

Programme Specification

PH-HN-2025: Photography

Pearson Higher National Certificate (HTQ) awarded by Pearson (FHEQ Level 4)

Pearson Higher National Diploma awarded by Pearson (FHEQ Level 5)

Programme Status: Approved | Version: 1

Introduction

This programme specification provides a summary of the main features of the Photography programme and includes the learning outcomes that you as a student are expected to have achieved on successful completion of the programme.

Further detailed information related to this programme and the College can be found in the following resources:

- Programme Handbook
- B&FC Admissions Policy
- Work based and placement learning handbook (for foundation degrees)
- Student guide to assessment and feedback

When undertaken as part of a Degree Apprenticeship additional information is available in the following resources:

- The Programme Delivery Plan
- The End Point Assessment Guide
- B&FC Mentor Guide
- B&FC Apprenticeship Strategy

Key Programme Information

Programme Code	PH-HN-2025
Programme Title	Photography
Teaching Institution	Blackpool and The Fylde College
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) Accreditation	None
UCAS Code	
Language of Study	English
Version	1
Approval Status	Approved
Approval Date	18 Sep 2025
JACS Code	Photography (W640)
Programme Leader	Jonathan Rowe

Programme Awards

Award	Award Type	Level	Awarding Body
Pearson Higher National Certificate (HTQ)	Higher National Certificate	Level 4	Pearson
Pearson Higher National Diploma	Higher National Diploma	Level 5	Pearson

Programme Overview

The Photography pathway provides exciting opportunities for you to study a vibrant, industry-relevant curriculum that develops multi-skilled creative practitioners in photographic practice, aligned to a range of careers in the creative industries. The programme allows you the freedom to experiment across a variety of specialisms and will equip you with the necessary knowledge and technical skills to enter the photography industry, develop a freelance profile, or progress to further studies at BA (Hons) degree level. This programme will provide you with a platform to begin or enhance your career and incorporates both technical training and practical elements that are highly desirable in a range of roles in the photography industry and broader visual arts sectors.

You will benefit from the expertise of the curriculum team who are actively engaged with the photography industry, providing real-world, work-based experiences and training. You will have access to multiple College resources. These include fully equipped photography studios, a traditional darkroom for analogue processing, digital editing suites with access to Adobe Creative Cloud (including Photoshop, Lightroom, and Bridge), and a range of professional photographic equipment. The Photography programme also utilises the gallery and theatre for works in progress and the stunning public gallery. The photography studios are equipped with the latest industry-standard technology and provide a spacious and inspiring environment in which to work. The studios can be accessed during both contact and non-contact times. Class sizes are normally small, which is very beneficial, affording the opportunity for a tailored personal learning experience with lots of tutorial guidance and support.

Our university campus is well-positioned within the local art and design community and creative sectors, which are incredibly diverse. There are many small and large-scale industry-based businesses and events for you to engage with. These vary from local galleries such as The Grundy and Abingdon Studios to pivotal local employers and organisations such as Left Coast, Aunty Social, Association of Photographers and Creative Lancashire.

Admission Criteria

Entry Requirements

For applicants to the HNC who have recently been in education, the entry profile will typically require the the following:

A minimum of 48 UCAS points in an appropriate discipline
2x A Levels in appropriate discipline, or
Level 3 Extended Diploma or Merit from Level 3 Diploma in an appropriate discipline, or
Level 3 Access to Higher Education Diploma or Foundation Diploma Art & Design, or
An international equivalent of the above qualifications

As well as

Grade 4/C in both GCSE Maths and English, or L2 equivalent

Adults

Adults who have completed L2 or Commercial Courses with BSoA may also be considered based on portfolio and experience in the subject area.

Applicants who do not meet these criteria but can demonstrate relevant work/life skills or knowledge will also be considered on an individual basis. Blackpool School of Arts welcomes applications from mature students without formal qualifications for HNC programmes or from mature students whose Level 3 qualifications were gained more than 5 years ago. All applicants will be interviewed, and we will consider your prior formal qualifications, and enable you to discuss evidence of experience gained through employment or other verifiable source.

We will consider the following:

Related work experience

An international equivalent of the above qualifications

RPL may also be considered in accordance with the awarding body's regulations

Applications may also be considered from individuals who can demonstrate a strong interest in the subject and a willingness to commit to the goals of lifelong learning and personal development.

Career Options and Progression Opportunities

Progression

Your HNC provides a solid grounding in the related subject discipline and is aligned to Level 4 benchmarks. Upon completing the HNC, you can apply to study the Level 5 HND of the corresponding programme at B&FC or apply to other HE providers, subject to meeting their requirements for admissions and/or RPL. BSoA now offers a BA (Hons) Creative Practice Top-Up, which will likely be your route of progression if you wish to move from Level 5 to Level 6.

After completing the BA (Hons) Top-Up, you can then apply for a corresponding Level 7 programme at one of the providers outlined below:

University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)
University of Salford
Manchester School of Art
UAL CSM
Liverpool Hope
Liverpool John Moore's

Or a PGCE at B&FC

Employment Opportunities

HNC/D Art and Design Photography covers several careers in the photography industry. Photographers create work for a range of creative outputs and may be involved in exhibitions, publications, commissions and in support of the wider creative industry. Other employment opportunities include:

Junior property photographer
Junior photographer – Still life studio
Junior level e-commerce photographer
Apprentice/internship photographer
Apprentice/internship photographic assistant

Apprenticeships

In the future, you may have opportunities to study for a qualification while working and earning by completing a creative apprenticeship. Creative arts and design standards are still in development and currently include:

Photography
Museums and Galleries Technician
Creative Digital Professional

Programme Aims

This programme aims to:

By the end of Level 4, students will have sound knowledge of the basic concepts of creative output. They will be competent in a range of subject-specific skills as well as in general skills and qualities relevant to key areas of creative practice.

- give students the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to achieve high performance in the international creative industries

- develop students with enquiring minds, who have the abilities and confidence to work across different business functions and to lead, manage, respond to change, and tackle a range of complex creative situations

- provide the core skills required for a range of careers in the creative industries, specifically those related to management and operations

- offer a balance between employability skills and the knowledge essential for students with entrepreneurial, employment or academic ambitions

- develop students' understanding of the major impact that new digital technologies have on the creative environment

- provide insight into international business operations and the opportunities and challenges presented by a global marketplace

- equip students with knowledge and understanding of culturally diverse organisations, cross-cultural issues, diversity and values, and to allow flexible study to meet local and specialist needs.

By the end of Level 5, students will have a sound understanding of the principles in their area of specialist study and will know how to apply those principles more widely in the business world. They will be able to perform effectively in their specialist area.

- give students the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to achieve high performance in the international creative industries

- develop students with enquiring minds, who have the abilities and confidence to work across different business functions and to lead, manage, respond to change, and tackle a range of complex creative situations

- provide the core skills required for a range of careers in the creative industries, specifically those related to management and operations

- offer a balance between employability skills and the knowledge essential for students with entrepreneurial, employment or academic ambitions

- develop students' understanding of the major impact that new digital technologies have on the creative environment

- provide insight into international business operations and the opportunities and challenges presented by a global marketplace

- equip students with knowledge and understanding of culturally diverse organisations, cross-cultural issues, diversity and values, and to allow flexible study to meet local and specialist needs.

Programme Learning Outcomes

Level 4

Upon successful completion of this level, students will be able to:

1. Analyse the history, theories, and developments related to the area of practice, exploring contextual knowledge to create informed creative projects.
2. Generate and refine ideas using an iterative approach to problem solving in creative practice, evaluating briefs to design innovative solutions.
3. Acquire and apply the technical knowledge and skills necessary to produce and execute creative project outcomes.
4. Implement professional knowledge, behaviours, and practices within the sector, responding effectively to given briefs.
5. Explore techniques, media, and formats to communicate ideas and concepts for diverse audiences, presenting development and outcomes effectively.

Level 5

Upon successful completion of this level, students will be able to:

6. Analyse and synthesise contextual knowledge to inform personal progression and evaluate responses to professional briefs.
7. Evaluate and innovate professional approaches to creative problem solving, formulating of ideas, proposals, and final outcomes.
8. Apply and execute technical knowledge and skills to support the production of professional outcomes.
9. Demonstrate and implement professional knowledge, behaviours, and practices, managing projects effectively.
10. Demonstrate professional communication skills, articulating project development and outcomes effectively.

Programme Structure

Module	Level	Credits	Category	Description	Grading Method
Stage 1					
M/650/4784: A1: Concept and Development (Photography for England) (Mandatory)	4	85	Coursework: Assignment	Summative	Pass/Merit/Dist
T/650/4786: A2: Creative Project (Photography for England) (Mandatory)	4	35	Coursework: Assignment	Summative	Pass/Merit/Dist
Stage 2					
A/650/4788: B2: Professional Project (Photography) (Mandatory)	5	75	Coursework: Assignment	Summative	Pass/Merit/Dist
Y/650/4787: B1: Personal Professional Development (Photography) (Mandatory)	5	45	Coursework: Assignment	Summative	Pass/Merit/Dist

Study Workload

You will have a number of hours timetabled each week where you will be supported by a subject specialist academic tutor. You are expected to attend all timetable sessions. If you wish to see a member of staff at another time either drop in, make an appointment in person, by phone or email. In addition to your timetabled sessions, you will be expected to undertake further study independently as described in the section on teaching and learning.

Programme Delivery: Learning and Teaching

Throughout this programme, you will take an active role in your learning through a combination of enquiry, project, and problem-based learning. You'll collaborate with fellow students, staff, and industry professionals to take ownership of your personal and professional development in the exciting and ever-evolving world of photography. This approach directly supports the development of contextual knowledge, creative exploration, technical proficiency, and professional behaviours, as outlined in the Level 4 assessment criteria.

At Level 4, you'll be introduced to the core principles of photographic practice, laying the groundwork for your creative and technical development. You'll explore key areas such as camera operation, exposure control, composition, lighting techniques, and visual storytelling. You'll work across both traditional and digital platforms, including black-and-white darkroom processes and digital workflows using Adobe Creative Cloud applications such as Photoshop, Lightroom, and Bridge. These activities support the development of technical knowledge and skill, enabling you to produce appropriate outcomes in response to creative briefs.

You'll also examine the historical, theoretical, and cultural contexts of photography, developing your ability to critically analyse images and understand their impact. This supports your contextual understanding and ability to interpret relevant cultural and social factors. Through research, independent and directed study, and hands-on studio and location-based practice, you'll engage in problem solving, analysis, evaluation, reflection, and experimentation—skills that align with the iterative development processes and creative problem-solving expected at Level 4.

Our teaching approach blends analogue and digital methods, helping you understand the full spectrum of photographic practice. You'll benefit from collaboration with other programmes

across the School of Art, enriching your learning and enhancing your transferable skills. This supports the development of professional knowledge and behaviours, and encourages a broad, interdisciplinary approach to creative work.

Employment-related activities will help you develop communication, teamwork, research, and analysis skills that are highly valued in both higher education and the workplace. Group critiques, peer reviews, study visits, and sessions with visiting photographers and creative professionals, along with opportunities to curate and exhibit your work, will support the development of your professional identity. These experiences contribute to your ability to present development processes and outcomes to a specified audience, a key criterion for Level 4 assessment.

By the end of Level 4, you'll have a solid understanding of the basic concepts of photography and be competent in subject-specific techniques such as digital editing, studio lighting, darkroom printing, and portfolio development. You'll also complete a commissioned, industry-based brief, demonstrating your ability to apply technical knowledge and skill to produce appropriate outcomes.

At Level 5, you'll deepen your knowledge and refine your creative voice. You'll explore advanced photographic techniques, including medium and large format photography, experimental image-making, moving image, and multimedia storytelling. You'll also engage with professional practices such as editorial, commercial, documentary, and fine art photography. The curriculum will support you in developing a personal photographic style and a critical understanding of your place within the wider creative industries. You'll be encouraged to take creative risks, develop your own ideas in response to challenging briefs, and manage uncertainty and complexity with confidence. You'll apply both theory and practice across a range of photographic contexts, demonstrating critical thinking, creative problem solving, and professional communication skills. By the end of Level 5, you'll have a strong understanding of your chosen specialism and know how to apply your skills in the wider creative industries. You'll have built a distinctive photographic identity, supported by a professional online portfolio and website.

Throughout the HNC/D, you'll gain valuable insight into the industry through professional content, research, lectures, seminars, group appraisals, peer reviews, exhibitions, and live briefs. This will support your transition from student to industry practitioner. You'll develop skills in image construction using both analogue and digital techniques and refine hands-on practical skills such as studio and location photography, digital post-production, darkroom printing, and visual sequencing. Sessions will be delivered through workshops with tutor-led demonstrations, one-to-one guidance, peer review, and group collaboration. Professional development and contextual studies will be delivered through lectures, seminars, visiting speakers, and study visits, taking place in lecture theatres, digital suites, and photography studios to provide a rich and varied learning environment that supports your creative growth.

B&FC's Power to Progress initiative is designed to ensure that you receive tailored support to overcome barriers to learning and reach your full potential. You'll have access to a wide range of services including academic coaching, wellbeing support, and inclusive learning strategies that help you build confidence, resilience, and independence throughout your studies.

A key part of this support is the guidance provided by Higher Education Learning Mentors (HELMs). Your HELM will work with you on a personal level to help identify your strengths and areas for development. They'll support you in setting realistic and meaningful goals, and in developing the skills and behaviours that will help you succeed—both academically and professionally.

Alongside HELM support, you'll take part in regular one-to-one and group tutorials. These sessions are designed to help you reflect on your progress, set and review targets, and explore

your personal and professional development. Tutorials provide a space for you to ask questions, share ideas, and receive feedback in a supportive environment. They also help you build the skills needed for independent learning, critical thinking, and career planning.

Programme Delivery: Assessment

The HNC Photography programme is based upon a singular Module which runs through the year. It's title is module A: 'Process and Practice' and as this suggests will introduce you to a variety of, knowledge, skills and technical processes which you will be able to develop and will support your own practice within the Photography industry.

The module is delivered through two units (A1 and A2) which help to break down the learning into manageable parts and will be delivered consecutively.

The first unit, A1: 'Concept and Development' is worth 85 credits which is a substantial part of the years delivery, the delivery will be mostly practical and studio based and will be structured to allow you to approach and be assessed on five areas of teaching and which are Contextual studies, Idea formation, Technical Skills, Professional Practice and Communication Skills. These five pillars of learning form the basis of the programme throughout the year and will continue into the HND delivery should you wish to progress.

The second unit of the year, A2: 'Creative Project' is worth 35 credits and will be based upon a brief that will allow you to explore and further develop your practice and the same five criteria as before will be assessed, thereby encouraging your development as a holistic practitioner.

The HND is the second year of the programme and follows a similar path, in terms of the content and the areas of teaching and learning, however, will focus on developing your professional approach. The overarching module for the year is entitled Module B: 'Professional Creative Practice' and is designed to support your transition into employment or further study at Level 6. Again, the module is delivered through two units (B1 and B2), however at this level the first unit, B1: 'Personal Professional Development' is smaller and will focus on you and the creation of a professional identity within the industry, the second unit B2: 'Professional Project', which is larger will give you the opportunity to instigate, plan and develop a fully realised personal project incorporating a strong portfolio and digital identity.

Throughout the programme delivery, you will be given the opportunity to discuss your progress through identified formative assessment points, these are timed in such a way to allow you to consistently assess your own progress and receive structured feedback at specific points.

Overall, the programme is designed to be realistic, developmental and progressive, helping you to forge a strong and dynamic creative professional identity.

Your curriculum includes core learning delivered across various specialisms, encouraging collaboration and interaction. Not only does this foster vital cross-curricular communication, but it also makes efficient use of resources and staffing.

You'll also develop practical skills through studio-based learning and culture, guided by industry specialists. This dynamic, interactive experience emphasizes experiential learning. Through hands-on activities, peer support, practical projects, and assignments, you'll gain valuable experience in research, independent and directed study, and real-world workplace scenarios. This approach ensures you're well-prepared for the challenges of your chosen creative field. The studio-based model deepens your understanding of design processes and helps you produce more sophisticated and complex outcomes.

This structure supports your foundational growth while allowing flexibility for your individual development. You'll benefit from a strong support framework within the school, including excellent resources, learning environments, and robust tutorial and learning support systems.

Your programme aligns with current industry standards and practices, ensuring you acquire skills that are highly valued by employers. This alignment boosts your employability and prepares you for a successful career in the creative industries.

Your learning journey is supported by a holistic delivery model, monitored through a comprehensive assessment system. You'll receive ongoing feedback through regular formative and summative assessments, helping you grow in confidence while ensuring you meet all learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Assessment Strategy

HNC

Unit A1: Concept and Development (85 Credits)

You'll engage with Unit A1 over 23 weeks, concluding at the February half-term.

Assessments will be project-based. Your progress will be assessed formatively throughout the year. Each project is designed to holistically address the five pillars of learning:

- Contextual Knowledge
- Ideas Generation and Development
- Technical Knowledge and Skill
- Professional Practice
- Communication

Each assessment integrates all five pillars of learning. You'll receive formative feedback in weeks 9 and 17, and your final summative assessment will take place in week 23. Your final body of work will determine your final grades, which will be confirmed in March.

Unit A2: Creative Project (35 Credits)

After completing Unit A1, you'll begin Unit A2 in week 24, running through to week 32. This 35-credit unit covers the five pillars of learning and culminates in a summative assessment. You'll receive formative feedback in week 28, and your final grade will be confirmed in June.

HND

Unit B1: Personal Professional Development (45 Credits)

You'll complete this 45-credit unit over the first 11 weeks of the academic year, addressing the five pillars of learning through a single assignment. A formative assessment in week 6 will guide your development. Your final grade will be confirmed in December.

Unit B2: Professional Project (75 Credits)

Starting in week 12 and continuing to week 32, this 75-credit unit covers the five pillars of learning. You'll receive formative feedback in weeks 15 and 27, with a final summative assessment in week 32. Your final grade will be confirmed in June. This unit supports the creation of a substantial, cohesive body of work that reflects your learning across all outcomes.

Assessment strategies will be varied so that you are able to develop transferable skills such as independence, collaborative working, digital and communication skills as well as subject-specific knowledge in preparation for a successful and long-term entry to employment within the sector.

For practical units, you will be asked to submit a portfolio which comprises of a body of work including the planning and development stages as well as the final output. Written evidence should also be submitted containing references, creative development, and written reflections.

The practical demonstration of skills is required, you will need to carry out your own research and analysis, working independently on self-directed projects or as part of a team. Assessment items include:

- Written essays and reports
- Reviews and evaluations
- Individual and group presentations
- Critical self and peer-evaluation
- Individual online portfolios/promotion of work
- Group and individually produced artefacts
- Practical skills assessment

These assessment items aim to develop the following employability skills:

Independent written research to develop arguments, reflection and evaluation through sketchbooks, reports, and essays

Group work to develop problem solving through collaborative assignment briefs
Demonstrating techniques, recorded as experimental development such as textile samples, garment prototypes, or costume elements demonstrating refinement of process
Potential assessment of a work placement/session: using industry standard resources to demonstrate readiness for employment through reports, journals, blogs and essays
Review of progress in the form of continuous self-reflection setting and achieving targets to improve professional practice through journals, sketchbooks, and presentations
The assessment of a project/product which may include multiple assessments in different formats

You will be expected to evidence a breadth of subject knowledge, supported by a photography industry context. Critical analysis of existing creative outputs, peer work or individual work will evidence engagement in the reflective process supported by engagement in critical debate and argument. Photography production skills, technology practices and communication skills will also be assessed in both theoretical and practical demonstrations.

Each unit within the Pearson Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND) is assessed and awarded a grade of Pass, Merit, Distinction, or Refer, based on the quality and level of the work submitted.

Every unit comprises five learning outcomes, each of which is individually assessed and graded using the same scale: Pass, Merit, Distinction, or Refer. The grades achieved across the learning outcomes are then combined to determine the overall grade for the unit.

Subsequently, the grades from all completed units are aggregated to calculate the overall qualification grade, in accordance with Pearson's grading and classification guidelines.

Reasonable Adjustments

At Blackpool and The Fylde College (B&FC), you'll have access to a supportive and inclusive

approach to assessment that recognises your individual needs and circumstances. If you experience challenges that affect your ability to complete assessments—whether due to health, personal issues, or other barriers—you can request reasonable adjustments to help ensure a fair and equitable learning experience.

You can access the Personal Mitigating Circumstances (PMC) process if unexpected events impact your ability to meet deadlines or complete assessments. This process allows you to formally explain your situation and request adjustments such as deadline extensions, alternative formats, or rescheduled assessments.

In addition, the CASA (Centralised Assessment Submission and Adjustment) system helps manage assessment submissions and adjustments consistently across your programme. CASA ensures that any changes are applied fairly and transparently, making it easier for you and your tutors to stay informed and supported.

You may also be supported by the Student Support Wellbeing and Inclusion (SSWI) team, who work with you to create tailored support plans based on your individual needs. They'll help you access inclusive learning strategies and collaborate with your tutors to ensure adjustments are embedded into your learning experience.

Programme Delivery: Work Based and Placement Learning

This programme provides work-related learning opportunities which are designed to embed and develop a range of transferrable skills to prepare you for employment opportunities in a range of related creative professions. These include skills in spoken, written and visual communication, the ability to manage collaborative and independent projects, creative problem-solving.

The curriculum team are also working professionals engaged in various aspects of the industry, alongside the expertise of the team, local employers will be engaged in certain aspects of the course which will be tailored to your development, skill set and knowledge.

External engagement with industry representatives may include:

- field trips to local destinations and environments
- inviting members of the local creative communities to present guest lectures
- using employers to judge the quality of assessed presentations and/or products.

Programme Delivery: Graduate Skill Development

Upon the successful completion of your programme of study not only do we want to ensure that you have a great qualification but it's important to us that you are fully ready to embark on an exciting career and join our successful graduates working in the creative industries. To ensure this, we've placed an enormous focus on developing and refining graduate attributes through teaching, learning, assessment, and engagement with a wide range of peers, employers and other stakeholders. We call these graduate attributes, and they are designed to help you prepare for employment and succeed throughout your career.

As a B&FC graduate, you'll benefit from these graduate attributes:

- A commitment to lifelong learning and career development
- Collaborative teamwork and leadership skills
- Personal and intellectual autonomy
- Ethical, social and professional understanding
- Communication, information and digital literacies
- Global citizenship
- Research, scholarship and enquiry skills
- Enterprise and entrepreneurial awareness and capabilities

Study Costs: Equipment Requirements

You will need to spend approximately £250 p.a. on basic materials such as studio equipment etc, as well as an SD card and hard drive. A full list of material requirements will be issued to you after enrolment. You should also be aware that there may be additional costs to consider such as optional educational visits and photocopying/printing.

Study Costs: Additional Costs

Each year, we strongly encourage you to join two programme outings, although participation is not mandatory. These outings provide valuable opportunities to immerse yourself in real working environments, offering insights into professional culture and daily routines within the industry.

Additionally, we offer an exciting annual international trip, which is an optional opportunity available at an additional cost beyond the programme fees. This trip provides a unique chance to broaden your horizons, gain exposure to global perspectives, and forge connections with professionals.

While participation in these outings is not compulsory, we believe they offer invaluable experiences that can greatly enrich your learning journey and expand your professional network. Your active involvement in these opportunities can enhance your understanding of industry practices and contribute to your personal and professional growth.

Blackpool and the Fylde College are keen to support all our students and recognise that in this current climate you may need extra financial support to enable you to achieve to your potential – We have a team of professionals to support you – here is the link to the different financial support we offer - <https://www.blackpool.ac.uk/higher-education-bursaries-terms-and-conditions>

Related Courses

HNC/D Fashion & Textiles

HNC/D Graphic Design

HNC/D Fine Art

HNC/D Acting

HNC/D Music Technology

BA (Hons) Creative Practice