

The Course

The A Level specification consists of two units:

Unit 1: Personal Investigation (60%)

Unit 2: Externally Set Assignment (40%)

In the first two terms of the Lower Sixth, students work through a series of practical projects to develop their confidence, creative thinking and technical skills as emerging photographers. Students must set their own theme in the final term and begin the research and initial practical work for the Personal Investigation. This major body of work is developed until December of the Upper Sixth. Next, the exam board sets the theme for the Externally Set Assignment. Students create a body of work over several weeks, culminating in a 15 hour controlled exam in the Photography Suite where they produce a series of final outcomes for Unit 2.

All students will experience the following range of media techniques to develop their skills:

- Technical instruction on how to use a DSLR camera including guidance on composition, exposure, depth of field etc.
- Studio and location practice.
- An introduction to 35mm film and wet process dark room techniques where relevant.
- Contextual research and analysis and how to analyse photographs using formal language to express their views and opinions.
- Instruction on the use of Photoshop and digital manipulation.
- Visiting professional photographer workshops.
- Exhibition visits.

The primary aim of this course is to develop mature and creative individuals who have the confidence to express themselves. Part of that confidence comes from using a camera in a skilful and accomplished manner, and we emphasise traditional skills. Time and again, our students return from university interviews smiling, having been complimented on the quality of their portfolio and then offered a place on their chosen degree.





Why choose Photography?

This subject is essential for students wishing to apply for courses in Photography or related studies involving digital media and manipulation at university, including Professional Photography, Commercial Photography, Fashion Photography, Video Art, Visual Communication, Film and Television Production, Digital Media, Games Design, Fine Art, Photography Education and many more. Alternatively, you may choose Photography as a complete change to your other Science or essay-based subjects. It's worth remembering that the study of Photography can positively complement your other selected topics and give you a better appreciation of the world around us. The level of creative autonomy within the course will enable you to express your ideas effectively and develop new problem-solving methods. It will also improve your organisation and independent study techniques and many other transferable technique that are useful in a whole range of careers.

The Teaching Staff

All staff within the department are Bachelors or Masters of Fine Art with specialisms in photography, figurative painting, drawing, sculpture and installation. Our department technician is also a professional illustrator and can often be found advising students on ideas and photographic processes.

The Facilities

Students have exclusive use of three dedicated Photography Studios and two IT suites that are open to use throughout the normal day and after school. Photoshop software is available in both IT rooms as well as in other selected places around the school. The studios are equipped with various backdrops, light cubes and lighting equipment. Workshops by visiting professionals and location work are integral to the course and visits to relevant exhibitions. In addition, our photographers enter local and national competitions.

What do I need to study A Level Photography?

A minimum Grade 6 in a creative subject (Art, Drama, Design and Technology or Photography) and a genuine interest in the subject is required.