

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1. Key Information

Programme Title:	BA (Hons) Photography BA (Hons) Photography with Foundation Year BA (Hons) Photography (Top-Up)
Awarding Institution:	Buckinghamshire New University
Teaching Institution(s):	Buckinghamshire New University
Subject Cluster:	Visual Arts
Award Title (including separate Pathway Award Titles where offered):	BA (Hons) Photography
Pathways (if applicable)	
FHEQ level of final award:	6
Other award titles available (exit qualifications):	Certificate of Higher Education Diploma of Higher Education BA Photography
Accreditation details:	Association of Photographers (AOP)
Length of programme:	3 years 4 years with Foundation Year 1 year Top-Up
Mode(s) of Study:	Full Time
Mode of Delivery:	In person (on-site) delivery
Language of study:	English
QAA Subject Benchmark(s):	Art & Design (2019)
Other external reference points (e.g. Apprenticeship Standard):	
Course Code(s):	BAPHOTFT / BAPHOTFY / BAPHOTTU
UCAS Code(s):	
Approval date:	01 December 2022
Date of last update:	January 2025

2. Programme Summary

BA (Hons) Photography at BNU is a contemporary programme of study that is designed to provide you with a broad spectrum of knowledge and understanding of the subject across commercial and culturally-located fields of practice. Equipping you with core technical skills from analogue to digital, academic knowledge, and extending your professional practice, the programme prepares you for future employment in the photography industry, and arts and cultural industries.

In addition to learning about commercial applications (such as editorial and advertising photography), you will develop your knowledge of photography through its interactions with other creative subjects; for example, in the creation of 3D environments using CGI, exploring design capabilities in commercial field, or experimenting with the moving image as a means of personal expression or visual communication. There will be clear emphasis on arts-based practice, where you will develop projects from concept to exhibition outcomes and be encouraged to adopt experimental approaches and methods.

You will be taught by staff who are active researchers and/or practitioners who will provide you with current insight into the subject, as well as develop your learning through research, collaborative projects, industry briefs and external opportunities. You will refine your skills, methods and knowledge to become thinking practitioners critically-engaged with your subject.

3. Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes

Programme Aims

This programme aims to:

1. Provide an insight into the processes and contexts which inform the making of commercial and culturally located photographic images in society, providing opportunities for learners to determine personal direction
2. Produce well-rounded graduates equipped with a range of technical, academic, creative and professional skills appropriate for the requirements of the image-based creative industries and/or to progress onto postgraduate study
3. Develop learners' key transferable skills and behaviours, including self-reflection and management, in order to improve employability prospects and successful independent and collaborative enterprise
4. Provide learners with a critical understanding of photography in order to articulate and contextualise their practice within theoretical discourse and broader frameworks of contemporary practice
5. Offer a contemporary curriculum engaged with social, technological, environmental, ethical and cultural perspectives, enabling graduates to become 'thinking practitioners' or socially responsible entrepreneurs, applying their learning to a range of commercial and cultural contexts

Programme Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding (K)

On successful completion of the programme you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
K1	Articulate your creative identity, motivations and aspirations within the context of contemporary photographic practice and the creative industries.
K2	Contextualise your practice in the light of key debates and theories in the field.
K3	Demonstrate detailed subject knowledge and understanding of the critical dimensions of photography.

K4	Evidence understanding of the power of photography as a tool for representation and influence.
-----------	--

Analysis and Criticality (C)

On successful completion of the programme you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
C1	Apply the skills of analysis, reflection and self-criticism to yourself and your practice.
C2	Communicate information, argument, and analysis effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
C3	Apply a critically-informed knowledge of professional practice to the wider visual arts and media industries.
C4	Demonstrate a synthesised understanding of the practice-theory relationship as you interpret, analyse and evaluate critical approaches to creative practice.

Application and Practice (P)

On successful completion of the programme you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
P1	Deploy emerging photographic technologies, making use of associated equipment and processes.
P2	Evidence conceptual and theoretical underpinning in response to self-set, staff-set and/or industry briefs.
P3	Devise creative and innovative solutions to a brief, making informed decisions in your selection of techniques, materials, processes and technologies to develop a coherent body of work.
P4	Evidence the synthesis of ideas and concepts within presentation and exhibition.
P5	Apply experimental approaches and technical skills relating to both analogue and digital methods of image creation.

Transferable skills and other attributes (T)

On successful completion of the programme you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
T1	Evidence understanding of professional standards, codes of conduct as well as legal and ethical aspects within the creative industries.
T2	Implement a socially responsible approach to photographic practice demonstrating appropriate behaviours and attitudes.
T3	Manage the progression of complex tasks, meeting deadlines and demonstrating appropriate self and time management.
T4	Develop yourself through solving problems and making creative and professional decisions while being open to change and challenge.

Graduate Attributes

The BNU Graduate Attributes of: Knowledge and its application; Creativity; Social and ethical awareness and responsibility; and Leadership and self-development focus on the development of innovative leaders in professional and creative capacities, who are equipped to operate in the 21st Century labour market and make a positive impact as global citizens.

On this programme, attributes are developed through a practical and theoretical study of photographic practice across commercial and culturally located fields. This embeds knowledge and understanding (K1-4), through the creative and technical development of skills in a range of media from analogue to digital. A study of photography as an interdisciplinary practice is encouraged, including 3D environments and use of CGI, moving image and sound as a form of visual expression as well as photography and its design capabilities (P1-5). Application of analysis and criticality occurs in response to research, projects and set briefs as well as external engagement opportunities (C1-4). Professional practice is a core element of the programme, developing ethical awareness and social responsibility as well as producing an autonomous approach to learning, self-development and cultivating leadership qualities (T1-4).

4. Entry Requirements

The University's [general entry requirements](#) will apply to admission to this programme with the following additions / exceptions:

- A typical offer will require a UCAS tariff score of: 88 - 112
- A minimum of two full A-levels (or equivalent) is required. Every application is considered on an individual basis.
- Applicants will need to complete an interview and/or demonstrate portfolio work, further guidance is given on the interview and portfolio advice pages.
- For further details of our international English entry requirements, please visit our international pages.
- Applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements for the three-year undergraduate programme, or those who do not feel fully prepared for a degree course, can apply for a four-year programme including a Foundation Year - UCAS Score 32-56

If you do not meet the entry requirements you may, if you have relevant professional experience, still be invited for interview, where you will be required to demonstrate the necessary knowledge and understanding for entry onto the course.

Previous study, professional and / or vocational experiences may be recognised as the equivalent learning experience and permit exemption from studying certain modules in accordance with our [accreditation of prior learning](#) (APL) process.

5. Programme Structure

Level	Modules (Code, Title and Credits)	Exit Awards
Foundation Year	<p>Core modules: CAD0001 Research and Development in Art and Design (20) CAD0002 Collaboration in Creative Practice (20) CAD0003 Visual Experimentation (20) CAD0004 Contextual Studies: Ideas, Concepts, Intro to research & writing (20) CAD0005 Portfolio (20) CAD0011 Project - Creative Realisation (20)</p>	N/A. No credit is awarded at this Level.
Level 4	<p>Core modules: CAD4024 Photography: Issues in Representation (20) CAD4028 Digital realms and Virtual Spaces (20) CAD4026 Convergence: Moving Image in Photography (20) CAD4025 Visual Narratives II: Screen and Wall (20) CAD4010 Visual Narratives I: Stock and Page (20) CAD4089 Contemporary Issues and Creative Practice (20)</p>	Certificate of Higher Education, awarded on achievement of 120 credits at Level 4
Level 5	<p>Core modules: CAD5053 Professional Studies in Photography (20) CAD5067 Photography for Design I (20) CAD5066 Photography and Critical Theory (20) CAD5075 Exploratory Practices and Methods in Photography (20) CAD5068 Photography for Design II (20)</p> <p>Option modules: Choose from one of the following 2 modules: CAD5122 Belonging & Becoming (20) CAD5061 Enterprise (20)</p>	Diploma of Higher Education, awarded on achievement of 240 credits, including a minimum of 120 credits at Level 5
Level 6	<p>Core modules: CAD6026 Research and Development (20) CAD6030 Creative and Professional Development (20) CAD6031 Contextual Report on Practice (20)</p>	Ordinary Degree, awarded on achievement of 300 credits, including 60 credits at Level 6 and 120 credits at each of Levels 4 and 5

	CAD6029 Professional Practice (20) CAD6027 Final Major Project (40)	Honours Degree , awarded on achievement of 360 credits, including 120 credits at each of Levels, 4, 5 and 6
--	--	--

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. Other option modules may also be introduced at a later stage enabling the programme to respond to changes in the subject area.

6. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and teaching

The teaching, learning and assessment methods used are consistent with those described in the Benchmark statements. Learning on across all levels predominantly emphasises an experiential approach to practice, theory and research with an increased professional and critical engagement of the subject at levels 5 and 6.

A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed, including:

Lectures – The theory element of the curriculum is led or supported by a programme of lectures. On practice-based modules, they could refer to tutor-led presentations and demonstrations of the core content, which is further explored in a range of interactive and integrated activities, including practical workshops; this may include the discussion of historical, critical and contextual information to link theory and practice. Related exercises are distributed, enabling you to both reinforce and evolve your appreciation of the material covered, incorporating a mixture of individual and group discussion and activity.

Seminars, Seminar presentations, Group Critiques – Seminars may involve group critiques requiring you to display your work-in-progress to tutors and peers and is considered central to the learning experience. These sessions accommodate the testing of ideas in the presence of staff and peers as well as more formal presentations which may be assessed. The process encourages you to become increasingly articulate, critical and confident when discussing work and prepares them for client presentations when you extend your practice into employment. The critique is seen as an important forum not only for critical appraisal but also for debate and discussion, and as an opportunity to question the opinions of tutors and peers.

Tutorials – Tutorials may be individual or small group based. The tutorial system enables exploration through discussion of issues such as current work, progress, including new ideas and possibilities, research methodologies, providing analysis and exchange, through negotiated development to support progressively independent and learning. An open and direct approach to discussion of work is encouraged. Additionally, each learner is allocated a Personal Academic Tutor who oversees the pastoral support of their tutees within each year group.

Practical workshops and technical demonstrations – learners are supported by a range of staff during their studies, from tutors and visiting lecturers to technical demonstrators who provide practical and technical instruction. Core technical skills are delivered through a series of hands-on practical workshops, and where knowledge and the learner's skills-base are tested and applied through a range of practice-based tasks.

Projects – Central to the learning experience is the undertaking of self-set, staff-set practical assignments, and industry briefs. Assignments are staged throughout the course to make increasingly complex demands of the learner. The final level of study requires you to manage and generate professional quality work suitable for exhibition and public dissemination. Although modular in construct, the course requires you to negotiate the complex relationship between theory and practice through application, and to grow from a coherent learning experience.

The project is essential in teaching and learning in that it encourages the definition of problems and their appropriate solution and evaluation. All projects have clearly defined learning outcomes and assessment criteria, related to content, which provide the framework for exploration, experiment, research, development, presentation and communication. As you progress through the course, you are expected to take a more active role in directing your project work and ideas as well as designing your own project briefs through negotiation with staff. Since practice is the main element of the course, staff closely monitor the implementation, management and intellectual development of all projects, including your involvement in external assignments which contribute to your professional development.

Study Trips – These aim to foster group dynamics, peer group learning and broadening of learner experience of other cultural and contextual perspectives. Visits to museums, galleries and other appropriate institutions and organisations are arranged to complement their awareness and understanding of contemporary commercial and cultural photographic practice.

Visiting speakers – a dynamic visiting lecturer programme is integral to the course, where visiting professionals from a range of backgrounds contribute through presentations and/or workshops on their practice and specialism. Learners will regularly encounter different views and perspectives, which will help them to construct a wider knowledge base.

Guided Independent Study: The early stage of the course is dedicated to supplying foundation concepts, information and experience of process underpinning creative practice which can be expanded and utilised at a later stage. Subsequently, the emphasis moves to the growing independence and self-direction in your work, and the tuition assumes a more individual dialogue with learners. You are encouraged to explore a diverse range of applications for images from which you will decide a personal balance and direction. Personal research and independent project development are important, where time is given to plan and develop ideas as well as reflect on connections between areas of enquiry. You are expected to undertake guided independent study throughout your course, and to utilise your time outside of taught sessions to develop your knowledge, skills base and project development.

Blended delivery: The course offers a blended approach to learning and teaching, where learners are fully supported by the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). It is not just materials and resources that can be accessed, but tasks and interactive activities set up to structure and support their studies.

Learning strategies, under the direction of the course team, are designed to increase your active involvement in the learning process, growing your level of independence as the course progresses. Ongoing critical dialogue enables staff and learners to shape the overall coherence of the learner's experience and tutorial guidance fosters discussion on the progress of their personal intellectual and creative development.

Furthermore, learners are encouraged to participate and engage with a range of arts-based, commercial and/or socially driven projects and workshops to build confidence and understanding of the broader industry or professional base. Additionally, you are also strongly encouraged to be pro-active in seeking opportunities for work experience. Staff provide support through any professional development modules, and there are opportunities for external engagement, from community-based projects, and exhibitions, to specific commissions.

Assessment

Various learning and assessment methods and strategies are deployed to ultimately guide learners toward a greater autonomy and self-reliance in conducting their practice by the end of their studies in Level 6. Both formative and summative assessment take place in all levels – formative assessments are valuable in their generation of feedforward that learners can utilise in developing, refining and completing their assignment work for summative submission at the end of their modules. Summative assessment recognises and articulates learner achievement and validates their learning and progression on the programme.

Level 4 emphasises the development, demonstration and assessment of technical and conceptual skills with a recognition of theory-applied thinking.

Level 5 focuses on an enhanced development and assessment of conceptual and theoretically informed practice with an improved understanding and application of technical skills. Assessing learners' engagement and understanding of the creative industries sector is also central to the Level 5 programme.

Level 6 emphasises greater autonomy in the production of work and assesses learners' ability to develop, refine and synthesise theoretical, conceptual and technical components of their photographic practice. Additionally, an increased engagement with the professional sector through the preparation of their professional identity and skills, is central to their final year of study.

Assessment components required from learners are designed to test all areas of academic and subject-specific knowledge and may include contextual report writing, portfolio submission, exhibition project work, oral presentations and the utilisation of research journals or critical sketchbooks.

Contact Hours

Learners can expect to receive approximately 12 hours of scheduled learning activities per week. You will also be expected to undertake 18-20 hours of independent study (including research and practice) per week towards the completion of your coursework.

7. Programme Regulations

This programme will be subject to the following assessment regulations:

- *Regulations for Taught Degree Programmes (2023)*

8. Support for learners

The following systems are in place to support you to be successful with your studies:

- The appointment of a personal tutor to support you through your programme
- A programme handbook and induction at the beginning of your studies
- Library resources, include access to books, journals and databases - many of which are available in electronic format – and support from trained library staff
- Access to Blackboard, our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which is accessible via PC, laptop, tablet or mobile device
- Access to the MyBNU portal where you can access all University systems, information and news, record your attendance at sessions, and access your personalised timetable

- Academic Registry staff providing general guidance on University regulations, exams, and other aspects of learners and course administration
- Central learner services, including teams supporting academic skills development, career success, learner finance, accommodation, chaplaincy, disability and counselling
- Support from the Bucks Students' Union, including the Students' Union Advice Centre which offers free and confidential advice on University processes.

9. Programme monitoring and review

BNU has a number of ways for monitoring and reviewing the quality of learning and teaching on your programme. You will be able to comment on the content of their programme via the following feedback mechanisms:

- Formal feedback questionnaires and anonymous module 'check-ins'
- Participation in external surveys
- Programme Committees, via appointed student representatives
- Informal feedback to your programme leader

Quality and standards on each programme are assured via the following mechanisms:

- An initial event to approve the programme for delivery
- An annual report submitted by the External Examiner following a process of external moderation of work submitted for assessment
- The Annual Monitoring process, which is overseen by the University's Education Committee
- Review by the relevant PSRB(s)
- Periodic Subject Review events held every five years
- Other sector compliance and review mechanisms

10. Internal and external reference points

Design and development of this programme has been informed by the following internal and external reference points:

- The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- The QAA Subject Benchmark Statement – see detailed mapping below
- The BNU Qualifications and Credit Framework
- The BNU Grading Descriptors
- The University Strategy

Mapping of Subject Benchmark Statement and any relevant Apprenticeship Standard to Programme Learning Outcomes

Subject Benchmark Statement / Apprenticeship Standard:	Knowledge and understanding (K)				Analysis and Criticality (C)				Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)			
	K1	K2	K3	K4	C1	C2	C3	C4	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4
Subject-specific Knowledge and Understanding, Attributes and Skills																	
Present evidence that demonstrates some ability to generate ideas independently and/or as self-initiated activity and/or in response to set briefs	x									x						x	
Demonstrate proficiency in observation, investigation, enquiry, visualisation and/or making		x	x														
Develop ideas through to outcomes that confirm the student's ability to select and use materials, processes and environments	x					x		x	x		x	x	x				

Subject Benchmark Statement / Apprenticeship Standard:	Knowledge and understanding (K)				Analysis and Criticality (C)				Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
	Benchmark / Standard requirement	K1	K2	K3	K4	C1	C2	C3	C4	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4
Make connections between intention, process, outcome, context and methods of dissemination	x					x			x			x	x					
Knowledge of the broad critical and contextual dimensions of the student's discipline(s)		x	x	x					x		x							
Knowledge of the issues which arise from the creative practitioner's relationship with audiences, clients, markets, environments, users, consumers, and/or participants		x		x		x	x						x			x		
Knowledge of major developments in current and emerging media and technologies in their discipline(s)		x	x	x						x				x				
Understanding the significance of the work of other practitioners in their discipline(s)		x	x	x														

Subject Benchmark Statement / Apprenticeship Standard:	Knowledge and understanding (K)				Analysis and Criticality (C)				Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
	Benchmark / Standard requirement	K1	K2	K3	K4	C1	C2	C3	C4	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4
Understanding the role and impact of intellectual property							X								X			
Generic and Graduate Skills																		
Exercise self-management skills in managing workloads and meeting deadlines																	X	
Accommodate change and uncertainty									X									X
Analyse information and experiences, and formulate reasoned arguments			X		X													
Benefit from the critical judgements of others and recognise their personal strengths and needs			X		X													
Apply interpersonal, social and negotiation skills in interaction with others																X		

Subject Benchmark Statement / Apprenticeship Standard:	Knowledge and understanding (K)				Analysis and Criticality (C)				Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
	Benchmark / Standard requirement	K1	K2	K3	K4	C1	C2	C3	C4	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4
Communicate ideas and information in visual, oral and written forms	x					x												
Present ideas and work to their audiences	x					x							x					
Navigate, retrieve and manage information from a variety of sources										x								
Select and employ communication and information technologies										x				x				
The ability to identify IP issues, prevent infringements of other's IP rights and take the appropriate steps to safeguard the innovation and commercialisation processes							x								x			

Mapping of Programme Learning Outcomes to Modules

Programme Learning Outcome	Knowledge and understanding (K)				Analysis and Criticality (C)				Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
	Module Code (Core)	K1	K2	K3	K4	C1	C2	C3	C4	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4
Level 4																		
Photography: Issues in Representation		x	x	x					x		x						x	
Visual Narratives I: Stock & Page	x	x			x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Digital realms & Virtual Spaces	x	x			x	x			x		x	x	x				x	x
Convergence: Moving Image in Photography	x	x			x	x	x		x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Visual Narratives II: Screen and Wall	x	x			x	x					x	x	x	x			x	x
Contemporary Issues and Creative Practice		x				x		x										
Level 5																		
Professional Studies in Photography	x				x		x			x	x				x	x	x	x
Photography for Design I	x		x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Exploratory Practices and Methods in Photography	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x

Programme Learning Outcome	Knowledge and understanding (K)				Analysis and Criticality (C)				Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)			
	K1	K2	K3	K4	C1	C2	C3	C4	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4
Photography and Critical Theory		x	x	x	x	x	x							x		x	
Photography for Design II	x		x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Level 6																	
Research & Development	x	x	x	x		x		x		x				x		x	
Creative & Professional Development	x			x	x		x							x	x	x	
Contextual Report on Practice	x	x	x	x	x			x		x		x		x		x	
Professional Practice	x					x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Final Major Project	x			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x