

The Gryphon School

Sixth Form



Photography A Level Handbook



Contents

Course outline	2
Your E-Portfolio.....	2
Assessment Objectives:	3
Assessment weighting	4
List of useful websites.....	5
How the course is delivered.....	5
Departmental expectations	5
Understanding Visual Language and developing Visual Literacy.....	6
Summer Holiday Task: 'IDENTITY'	6

Course outline

You will be introduced to a variety of experiences exploring a range of photographic media, techniques and processes. This will include learning how to use the photographic studio.

You will learn methods to explore relevant images, artefacts and resources relating to Photography and a wider range of art and design, from the past and from recent times, including European and non-European examples. This will be integral to the investigating and making process. Your responses to these examples will be shown through practical and critical activities which demonstrate your understanding of different styles, genres and traditions.

You should be aware of the four assessment objectives (see below) to be demonstrated in the context of the content and skills presented and of the importance of process as well as product. You will use sketchbooks/workbooks to demonstrate your work and understanding. There is no specific requirement for candidates to demonstrate drawing skills unless you wish to.

Your E-Portfolio

Your e-portfolio is the only insight that the moderator has to your thinking. It is vital that you place all your thoughts, inspirations, ideas and developments into your e-portfolio and keep it updated. Although your teachers may understand what you are trying to say or achieve in your images the moderator may not. Therefore, it is vital that your e-portfolio is up-to-date and detailed.

Although your e-portfolio is personal to you it is also a reflection on how much pride and effort you put into your work. Often students will put a huge amount of effort into the creation of their images only to lose marks due to poor presentation. e-portfolio's allow you to present your work in a bespoke style to you as well as looking after our environment.

- It is recommended you choose a simple font that is easy to read, size 12 font is recommended. This will then allow people that view your work to concentrate on the picture more than the written element. Even when using an e-portfolio font size and style matters as work may be viewed on screen rather than a printed medium.
- Do not “cram” too many pictures on a slide – it’s better to have one image on a e-portfolio slide — give them the space they deserve.
- Ensure each page/slide has a title, flow is a vital element of your sketchbook.

Assessment Objectives:

Below are the Assessment Objectives (taken directly from Eduqas). You should be familiar with these and understand best to present your work to fully meet the criteria

As part of their studies for Photography learners are encouraged to consider the following:

AO1 Contextual understanding

- Development of ideas that are informed by contextual study of past and present photographic and other sources such as film, fine art, installation art, graphic design, production design and published media and the place of photography within these.
- Awareness of the variety of photographic and motion picture genre and, where appropriate, relating personal work to a particular genre.
- Analytical skill and critical and contextual understanding in appraising, comparing and contrasting the work of relevant photographers and other contextual sources and in the formative and summative evaluation of personal photographic outcomes.

AO2 Creative making

- Selection of, and experimentation with, appropriate photographic media and processes, other media and combinations of media, with controlled use of lighting, shutter speed, aperture, lenses, filters and digital software. Technical details may be included, but should be selective and concise. Concern with technical processes should not assume greater importance than the progression of creative ideas.
- Exploration of stimulating resources and studio-based and environmental sources to initiate and develop innovative ideas, with due regard to viewpoint, composition, tone, colour, texture, scale and other visual elements. Each significant step in the creative process should be documented. The full potential of photography should be explored through experimentation with traditional and digital media, where appropriate, combining photographic and other techniques to originate new ways of working.
- Discrimination in reviewing ideas as work develops. Careful control exercised in refining detail, such as in editing, image manipulation and print resolution, to produce outcomes of quality.

AO3 Reflective recording

- Gathering, selecting, organising and communicating relevant information in undertaking research into visual and tactile sources of reference. Due attention should be given to the selection of only the most significant images and the analysis and annotation of these, rather than including multiple thumbnail/contact prints with no evaluative comments.
- Recording, through photography and by other means, such as sketches, storyboards and written notes, ideas, observations and insights that are relevant to personal intentions.
- Critical reflection on work and progress in order to review what has been learned, deepen understanding and clarify purpose and meaning.

AO4 Personal presentation

- Presentation of creative responses that are essentially personal and effectively realise stated intentions, such as a photographic poster to support a strongly held opinion or images of architectural structures projected onto a three-dimensional construction.
- Explicit connections made, where appropriate, between the different elements of the submission, including contextual, practical and written responses, presenting work in an order which can be easily followed.
- Consideration of different presentational formats, such as animated sequences and use of mixed media, selecting the most appropriate of these for the submission, giving due regard to the purpose of the work and how it might engage the interest of an audience or potential clients. If the print size or cost of a preferred format is a constraint, then this could be drawn, described and/or presented as a scale model.

Assessment weighting

Component 1: Personal Investigation (60% of qualification/120 marks)

The Personal Investigation consists of **two** integrated constituent parts:

1. a major in-depth critical, practical and theoretical investigative project/portfolio and outcome/s based on themes and subject matter that have personal significance;
 2. an extended written element of 1000 words minimum, which may contain images and texts and must clearly relate to practical and theoretical work using an appropriate working vocabulary and specialist terminology.
- Both the practical/theoretical work and the written element will be assessed together using the assessment objectives. Learners will be required to select, evaluate and present their work for assessment.
 - The Personal Investigation will be determined by the learner and teacher, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated.
 - No time limit: duration to be determined by the centre.

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40% of qualification/80 marks)

The Externally Set Assignment consists of **two** parts:

Part 1: Preparatory study period

- The externally set assignment materials are to be released to learners from 1 February (in the second year of the course) and will consist of a series of visual and written stimuli, which are to be presented to the learner at the start of the preparatory study period.
- One of the stimuli is to be selected by the learner and used as a starting point from which to elicit a personal response.
- Responses are developed during the preparatory study period. They should take the form of critical, practical and theoretical preparatory work/supporting studies which inform the resolution of ideas in the **15** hours sustained focus study.
- The **start** of the preparatory study period is defined as the date upon which the externally set assignment materials are presented to the learner. The preparatory study period may commence **on or after 1 February**. The preparatory study period **finishes** upon commencement of the sustained focus work.
- Start and finish dates of the preparatory study period to be determined by the centre, taking into account the May deadline for the submission of internally assessed marks to WJEC.

Part 2: 15 hour period of sustained focus work

- The resolution of learners' ideas from the preparatory work must be completed during the designated **15** hours and they must show how their planning relates to the outcome/s.
- The period of sustained focus work must be completed under supervised conditions.
- Centres determine the scheduling of the supervised sustained focus sessions, taking into account the May deadline for the submission of internally assessed marks to WJEC.

Both the preparatory work and sustained focus work will be assessed together, using the assessment objectives.

Learners will be required to select, evaluate and present their work for assessment.

The Externally Set Assignment will be set by WJEC, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated.

For Full specification see:

[A level specification template](#)

List of useful websites.

Below is a list of useful links and websites. Use these as a launch pad for inspiration and ideas for your work.

www.Foto8.com (photojournalism)
www.Fotofolios.org (University for the creative arts students)
<http://www.hasselblad.co.uk/showcase.aspx> (hasselblad showcase photographers)
<http://www.bipp.com/> (British institute of professional photography)
<http://www.rps.org/> (royal photographic society)
<http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/?source=NavPhoHome> (National Geographic)
<http://www.photographyresearchcentre.co.uk/noflash.htm> (photography achieve)
<http://www.photographersgallery.com>
<http://uk.photolibrary.com/> (stock photos)
<http://ukphotolibrary.com/> (stock photos)
<http://www.creativereview.co.uk/> (creative review)
<http://www.aestheticamagazine.com/> (creative magazine)
<http://www.photographersgallery.com>

How the course is delivered

Photography at the Gryphon school is delivered by team teaching. You will have two photography teachers, each with their own area of specialisation.

At the start of the first term you will be introduced to the core camera skills that are vital to your understanding and development of the practical side of photography. Alongside this you will be introduced to safe and sensible use of the studio along with different methods of lighting and how these can be adjusted for creative effect. As well as this you will also be introduced to key digital techniques using Adobe suite (Creative Cloud). The Department now uses e-portfolios so you will also be introduced to the standard way of working with these.

When we set your **Component 1: Personal Investigation** project. Your teachers will then take a more supportive role, responding to your individual needs. We understand that the area of photography is very wide and therefore every student has different aspects of study that they need to develop. It is however, up to you to discover what areas of the medium best suit your style and interests. Your teachers will help you find and develop these.

Departmental expectations

Knowledge, skills and understanding.

Students should adopt an integrated approach to the critical, practical and theoretical study of photography, which includes first-hand experience of original work. You will be expected to work independently both inside and outside of the classroom environment. Your teachers will support your work at all times.

The components for this specification have been devised for students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Relevant materials, processes, technologies and resources
- How ideas, feelings and meanings can be conveyed and interpreted in images and artefacts
- How images and artefacts relate to the time and place in which they were made and to their social and cultural contexts
- Continuity and change in different genres, styles and traditions
- A working vocabulary and specialist terminology.

The components equally require students to develop the skills to:

- Record experiences and observations, in a variety of ways using drawing or other appropriate visual forms; undertake research; and gather, select and organise visual and other appropriate information

- Explore relevant resources; analyse, discuss and evaluate images, objects and artefacts; and make and record independent judgements
- Use knowledge and understanding of the work of others to develop and extend thinking and inform own work
- Generate and explore potential lines of enquiry using appropriate media and techniques
- Apply knowledge and understanding in making images and artefacts; review and modify work; and plan and develop ideas in the light of their own and others' evaluations
- Organise, select and communicate ideas, solutions and responses and present them in a range of visual, tactile and/or sensory forms.

Understanding Visual Language and developing Visual Literacy

Objective:

- Development of visual literacy.
- Learn the basic vocabulary used in formal analyses in the visual arts.

To enhance your appreciation of photography it is necessary to develop the skills to make careful visual analysis. While everyone can easily discuss the contents of photographs ("what you see"), most need more training to learn about formal analysis used in the visual arts. Formal analysis focuses on an artwork's "formal" qualities or those visual elements that give it form. These include: shape, size, texture, line, space, etc.

Formal analysis provides a basic common language in the visual arts. However, a description of a photograph based only on formal analysis would be incomplete. Photographers make decisions both about composition (arrangement of visual elements) as well as content (meaning) when taking photographs. Consequently, it is important to consider the artist's intentions for making a photograph of a particular subject. Finally, the historical and social context in which a photograph was made must also be carefully considered.

An important note: each image offers a variety of interpretations. There is no one correct answer when interpreting works of art. We encourage you to carefully examine photographs to develop your skills for analysing photographs and to explore your own personal interpretations.

Summer Holiday Task: 'IDENTITY'

Your holiday task consists of taking a selection of photographs that explore the concept of 'identity'.

Think about what the concept of identity means to you. This could be a selection of portraits of you, people you know, objects that relate to you etc.

For inspiration look at the following artists: Steve McCurry, David Bailey, Clay Enos, Alec Soth, Lee Jeffries, Hans Eijkelboom, Martin Parr, Sam Taylor Wood, Nick Knight, Rankin, Andrea Costantini, May Xiong, Lisa Kokin, Hollie Chastine, Paul Maria Schneggenburger, Sally Mann...

Once completed, you will need to bring the images to your first photography lesson to upload them onto your e-portfolio. Think about why you have taken the photos and how you feel they communicate the concept of identity. Feel free to bring notes to the critique if it will support your work. If you do not have access to a digital camera then you can use your mobile phone to take the images.

This piece of work is mandatory and will form part of your identity unit of coursework.

Please ensure you have OneDrive (Microsoft) downloaded onto your device. We will go through the sign in and upload process during the first few lessons.

If you require advice or support, please contact the Head of Department by e-mail no later than **13th July**:

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