

Part One: Programme Specification

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	BA Honours Photographic Arts The BA Honours Photographic Arts is a degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA first cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Diploma of HE Photographic Arts Certificate of HE Photographic Arts
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Faculty of Media, Arts and Design, Watford Road, Harrow HA1 3TP
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Course/programme leader:	Gavin Jack
Course URL:	westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/photography
Mode and length of study:	Full Time, 3 Years
University of Westminster course code:	BDMPPHO
JACS code:	
UCAS code:	W640
QAA subject benchmarking group:	Communication, Media, Film & Cultural Studies and Art & Design
Professional body accreditation:	None
Date of course validation/review:	Last Reviewed 2014
Date of programme specification:	2014/15

Admissions requirements

Qualification type	Grade/points
A Levels	BB, including Photography
International Baccalaureate	28 points (minimum)
Edexcel BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma	MMM
Access to HE Diploma	Pass with 45 at Level 3. 25 at Merit +. Portfolio required

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.

If these are met, forms will then 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 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.

Applicants 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 course 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 artifacts.
- to enable students to communicate effectively through photography based visual media.
- to enable students to contextualise their practice within the wider sociocultural and professional / institutional contexts.
- to develop students reflective and critical engagement with their own work and with contemporary culture.
- 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, ie 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.

Employability

Employability is defined as:

'a set of achievements, - skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy' (HEA, 2012, PDF)

In addition to the photography skills, knowledge and experience you'll gain on the course, you will also be learning a range of wider, more generic 'employability' skills that will prepare you for professional life in a range of ways and which are also valued by employers. Sometimes the learning of these skills will be quite explicit, but often they are embedded within the course across all modules.

Some examples of these skills are:

- Ability to innovate
- Conceptual thinking
- Creativity
- Critical analysis and discussion
- Entrepreneurship
- Problem solving
- Research and development skills
- Self-reflection and awareness
- Structuring an argument
- Teamwork

The strand of Personal Development modules on the course are where these skills are most clearly developed but they are also embedded within many of the modules on the course. Some of these are summarised below module by module:

Personal Development 1 – Images, Thoughts and Texts

Study skills, research, analysis of written and visual information, self-evaluation, reflection and critical judgment.

Personal Development 2 – Presenting your Photography Portfolio and website development, peer review.

Personal Development 3 – Personal Vision Research planning, time management, oral presentation.

Photography in Context

Collaborative working, fundraising/sponsorship, curatorial skills, display and presentation of work in the public context.

Photography Work Placement

Professional experience, CV writing, career mapping.

Art/Science Collaboration

Collaborative interdisciplinary working, peer teaching.

Personal Development 4 – Professional Futures

Portfolio presentation, CV writing, career mapping, business skills.

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 (fine art, freelance editorial, photojournalist, social, fashion, advertising, PR, music, portraiture, architecture, documentary, newspaper, medical)
Photographer's assistant, Stylist, Location finder, Studio manager
Arts Officer – (Director, Assistant, Production personnel),
Museum (Curator, staff, archivist)
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. These 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 effective use of their learning environment.
- 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
- Make use of the photography facilities with a clear and measured understanding of health and safety procedures.
- Competently control both analogue and digital workflows.
- 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 awareness some of the key debates in photographic history.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the procedures for the presentation and structure of academic essays.
- Construct both a physical and an online portfolio of their work.
- Prepare and deliver an illustrated presentation to their peers.

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, self guided research for the production of 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.
- Collaborate effectively both with individuals and within a group.
- Present themselves in a professional manner when dealing with external bodies and organisations.

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 art, media, cultural and educational market place and professions

Learning, teaching 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

Towards 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.

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.

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.

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 Faculty.

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

The course has been designed so that there are thematic linkages and continuities between modules running concurrently each semester in the first two years. These are intended to give a sense of coherence and continuity.

Broad themes by level and semester:

Level 4

Semester 1 The transparency of the Photographic Image.

Semester 2 The Language of Photography.

Level 5

Semester 1 Image and Identity.

Semester 2 Photography in Context.

Also built into the course structure is a development and progression between the consecutive semesters of course. There are three main strands or types of module within the course:

Photography Practice modules which concentrate on the development of students' own creative practice.

History & Theory of Photography modules which give students a theoretical framework and an historical context to their own work and a broader understanding of photography as a cultural and social phenomenon.

Personal Development modules which help students to develop a wide range of skills needed both for degree level study and for future employment as well as the space to reflect upon and synthesise their learning throughout the course.

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.

Credit Level 4				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
MPHO402	Photography Practice 1	Core	30	15
MPHO403	History & Theory of Photography 1	Core	15	7.5
MPHO404	Personal Development 1	Core	15	7.5
MPHO405	Photography Practice 2	Core	30	15
MPHO406	History & Theory of Photography 2	Core	15	7.5
MPHO407	Personal Development 2	Core	15	7.5
Award of Certificate of Higher Education available				

Credit Level 5				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
MPHO504	Photography Practice 3	Core	30	15
MPHO505	History & Theory of Photography 3	Core	15	7.5
MPHO506	Personal Development 3	Core	15	7.5
MPHO507	Photography Practice 4	Core	30	15
MPHO508	History & Theory of Photography 4	Core	15	7.5
2PHO560	Photography in Context	Option	15	7.5
2PHO561	Photography Work Placement	Option	15	7.5
MDPI500	Art/Science Collaboration	Option	15	7.5
Award of Diploma of Higher Education available				
Credit Level 6				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
MPHO601	Major Project 1	Core	15	7.5
2PHO623	Dissertation	Core	45	22.5
2PHO633	Major Project 2	Core	45	22.5
2PHO634	Personal Dev 4 - Professional Futures	Core	15	7.5
Award of BA available				
Award of BA Honours available.				

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

Academic regulations

The BA Honours 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, which is available at westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster. The following regulations should be read in conjunction with Section 17: Modular Framework for Undergraduate Courses and relevant sections of the current Handbook of Academic Regulations, which is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations

Award

To qualify for the award BA Honours Photographic Arts, a student must have:

- obtained at least 360 credits including:

- passed 75 credits at credit Level 4 or higher and achieved at least a condoned credit in each of the remaining modules worth 45 credits at Level 4; and
- passed a minimum of 120 Credits at credit Level 5 or higher; and
- passed a minimum of 120 credits at credit Level 6 or higher.
- attempted modules with a maximum value of 330 credits at credit Levels 5 and 6; and
- 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 credit Level 6 being in the range of the class to be awarded, and the average of the next best 105 credits passed at credit Levels 5 and 6 provided the next best 105 credits passed are no more than one classification below this.

Support for students

Upon 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 Faculty Registry. Students will be provided with 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 four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at their Faculty. Students can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books).

Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students.

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 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)

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 management structure supporting the course is as follows:

Gavin Jack, Course Leader, responsible for day to day running and overall management of the course and development of the curriculum.

Rachel Cunningham, Year One Leader, assists course leader in coordinating and overseeing the first year of the course.

Allan Parker, Year Two Leader, assists course leader in coordinating and overseeing the second year of the course.

Eugenie Shinkle, Theory Coordinator, responsible for overseeing and coordinating theory modules on the course.

Neil Matheson, Admissions Tutor, responsible for overseeing and coordinating admissions and recruitment on the course.

Andy Golding, Head of Department, holds academic responsibility for the course and other courses within the Department of Photography & Digital Media within the Faculty of Media, Arts & Design

Kerstin May, Dean of Faculty, holds overall responsibility for the course, and for the other courses run by the Faculty of Media, Arts & Design.

Michelle Payne, Course Administrator, is a member of the Faculty Registry team, responsible for enrolment, registration and other matters. More details are given below in section 1.4.

Module Leaders are responsible for the delivery of individual modules, but may be only one of the staff team supporting that module. It is also possible that a module leader will have only an organisational role, with teaching delivered by other staff.

Academic staff teach and in some cases lead modules. Note that several staff with specific roles also teach and lead modules.

Course approval, monitoring and review

The course was initially approved by a University Validation 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 Faculty 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 Faculty 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 views are 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 invited to complete a Module Feedback Questionnaire before 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 elicits feedback from students about their course and University experience.

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 is part of the Faculty's' quality assurance evidence base.

For more information about this course:

University of Westminster website - westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/photography

Westminster Photography website - www.westminsterphotography.co.uk

Admissions Officer

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Admissions Tutor

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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.

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