. Provide a stimulating, supportive and collaborative learning environment, and to promote strong learning communities.
3. Balance professional approaches and industry connections with experimental and exploratory approaches to photographic practice and thinking.
4. Support the development of historical and cultural awareness through the study of photographic practice in relationship to social, political and theoretical debates.
5. Prepare students to author their own careers within the creative and cultural sectors by developing transferable skills including team-work, problem-solving, and the ability to understand and use feedback to improve their performance.
6. Develop a wide range of appropriate, effective communication skills for professional and academic contexts, employing visual, verbal and/or written media.
7. Cultivate visual literacy, critical thinking, and intellectual curiosity as the basis for lifelong learning and professional development.

2.2 Programme Outline:

Year 1 (Level 4)

Key Themes:

- Learning analytical skills and critical awareness
- Acquiring fundamental creative skills and professional competencies
- Gaining research skills and knowledge of resources
- Appreciating historical and industrial context

This year establishes core creative, critical and professional skills in photography.

Two core *Professional Practice* modules (*Photography Project 1: The self & the other*; *Photography Project 2: Location & environment*) introduce you to photographic work and peer to peer reflection, and include a series of practicals, short projects and technical introductions.

In two core *Histories and Theories* modules (*Histories and Theories 1: The politics & poetics of looking*; *Histories and Theories 2: Space, place & culture*), you build your knowledge of research methods, essential historical contexts and critical reflective skills.

In two core *Professional Contexts* modules (*Professional Practice 1: Exhibiting Photographs* and *Professional Practice 2: Modes and sites of publication*), you consider key industry frameworks and systems of production, presentation and distribution.

Year 2 (Level 5)

Key Themes:

- Building on conceptual, compositional and technical skills in photography
- Deepening awareness of historical and cultural contexts
- Working with clients and responding to real-life briefs
- Introductions to current professional contexts and their commercial, legal and regulatory requirements

This year, you build your understanding and confidence, developing your critical insight and creative proficiency.

Two core project-based modules (*Photography Project 3: Mediation & moving image; Photography project 4: Visual narratives & cultural contexts*) explore photographic practice in response to specific modes of production and publication.

In addition to these core modules, a number of options (*Professional Contexts 3a: Fashion photography; Professional Contexts 3b: Photography & branded content; Professional Contexts 4a: Editorial photography; Professional Contexts 4b: Photography & the developing world*) allow you to focus your study in relation to specific professional contexts and their commercial and creative demands.

Two core histories and theories modules (*Histories & Theories 3: Media, culture & communication; Histories & Theories 4: Ethics, politics and visual narratives*) enrich and deepen your developing practice through the exploration of key critical discussions relevant to your other modules.

Year 3 (Level 6)

Key Themes:

- Research, development and pre-production
- Professional standard major project work
- Career entrance strategies
- Development as a reflective practitioner

This year focuses on intensive preproduction and production, networking and developing career entry strategies, and producing a substantial critical study.

In the project module (*Photography Project 5: Research and Development*), you initiate, plan and research your final portfolio, clarifying your projects and negotiating your work with your tutors.

In the second project module (*Photography Project 6: Independent Practice*), you carry out a sustained period of self-directed production to produce and deliver your portfolio of photography work. At the same time, you develop your professional profile, identifying strategies and tools that support your entry to a chosen professional pathway, or, alternatively, considering postgraduate study.

Alongside this work, you undertake a critical study (*Written Research Project*) that explores in depth an area of photography, considering its relationship to your own portfolio.

SECTION 3: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the programme, graduates will demonstrate the following Brookes Attributes through their ability to:

3.1 ACADEMIC LITERACY

LO1	Articulate an understanding of photographic practice in context – historical progression, current methods and future possibilities – of sufficient depth and breadth to shape the development of effective and original professional practice.
LO2	Identify, develop and apply contextually appropriate working methodologies and compositional strategies, understanding the relationship between them.
LO3	Articulate ideas and narratives verbally, in speech and in writing, understanding the requirements and conventions implied by differing contexts and audiences.

3.2 RESEARCH LITERACY

LO4	Apply insights into visual cultures and processes of photographic image making to the critical analysis of photography in context, and to the development of their own practice.
LO5	Establish a culturally and critically informed understanding of the ways in which photographic images work in differing social, political and professional contexts.
LO6	Understand and articulate their own work's relationship to wider cultural, historical and theoretical debates and contexts.

3.3 CRITICAL SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL LITERACY

LO7	Develop ideas and resolve outcomes through both independent and collaborative processes, within, and beyond, the disciplinary context.
LO8	Manage work flow in response to deadlines and the requirements of different processes and methods.
LO9	Critically evaluate their creative and professional behaviour, developing the capacity to adapt to a broad and evolving range of professional environments.

3.4 DIGITAL AND INFORMATION LITERACY

LO10	Demonstrate effective use of digital and information technologies in meeting academic and professional standards and in communicating to diverse audiences.
LO11	Demonstrate the level of digital literacy and insight required to adapt, anticipate and innovate in the context of a fast-changing digital landscape.

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3.5 ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

LO12	Demonstrate an awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion, and the effects of discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping.
LO13	Promote the consideration of sustainable practices and working methods in relation to ethical, social, political and environmental issues.

SECTION 4: CURRICULUM CONTENT & STRUCTURE

4.1 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS:

Code	Module Title	Level	Credit	Status	Coursework: Exam Ratio
PHOT4001	Photography Project 1: The self & the other	4	30	Compulsory	100:0
PHOT4002	Professional Contexts 1: Exhibiting Photographs	4	15	Compulsory	100:0
PHOT4003	Histories and Theories 1: The politics & poetics of looking	4	15	Compulsory	100:0
PHOT4004	Photography Project 2: Location & environment	4	30	Compulsory	100:0
PHOT4005	Professional Contexts 2: Modes and sites of publication	4	15	Compulsory	100:0
PHOT4006	Histories and Theories 2: Space, place & culture	4	15	Compulsory	100:0
PHOT5001	Photography Project 3: Mediation & moving image	5	30	Compulsory	100:0
PHOT5002	Professional Contexts 3a: Fashion photography	5	15	Optional	100:0
PHOT5003	Professional Contexts 3b: Photography & branded content	5	15	Optional	100:0
PHOT5004	Histories & Theories 3: Media, culture & communication	5	15	Compulsory	100:0
PHOT5005	Photography project 4: Visual narratives & cultural contexts	5	30	Compulsory	100:0
PHOT5006	Professional Contexts 4a: Editorial photography	5	15	Optional	100:0
PHOT5007	Professional Contexts 4b: Photography & the developing world	5	15	Optional	100:0
PHOT5008	Histories & Theories 4: Ethics, politics and visual narratives	5	15	Compulsory	100:0
PHOT6001	Photography Project 5: Research & development	6	30	Compulsory	100:0
PHOT6002	Written Research Project	6	30	Compulsory	100:0
PHOT6003	Photography Project 6: Independent Practice	6	60	Compulsory	100:0

4.2 PROGRESSION AND AWARD REQUIREMENTS

In order to achieve the expected depth of learning, progression is designed as follows:

- For the BA (Hons) degree, students must pass all compulsory modules and accrue 360 credits overall, of which 120 credits must be at level 6.
- For the BA Ordinary Degree, students are required to accrue 120 credits in years 1 (level 4) and 120 credits in year 2 (level 5) plus 60 credits from year 3 (level 6), accruing 300 credits in total.
- For the Diploma of Higher Education (Photography), students are required to accrue 120 credits in year 1 (level 4) and 120 credits in year 2 (level 5), gaining a total of 240 credits overall with the PHOT5001 and PHOT5005 modules being compulsory.
- For the Diploma of Higher Education, students must complete 240 total credits of which 90 credits must be Level 5 or above.
- For the Certificate of Higher Education, students have to complete 120 credits, at least 90 of which must be at Level 4.

SECTION 5: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

5.1 Teaching and Learning:

The course uses a wide variety of teaching and learning activities to support your studies and to allow you to develop and demonstrate the programme learning outcomes. There are three interrelated categories of module:

- **Photography project modules** form the backbone of the programme. These practice based modules run through the course from start to finish and provide space for extended creative and professional development. Over the course of study the photography projects are designed as a sequence that progressively introduces a range of genres and creative contexts, allowing you to gain experience in different working methods and situations.
- **Professional contexts modules** develop live projects with industry partners that explore the role of photography in specified industrial environments.
- **Histories and theories modules** introduce you to critical vocabularies and analytical approaches to photographic practice, contextualising your work within the photography context and project modules.

The modules are delivered via a range of teaching approaches:

- **Workshops** are dynamic teaching environments that include a range of approaches to developing your practice and thinking. They are usually hands-on, project-based sessions allowing you to acquire specific abilities or techniques which will benefit your practice, and may include technical demonstrations. Frequently, they will also involve discussions around your own and others' practice.
- **Lectures** are formal presentations that cover key issues and outline important concepts, as well as illustrating these concepts through plentiful examples. They will often include the presentation of photographic practices as well as examples of wider art and visual culture. Guest speakers are also employed when they can provide first-hand insight into the module subject matter.
- **Seminars** may be tutor or student-led, and are opportunities for in-depth discussion and debate on the issues raised in other taught sessions within a module. They are a vital space for the testing and application of theoretical concepts and considered discussions around practice, including students' own.
- **Tutorials** are smaller meetings between tutors and individual students or student groups. They are used to help students develop ideas, to monitor the progression of projects and to provide detailed feedback on work submitted both formative (developmental) and summative (assessed). Third year modules requiring independent study (e.g. *Photography Project 5: Research & development*; *Photography Project 6: Independent Practice*) are largely taught through tutorials.
- **Group criticisms (crits)** are a mode of learning that is embedded throughout the course, particularly in photography project modules and professional contexts modules. They involve you presenting your developing work to your peers for critical feedback and support.

Within each semester, modules are thematically and technically aligned so that they support and enrich one another.

Scheduled teaching time for a module generally includes around 36 hours of contact time with teaching staff, made up of a combination of lectures, seminars, tutorials and workshops. Each module also requires further independent working time to make a total

of 150 hours, for example preparing for teaching sessions, carrying out research and delivering assignments in a range of formats.

5.2 Assessment and Feedback:

In order to allow you to develop a range of knowledge and skills, various approaches to assessment are used. These include:

- portfolios of photographic work (exhibited and/or online)
- presentations
- essays and written research
- industry standard presentation formats (for example, pitch packs)
- reflective commentary in the photographer's log

The Photographer's log

This is a dedicated online written weblog that you are expected to use throughout your study to document your photographic thinking and research, and to critically reflect upon your developing practice. Your log writing will clearly refer to your developing portfolios of photographic work and will reference your wider viewing, reading and thinking. (It is not unlike a creative journal or the writing that artists produce in their sketchbooks.)

Critically, log writing is a process of personal reflection and learning that considers your work as it develops: it happens throughout your working process, not at the end of it.

Your photographer's log should link clearly and explicitly to your portfolios (see 5.3 below).

Programme Assessment Strategy

The programme's assessment strategy is informed by Oxford Brookes' Assessment Compact, which is available in full here: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/brookes--assessment-compact/>.

Assessment and feedback are vital elements of learning, but to be most effective the rationale for assessment tasks and the processes leading to feedback need to be open and explicit. For these reasons, assessment and feedback within the programme are designed according to the following principles:

1. Assessment tasks are constructively aligned, in that they relate directly the learning outcomes of each module and the degree as a whole.
2. Assessment criteria are explicit and clear, and are made available to students at the start of each module.
3. Students are empowered to engage with assessment processes through self-assessment or peer review exercises.
4. Formative assessment is developmental and provides vital feedback at early or middle stages of larger summative projects.
5. Feedback on formative assessment is detailed, clear and returned to students within two weeks.
6. Feedback on summative assessment including grades is made available to students as soon as possible following the relevant Exam Committee procedures.
7. As the course progresses, students are encouraged to receive feedback face-to-face in a tutorial environment in order to establish a productive dialogue.

8. Critical reflection and self-assessment are vital for modules where creative projects, placements and/or live projects make up an element of the assessed work.

The course is assessed through 100% coursework. There are no formal examinations as these are not a suitable means of assessing the programme's learning outcomes.

5.3 Portfolios of work for assessment

Your portfolio of photography for *Photography Projects* and *Professional Contexts* modules documents and presents your creative work produced during the module. It captures developmental process, tests and experiments, as well as final outcomes.

The portfolio is presented online, alongside your photographer's log.

5.4 Relationship of assessed components

Throughout the programme, *Histories and Theories* modules are assessed through a single component: for example, a critical commentary, essay, presentation or written research project. In each case, this single outcome makes up 100% of the module's assessment.

Photography Projects and *Professional Contexts* modules are assessed through the relationship between two interrelated outcomes - usually, a portfolio of practice and accompanying written photographer's log. In these modules, the two outcomes are seen as interdependent, complementary parts of an integrated process of thinking and making. For this reason, they are not assessed separately, but holistically, and are together awarded 100% of the marks for the module. This approach encourages innovation, risk-taking and advanced reflective practice by valuing your conceptual and contextual thinking as vital constituents of the work you make.

SECTION 6: ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME

6.1 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the University's general admission criteria for honours degrees, typical offers for this degree are:

- Successful Portfolio Interview (can be digitally submitted)
- UCAS 112 points. Points may be counted from qualifications equivalent to 3 A-levels only.
- IB 30 points
- BTEC DMM
- Foundation Art and Design Diploma – Merit

A foundation Diploma in Art and Design is the preferred route to the course and applicants are encouraged to enrol on a Foundation course if they apply straight from A-level.

Selected candidates will be invited for an interview. The interviewer will look for evidence of motivation, general creativity and breadth of interest, and will expect to be shown work which demonstrates creative ability of some kind. Any such work may be presented, including art-work where no formal course has been followed.

Candidates who live overseas and cannot attend for interview will be evaluated by portfolio. A digital document or link to e-portfolio with photographs or scanned images of your creative artistic work is preferred. The portfolio should contain a variety of different types of work and should be large enough to give the assessor an idea of the candidate's creative ability.

See the university's general entry requirements: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying-at-brookes/how-to-apply/entry-requirements/undergraduate-courses/>

Please follow this link for how to apply through UCAS: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying-at-brookes/how-to-apply/applying-through-ucas/>

See the university's general English language requirements: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/international/applying-to-arriving/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>

English language requirements

Please see the University's standard English language requirements, available at <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/undergraduate/undergraduate-entry-requirements>.

International and EU applications

Preparation courses for EU students

We offer a range of courses to help students meet the academic and English language entry requirements for their courses and also familiarise them with university life. Find out more about the international foundation pathways we offer and our pre-sessional English language courses at <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/international/english-and-pathway-courses>.

Country specific entry requirements

If you are studying outside the UK, for more details about your specific country entry requirements, translated information and local representatives who can help you to apply, please have a look at our country specific information pages (<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/international/country-information/country-specific-information>).

English requirements for visas

If you need a student visa to enter the UK you will need to meet the UK Visas and Immigration minimum language requirements as well as the University's requirements. Find out more about English language requirements at <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements>.

SECTION 7: PREPARATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Photographs' ubiquity and the diversity of their production, dissemination and reception ensure that there is wide-ranging scope for graduate progression and employment. Graduates of photography degrees rarely enter standard jobs as 'photographers' (although these do exist, and this does happen). Rather, much like graduates of other arts subjects, they tend to advance professionally through, for example:

- A freelance-based portfolio career
- Employment in a creative role that draws heavily on photography and creative practice and visual thinking and innovation
- Employment in roles in the arts and cultural sector that require creative/visual skills and high levels of cultural insight and contextual awareness
- Independent practice as an art photographer.

The programme provides you with a range of opportunities - within the curriculum, through the learning resource, and in co-curricular activities - that support your development and prepare you for life after graduation.

Opportunities within the curriculum

The course has been designed to support your development towards a wide range of career pathways in photographic practice and wider cultural and creative sectors.

The combination of *Photography Project* and *Professional Contexts* modules provide challenging, supportive simulations of real-life work experiences that enable you to develop the integration of creativity, technical, and entrepreneurial skills that are required for career entry and progression in the professional world.

The necessary technical skills for advanced photographic practice are developed throughout the programme via practical workshops and technical demonstrations. The Level 5 *Professional Contexts* modules provide an opportunity to experience the demands of specific industrial environments within which photographers work, as well as developing skills in working to brief, deadlines and budgets.

Throughout the course, your prospects and career-readiness are enhanced by discussions and explorations of new media forms characterised by innovations in content, technologies and audience interactions.

As the programme progresses, your studies become increasingly focused in relation to the world of employment, culminating in Year 3 (Level 6) when, in the *Photography Project 6: Independent Practice* module, you create a focussed career strategy and draw up plans for your progression into the professional world, or, alternatively, into further study.

The course design benefits from strong links with industry; the course team are closely linked with the professional world of photography, with extensive networks of industry contacts.

Photography practitioners are regularly invited to contribute as visiting lecturers. They also attend presentations of students' project work, providing invaluable industry-focused perspectives.

Learning and teaching environments

The physical learning and teaching environments on which the programme draws emulate as closely as possible the working practices of the photographic industry, providing spaces where ongoing discussions of work in progress, supportive critical reviews and ideas-sharing flourish. In addition to their provision of technical resources, these spaces' professional, collaborative atmosphere provides you with an environment where you can develop creative insights, confidence and communication skills that are crucial to employment in photography and the wider cultural sector.

Co-curricular activities

It is hoped that you will engage with co-curricular activities that enable you to work with a wide range of partner organisations, locally and nationally, as well as with social enterprises and regional agencies that will offer you a wealth of opportunities to practise and enrich your professional skills.