

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

<b>Course Record Information</b>	
Name and level of final & intermediate Awards	BA Photographic Arts Diploma of HE Photographic Arts Certificate of HE Photographic Arts
Awarding Body	University of Westminster
Location of Delivery	Harrow Campus Watford Road Harrow HA1 3TP
Mode of Study	Full Time
UW Course Code	BDMPPHO
JACS Code	W600
UCAS Code	W640
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	Communication, Media, Film & Cultural Studies Art & Design
Professional Body Accreditation	
Date of initial course approval/last review	Last reviewed 2007
Date of Programme Specification	March 2007

### Admissions Requirements

In respect of GCE Advanced Level, applicants must show that their successes equate to a minimum of one B and one C.

In the case of mature students, appropriate learning or experiential learning (e.g. work experience) see the next section on students without formal entrance requirements and for information about Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL).

Application forms are initially assessed on the basis of the minimum requirements above.

Students are also required to complete a questionnaire supplement to the standard application form which requests information about their

- critical theoretical background
- the nature of the practical work they are involved in
- the cultural influences on their application to this course in particular and their post graduate and professional ambitions (if known)

Application forms will normally be assessed on:

- a commitment to ideas and their visual representation
- a commitment to critical debates
- experience in photography
- intellectual ability and curiosity
- capacity for self-motivated study

If a student satisfies these criteria they will be invited for interview. They are required to bring evidence of practical work that demonstrates their skills in course-related areas. They are invited in groups of around 20 and given a general introduction to the course, site and facilities. They are then divided into smaller groups of around 5 interviewees with at least two interviewers (normally one staff and one student) and asked to make a presentation of their portfolio to the group. They then attend a short individual interview, where they will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- competent oral and written expression
- perceived ability to deal with the academic demand of the course
- basic technical control of media
- perceived ability to deal with the practical demand of the course
- standard of visual / aural perception
- capacity for individual and group work
- IELTS 6.5 minimum standard in English for non native speakers

The course accepts many mature and overseas students and these criteria are applied flexibly where the applicant is unable to satisfy all of them due to differences in educational provision available to them.

Students who do not have English as a first language are assessed to meet the IELTS standard and may be advised to attend a language course prior to entry, or counselled to take a module in 'English for Academic Purposes' on attendance.

In exceptional circumstances students may be admitted directly to Level Five if they can demonstrate appropriate previous academic experience.

All applicants resident overseas and unable to attend for interview will be required to submit a portfolio of visual work and written work as specified by the Course Leader.

### **Aims of the course**

The principal aims are

- to provide graduates with a sound academic knowledge and understanding of photography and related media
- to provide a theoretical understanding of the historical, socio-political, and cultural contexts for a broad range of contemporary photographic practices
- to facilitate the attainment of a high standard of practical and technical control in the production of photographic and related media products
- to enable students to communicate effectively through photographic based visual media.
- to enable students to contextualise their practice within the wider external professional / institutional contexts.
- to develop students reflective and critical engagement with their own work and

with contemporary visual culture generally.

- to develop a broad range of relevant transferable skills which will enable students to work in a variety of media and cultural contexts

### **Employment and Further Study Opportunities**

As practitioners, graduates are prepared for a wide range of employment in the professions and industries concerned, with the ability to fulfill both traditional roles and to participate in the rapid changes and developments that characterise the field. In academic terms, the course provides graduates with a theoretical and critical understanding of photography, giving the basis both for postgraduate study and for a broad range of employment within visual and creative industries.

Some of the range of aspects of the industries graduates have gone into are listed below:

Photographer (freelance editorial, photojournalists, sports, social, fashion, advertising, PR, music, portraiture, architecture, documentary, newspaper, medical, wildlife, war, police photographer)

Photographer's assistant, Stylist, Propser, Location finder, Studio manager

Arts Officer – (Director, Assistant, Production personnel),  
Museum (Curator, staff, archivists)  
Gallery (Director, manager, assistant, technical support).

Picture Researcher, Photographer's Agent, Photographic Association personnel (MD, education officer etc.

Picture Libraries (stock sales personnel, library manager, technical support, scanning/keywording)

Picture desk personnel (photo/picture editor, commissioning editor, retrieval/picture management, image enhancement)

Photography competition organiser, Photography festival director and various associated personnel

Photographic and digital bureau services personnel, including technician and those who design and produce photo related printed material.

Designer (for magazines and books), Website designer, Exhibition designer

Photography writer - journalism, critical writing, exhibition/book reviews, technical reviews, criticism, books.

Lecturer, Teacher, Workshop Leader, education management, quality manager, administrative support for education (schools, FE, HE, special needs)

## **Learning Outcomes**

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. They are threshold statements of achievement and are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

### **Year One Learning Outcomes**

At the end of Year One it is expected that students will be able to:

- Make use of the photography facilities with a clear and measured understanding of health and safety procedures.
- Expose monochrome and colour analogue and digital materials accurately.
- Print using black and white and colour analogue processes and a range of digital outputs
- Control 35mm, Digital SLR, medium and large format cameras
- Control studio flash lighting
- Demonstrate effective use of Image Processing software to prepare digital images for output.
- Demonstrate through practical image making an understanding of visual language and photographic conventions
- Articulate a coherent idea through the production of photographic images.
- Collect and categorise information and ideas using defined techniques and principles.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of subjectivity, objectivity, and photographic truth..
- Demonstrate some of the key debates in photographic history
- Demonstrate an understanding of the procedures for the presentation and structure of academic essays.
- Make effective use of their learning environment.
- Identify and utilise the range of information sources available to them.
- Develop appropriate research methodologies.
- Organise and communicate their ideas effectively in written and oral form.
- Critically evaluate their own performance and that of their peers.
- Negotiate collaborative working practices through pair and small group work
- Demonstrate competence in the use of IT for academic purposes.

### **Year Two Learning Outcomes**

At the end of Year Two it is expected that students will be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced skills in more specialist methods and techniques while producing projects within the expanded field of photography.
- Consider the production of their work in relation to specific audiences, viewing contexts and presentational styles.
- Engage in the process of problem solving in negotiation with both peers and external agencies.
- Present and evaluate their own performance through documentation and analysis.
- Undertake extensive research for the production of projects.
- Demonstrate a high level of autonomy in the research and production of photography based projects.
- Effectively interact within a learning group and contribute to that learning
- Demonstrate a fluency in the key concepts and debates within contemporary visual theory.

### **Year Three Learning Outcomes**

At the end of Year Three it is expected that students will be able to:

- Demonstrate highly developed conceptual, analytical and practical skills in the complex field of visual and textual representation
- Command a broad informed historical, critical and theoretical framework for future production and intellectual work
- Demonstrate sophisticated problem solving skills in media production and project management
- Exhibit confidence in themselves as critically informed practitioners able to make informed postgraduate career choices
- Engage effectively in professional debate and produce coherent reports
- Realistically assess their own skills, knowledge and interests and to match these to an appropriate career.
- Demonstrate a range of transferable skills and flexibility of approach to the media, cultural and educational market place and professions

## **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods**

### **Delivery Methods**

The course team implements a range of teaching strategies and methods that follow the University's guidelines in supporting independent learning. Our intentions are to foster and encourage abilities and attributes that can help students become critically aware and skilled individuals and professionals. We have created a learning environment that encourages the constructive development of critical analysis, reflective thinking and self-evaluation. Processes such as questioning, examining, problem solving, comparing, analysing, reflecting, speculating, deconstructing and experimenting are all encouraged to function within an intellectual framework of concepts, critical positioning, cultural awareness, diversity and context. Our teaching methods provide a range of skills and strategies so that students might examine and develop an understanding in critical photographic practice and image production.

The course uses the following forms of delivery:

- illustrated lectures
- technical classes
- workshops
- demonstrations
- tutorials
- group tutorials
- interactive critical reviews
- seminars
- visiting speakers
- work reviews
- research
- independent study

### **Tutorials**

Module leaders and tutors engaged in the delivery of specific modules will offer tutorials in order to discuss students progress, concerns, action points and to respond to issues raised during the module.

### **Group Tutorials**

At levels 5 and 6 for some modules students are taught in small tutor groups of approximately 5 to 10 students. The emphasis is on presentations and work reviews to the whole group so that students can experience feedback and support from both their tutor and peers. This practice encourages students to develop skills in critical analysis, reflective thinking, self-evaluation and communication.

### **Interactive Critical Reviews**

Before or at the end of each practice module all students are invited to present their work to the year group and module tutors for feedback and critique. The focus of these sessions is to enable the constructive development of skills in critical analysis, reflective thinking and self-evaluation. After being given the context for the work the group are invited to discuss the projects and feedback to the student.

## **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods Cont...**

### **Seminars**

These are smaller group discussions based on a specific text or topic where students will take an active role in both presenting and debating material.

### **Visiting Speakers**

Visiting artists and writers and professionals are invited to the department to speak to groups from both the full and part time BA programmes and the MA in Photographic Studies and Photojournalism. Recent speakers include Helen Sear, Victor Burgin, Parveen Adams, Martin Parr, Homi Bhabha, Rut Blees Luxemburg, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, Isaac Julian, Stuart Hall, Susan Buck Morss, Laura Mulvey, Karen Knorr, Olivier Richon, Irit Rogoff and Paul Shambroom. Adam Broomberg, Hannah Collins, Richard West, Jason Evans.

### **Work Reviews**

Work reviews provide the most common context for the discussion and development of work in progress at level 6. These group sessions are highly constructive in enabling students to further develop skills in critical analysis, reflective thinking, self-evaluation, communication, supporting others and the presentation of ideas.

### **Research**

Research refers to a broad range of information gathering, synthesis and selection, which informs and enhances the development of students work in considerable depth. Research is documented through journals, workbooks and written logs and includes the reflective and critical analysis of visual and critical references and contemporary photographic practice. Research need not only be library based and should include visiting exhibitions, galleries, museums, viewing films, attending performances, lectures, seminars etc.

### **Independent Learning**

The course aims to enable students to develop their study and practice in an increasingly self-defined way throughout the 3 years of the programme. Students are encouraged to take an increasing responsibility for time management, organisation of studies, management of information and strategies for the production of their work and research and critical self-reflection of how their own practice stands in relation to current practice and the market place.

### **Range of Assessment Methods**

Learning outcomes are demonstrated through the following Assessment Methods:

#### **Level 4**

Projects  
Group Projects  
Workbooks  
Critical Self-Assessment  
Essays (1,500 – 2,000 words)

#### **Level 5**

All of the above plus Essays (3,000 words)

#### **Level 6**

All of the above plus  
Portfolio  
Major Project  
Research File  
Seminar Paper (1,000 words)  
Dissertation (9,000 – 11,000 words)

### **Detail on Assessment methods**

#### **Projects**

One of the key strategies of teaching and learning in practice across the programme is through projects. These are initially set by tutors during the first half of the course and progressively become more self-defined during the second half. Projects provide a framework for problem solving tasks, which invite students to find solutions and to consider formats, critical and cultural contexts, issues of audience and consumption, proposed form, medium, presentation via proposal forms. On completion of a project students are required, at level 5 and 6, to write a critical self-assessment, which reflects on the project and the relationship of their work with both contemporary practice and its context.

#### **Project Proposal**

500 to 1,000 words (Major Project)

- Project Title (or working title)
- Subject
- Aims, objectives, concept
- Audience
- Context (editorial, gallery, artist's book etc)
- Proposed form, medium, presentation
- Research
- References (visual and critical)

#### **Essays and Dissertation**

Guidelines for essays and induction into essay writing are given at the start of the course during The Thinking Photography module and continuing support is offered through Study Skills Support and tutorials throughout the course. Guidelines and advice on the Dissertation module is given in June of Year 2 to enable students to develop research areas and topics before Semester 1 of



their final year.

### **Group Working**

At each level of the programme there are opportunities for students to work collaboratively in groups in some modules in both theory and practice. Group working enables students to develop skills in working effectively with others, giving and receiving information, being proactive in leadership, learning to compromise and negotiate with others including dealing with conflicting opinions, learning to take individual responsibility and to delegate tasks and support others. Students working in groups are normally given the same mark for any group work submitted for the project or workbook components of a module. Collaboration is encouraged within the School.

### **Student Feedback**

Students on the course receive verbal feedback from tutors and their peers through tutorials, work reviews and interactive critical reviews.

Assessment offers more formal written feedback that accompanies the return of work for each module. This feedback reflects on the overall course work produced for that module. The feedback is normally written by the module leader or tutors engaged in the teaching and assessment of the module.

The following methods are used to provide feedback to students:

- individual tutorials
- group tutorials
- seminars
- work reviews
- interactive critical reviews
- personal tutorial feedback sheets
- module feedback sheets

**Course Structure**

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Undergraduate students study 120 credits per year. Please also see course module plans in appendix

**Year 1**

Code	Title	Status	Value
2PHO437	Photography Practice 1	Core	15
2PHO438	Thinking Photography	Core	30
2PHO433	Photography & Visual Culture	Core	15
2PHO439	Photography Practice 2	Core	15
2PHO440	Photographic Languages	Core	30

plus

2PHO441	Modernity & After	Option	15
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or

Free Choice Module Option

Award of Certificate of Higher Education available

**Year 2**

Code	Title	Status	Value
2PHO558	Perspectives in Photography	Core	30
2PHO559	Technologies of the Self	Core	15
2PHO562	Contemporary Photo Practices	Core	30
2PHO631	Contemporary Cultural Theories	Core	15
MPHO503	Photog for Wall, Page & Screen	Core	15

plus

2PHO560	Photography in Context	Option	15
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or

2PHO561	Work Placement	Option	15
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or

Free Choice Module Option

Award of Diploma of Higher Education available

**Year 3**

Code	Title	Status	Value
2PHO627	Practice Research	Core	15
2PHO623	Dissertation	Core	45
2PHO633	Major Project	Core	45
2PHO634	Professional Futures	Core	15

Award of BA Photography available

Award of BA (Hons) Photography available

NB: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year.

## Academic Regulations

The BA (Hons) Photographic Arts and its intermediate awards operate in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in 2008.

All students should make sure that they access a copy of the current edition of the general University handbook called **Essential Westminster 2010/11** which is available at [westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster](http://westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster). The following regulations should be read in conjunction with the *Modular Framework for Undergraduate Courses* and relevant sections of the current *Handbook of Academic Regulations*.

A *pass* in a module is achieved when the overall mark is greater than or equal to 40%; with at least 30% in the final assessment and any qualifying marks and/or sets achieved as detailed in the module handbook.

### Condoned Credit at Level 3 and Level 4

A student may be awarded condoned credit at Levels 3 and 4 four only, on the condition that the failed element(s) of assessment has been attempted at both the first and referred opportunity, and where he/she has achieved:

- a) an overall module mark of greater than or equal to 30% but less than 40%;
- b) an overall mark of 40% or greater but not reached the required qualifying mark(s) and/or qualifying set(s) as detailed in the module handbook.

Where a student is awarded condoned credit, the recorded module mark will be capped at 40%. Condoned credit will count towards any credit limits for specified awards. Where a student is awarded condoned credit in a module but subsequently achieves an overall pass at a re-take, credit may contribute only once to an award.

### Progression

To progress from Level 3 to Level 4 and from Level 4 to Level 5 in full time study, a student must achieve an average of 40% across 120 credits; to progress from Level 5 to Level 6 full-time study, a student must pass at least 165 credits, including 75 credits at Level 5.

#### Course specific Progression Requirement

In addition to the above, in order to progress from level 4 to level 5 a student must achieve a minimum of 40% (pass) in the following modules:

either 2PHO437 Photography Practice 1 OR 2PHO439 Photography Practice 2  
Plus  
Either 2PHO433 Photography & Visual Culture OR 2PHO441 Modernity & After

To qualify for the award of BA (Hons) Photographic Arts, a student must:

- a) Obtained at least 360 credits including:
  - passed 75 credits at Level Four or higher and achieved at least a condoned credit in each of the remaining modules worth 45 credits at Level 4; and
  - a minimum of 120 Credits at Level 5 or higher; and
  - a minimum of 120 credits at Level 6 or higher.
- b) attempted modules with a maximum value of 330 credits at Levels 5 and 6
- c) Satisfied the requirements contained within any course specific regulations for the relevant course Scheme. In the case of BA (Hons) Photographic Arts, students must achieve at least a pass mark (40%) for both 2PHO633 Major Project and 2PHO632 Dissertation.

The class of the Honours degree awarded is decided by two criteria: the average of the best 105 credits passed at Level 6 being in the range of the class to be awarded, and the average of the next best 105 credits passed at Levels 5 and 6 provided the next best 105 credits passed are no more than one classification below this.

### **Support for Students**

On arrival, an induction programme will introduce students to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which they will be studying, the Library and IT facilities and to the Campus Administration.

There is also a full programme of course specific events designed to acclimatise students to the course and its environment and to help students to get to know each other and staff better. This includes trips to Galleries in central London, group photo assignments and a social event at the end of the week where new student have the chance to meet with other year groups. Students will be given a copy of the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Students are allocated a personal tutor who can provide advice and guidance on academic matters.

Learning support includes the Library which, across its four sites, holds printed collections of 412,000 books, 1,600 journal subscriptions and substantial audio visual collections. Access to over 6,500 electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books, exam papers and links to recommended websites) is facilitated through infoLinX, the library portal.

There are over 3,500 computers spread over the four University campuses available for students use. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students can access course materials and communicate with staff and other students via message boards.

At University level, Services for Students provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The International Education Office provides particular support for international students. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support all students during their time at the University.

### **Reference Points for the course**

#### **Internally**

- University Teaching & Learning policy
- University Quality Assurance Handbook
- Handbook of Academic Regulations
- Staff Research

The course has been reviewed with reference to the University's mission to provide education for professional life and is designed to meet the requirements of the University Policies on skills development and employability and its Teaching & Learning Policy. The course structure meets the requirements of the modular

frameworks and the academic regulations of the University.

The course has a close relation to the BA Photography (part time) and to the MA Photographic Studies and MA Photojournalism courses within the department. There is also some relation to BSc Photographic Imaging Science.

### **Externally**

#### QAA Subject Benchmarks

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is the government agency responsible for safeguarding the standards of higher education qualifications in the UK.

They produce 'Subject Benchmark Statements' that

'set out expectations about standards of degrees in a range of subject areas. They describe what gives a discipline its coherence and identity, and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the abilities and skills needed to develop understanding in the subject.'

([www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk))

There are not specific benchmarks for photography as a discipline. There are, however, two sets of benchmarks that refer to our area (**Art & Design** and **Communication, media, film and cultural studies**). You can read these in full on the QAA's website ([www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)).

The development of the broad range of skills and knowledge articulated in the benchmarking statements can be mapped across the three levels of the programme. We are confident that the carefully planned development of theoretical and practical skills within the modules on the course will offer students the opportunity to meet and exceed the threshold expectations set out in the benchmark statements.

## **Quality Management and Enhancement**

### **Course approval, monitoring and review**

The course was last approved by a University Revalidation Panel in 2007. The Panel included internal peers from the University and external subject specialists from academia and industry to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other Universities and the relevance to employers. Periodic Course Review helps to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers.

The course is monitored each year by the School to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from each Course Committee, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from External Examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. The Annual Monitoring Sub-Committee considers the School action plans resulting from this process and the outcomes are reported to the Academic Council, which has overall responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards in the University.

### **Student involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement**

Student feedback is important to the University and student comment is taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways. The most formal mechanism for feedback on the course is the Course Committee. Student representatives will be elected to sit on the Committee to represent the views of their peer group in various discussions. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the Course Committee.

All students are asked to complete a Module Feedback Questionnaire at the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the Module Leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced. The University also has an annual Student Experience Survey which provides valuable feedback about a range of University services.

Students meet with Review Panels when the periodic review of the course is conducted to provide oral feedback on their experience on the course. Student feedback from Course Committees are part of the Schools' quality assurance evidence base.

For more information about this course please contact:

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Admissions Officer  
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Course website  
<http://www.wmin.ac.uk/mad/page-177>

Please note – This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.