

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course Record Information	
Name and level of final & intermediate Awards	BA (Hons) Photography BA Photography Diploma of HE Photography Certificate of HE Photography
Awarding Body	University of Westminster
Location of Delivery	School of Media, Arts and Design Watford Road Harrow HA1 3TP
Mode of Study	Part Time
UW Course Code	BDMPPHR
JACS Code	W640
UCAS Code	N/A
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	Communication, Media, Film & Cultural Studies Art & Design
Professional Body Accreditation	Seeking affiliation from Association of Photographers (AOP)
Date of initial course approval/last review	1990 Last reviewed 2010
Date of Programme Specification	May 2012

Admissions Requirements

This course is part time and is aimed at both school leavers and mature students - particularly those who already work in photography, use photography in their work or are concerned with issues of representation and imagery and has a specific identity as the majority of students have a wide range of life/work/family experience and commitments.

Prior experience or learning may be credited, while applicants with exceptionally advanced qualifications or experience may be granted admission at Level Five of the degree. The course is taught one day a week for 4 years with one further day's access per week to studios and darkrooms and there is an induction of 3 days in September of the first year.

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 an applicant 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 6 and given a general introduction to the course, site and facilities. They are then divided into 2 smaller groups with at least two interviewers (normally one staff and one student) and are 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

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

- to provide a learning environment in which student development is fostered by sharing the resource of the wide range of experiences that mature students bring from their own diverse contemporary photographic practice
- 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

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e., employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses.

- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students.
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision.
- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements, which will inform the service delivered to students.

As practitioners, graduates are prepared for a wide range of employment in the professions and industries concerned, with the ability to fulfil 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 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, Location finder, Studio manager

Postgraduate and Research degrees and Education

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

Arts Officer/ Museum/Gallery

Director, Assistant, Production personnel, Curator, staff, archivists, director, manager, assistant, technical support, Education officer.

Designers

Website, Exhibitions

Photography writer

Journalism, critical writing, exhibition/book reviews, technical reviews, criticism, books, editor for magazines and books.

Photographer's Agent

Photographic Association personnel.

Picture Libraries

Picture Researcher, stock sales personnel, library manager, technical support, scanning/key wording, picture desk personnel, photo/picture editor, commissioning editor, retrieval/picture management, and image enhancement.

Photographic and digital bureau services personnel

Technician and those who design and produce photo related printed material. Owner/managers of businesses offering photo services such as scanning, equipment hire and repairs, photo finishing, mounting and framing.

Learning Outcomes

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

Level 4 Learning Outcomes

At the end of Level 4 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 analogue and digital materials accurately.
- Print using black and white analogue processes and a range of digital outputs
- Control 35mm, Digital SLR, medium format cameras
- 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.

Level 5 Learning Outcomes

At the end of Level 5 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.
- Control studio flash lighting.
- Print using colour analogue processes and a range of digital outputs.
- 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.

Level 6 Learning Outcomes

At the end of Level 6 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 team uses the following forms of delivery:

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

Blackboard

Blackboard is an online system that facilitates and manages electronic communication and access to materials or information. Tutors use Blackboard to help support student learning by sharing valuable learning resources such as module outlines, lecture notes, assignment briefs and PowerPoint slideshows and communicating via announcements, email, discussion boards, blogs and wikis. Each module and the course has its own self contained Blackboard website. All the important course information such as timetables, and this handbook, in electronic version, are available to you on the Course pages. Electronic drop boxes and e-portfolios are used for students to submit images and portfolios and the Safe Assign

system is used for the electronic submission of essays and coursework.

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.

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.

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.

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, research files 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 4 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.

Guided Independent Study

Guided Independent Study periods are seen as a *fundamental part* of the learning strategies that support the students in achieving the learning outcomes of their course and modules and are designed to consolidate, integrate, or induce better understanding and deeper learning.

Range of Assessment Methods

Learning outcomes are demonstrated through the following Assessment Methods:

Level 4

Projects

Group Projects

Research Files
Critical Self-Evaluation
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 two years of the course and progressively become more self-defined during years three and four. 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-evaluation, 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 and 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 Induction week 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 at the end of year three 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 or 8 modules and part time students study a maximum of 90 credits or 6 modules per year.

Credit Level 4

Year 1

Code	Title	Status	Value
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Students must take the following core modules to the value of 60 credits:

MPHO400	Foundations in Photography	Core	30
2PHO433	Photography & Visual Culture	Core	15
2PHO441	Modernity and After	Core	15

and up to two option modules (to the value of 30 credits) selected from the following:

MPHO401	Digital Photography	Option	30
	Free Choice module	Free	15
	Free Choice module	Free	15

Total level 4 modules 90

Award of Certificate of Higher Education available

Credit Level 5

Year 2

Code	Title	Status	Value
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Students must take the following core modules to the value of 60 credits:

MPHO500	Constructed Photography	Core	30
2PHO559	Technologies of The Self	Core	15
2PHO563	Contemporary Photographic Practices PT	Core	15

and up to two option modules (to the value of 30 credits) selected from the following:

MPHO501	Documentary Photography	Option	30
	Free Choice module	Free	15
	Free Choice module	Free	15

Total level 5 modules 135

Award of Diploma of Higher Education available

Credit Level 6

Year 3

Code	Title	Status	Value
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Students must take the following core modules to the value of 45 credits:

MPHO600	Professional Futures PT	Core	30
2PHO631	Contemporary Cultural Theories	Core	15

Year 4

Students must take the following core module to the value of 15 credits:

2PHO627	Practice Research	Core	15
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Students must take and pass the following core modules to the value of 75 credits:

2PHO632	Dissertation	Core	45
2PHO622	Major Project	Core	30

Total level 6 modules 135

Award of BA and BA (Hons) available

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

Academic Regulations

The BA (Hons) Photography 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 have and keep for reference a copy of the current edition of the general University handbook called **Essential Westminster 2011/12**, which is available at www.westminster.ac.uk/study/current-students/resources/essential-westminster.

The following course specific requirements 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 at least 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

- (i) A student may be awarded condoned credit for no more than one module at each of levels, three, four, five and six within a programme of study 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 standard in one or more module components.
- (ii) Where a student is awarded condoned credit, the recorded module mark will be capped at 40%.
- (iii) Condoned credit will count towards any credit limits for specified awards.
- (iv) Where a student is awarded condoned credit in a module but subsequently achieves an overall pass at a re-attempt, credit may contribute only once to an award.

Progression

The University has regulations that govern the progression through the course.

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

- a) Obtained at least 360 credits including:
 - a minimum of 120 Credits at Level 4 or higher, of which no more than 15 credits shall be condoned; and
 - a minimum of 120 Credits at Level 5 or higher, of which no more than 15 credits shall be condoned; and
 - a minimum of 120 credits at Level 6 or higher, of which no more than 15 credits shall be condoned.
- 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:
 - must take and pass the following core modules to the value of 75 credits:
2PHO632 Dissertation (45 credits) and 2PHO633 Major Project (30 credits).

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, through an induction programme students will be introduced to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which they will be studying, the Library and IT facilities and to the School Registry. Students will be provided with a copy of the Course Handbook, which includes detailed information about the course. Students will also be allocated a personal tutor who can provide advice and guidance on academic matters.

Learning support facilities include the Library, which across its four campuses, 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 provides multi-faith guidance. The International Office provides particular support for international students and the University of Westminster Students' Union provides a range of facilities to support all students during their time at the University.

Key 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 Photographic Arts and to the MA Photographic Studies and MA Photojournalism courses within the department. There is also a relationship with 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)

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).

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 Management

The Course is managed by a Course Leader within the Department of Photography and Film, one of the four Departments in the School of Media, Arts and Design on the Harrow site. The Department also offers BA (Hons) Photographic Arts, MA Photographic Studies, MA Photojournalism and BSc (Hons) Photography and Digital Imaging. The Department has 42 full-time and fractional staff and 60 Visiting Lecturers.

The Department has one away-day per year to identify and address ways of improving the design and delivery of its courses. Staff in the Department undergo annual appraisal and observation of their teaching by their colleagues leading to staff development through course attendance or research activity. Staff in the Department attend events organised by the LTQE Teaching and Learning Groups around current teaching, learning and assessment issues.

Course approval, monitoring and review

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 1990. 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:

Course website

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/subject?subject=Photography>

Admissions Officer

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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.