The Hart School – Faculty of Design
Yr 11 GCSE Photography (AQA 8206) Curriculum Overview

Curriculum intent: GCSE Art and Design: Photography (AQA 8206) develops pupils into independent photographers who investigate, experiment, record and present a personal response. Component 1, the Portfolio, is 60% (96 marks) and is built from Unit 1 (camera, editing and photographer skills) and Unit 2 (Growth, Decay and Texture). Component 2, the Externally Set Assignment, is 40% (96 marks): AQA releases the paper from 2 January, and pupils have a preparatory period followed by 10 hours of supervised time. Both components are marked in school and moderated by AQA.

Four assessment objectives, each worth 25%, shape every lesson. AO1: develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources. AO2: refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes. AO3: record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses. AO4: present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language. Year 10 builds camera and editing skills through short technique studies, each led by a photographer, then launches Unit 2; Year 11 completes Unit 2 with developments and a final piece, then the externally set assignment.

Every piece is assessed individually against AO1–AO4 with a technical and editing checklist, WWW/EBI and green-pen DIRT, with Pupil Premium work prioritised. Each PPE is followed by QLA by AO and cohort, with PP and SEND work reviewed first. Access arrangements are confirmed before supervised time, and JCQ regulations apply to all assessed work.

Yr 11 end points: By the end of Year 11 pupils can complete the Component 1 portfolio with developments that combine photographers and a realised final piece (60%); respond independently to an AQA starting point; produce a final outcome in 10 hours of supervised time (Component 2, 40%); and present both components for AQA moderation.

Yr 11 key dates (LTP): Summative PPE on the Unit 2 portfolio w/c 2.11.26 · Year 11 PPE week w/c 23.11.26 · coursework portfolio PPE w/c 14.12.26 · Year 11 reports home 7.1.27 · AQA ESA paper available from 2.1.27 · PPE 2 w/c 22.2.27 and 1.3.27 · Year 11 reports home 24.3.27 · 10-hour ESA session 1 w/c 27.4.27 · AQA moderation submission window w/c 17.5.27 · course closed; records kept under JCQ retention

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2		Spring 1		Spring 2		Summer 1		Summer 2
Core Course Topic: Lesson (L) numbers and the week each is taught. Bold = summative assessment.	**Unit 2: Photographers 2 and 3 and Development 1** L1 · Photographer 2: research and initial images · w/c 7.9.26 L2 · Photographer 2: editing and final outcomes; explain edits · w/c 14.9.26 L3 · Photographer 3: research and initial images · w/c 21.9.26 L4 · Photographer 3: editing and final outcomes; analyse · w/c 28.9.26 L5 · Statement of Intent 2: review key images; plan · w/c 5.10.26 L6 · Development 1: choose 2 photographers to combine · w/c 12.10.26 L7 · Development 1: editing and analysis · w/c 19.10.26	**Unit 2: Developments, Final Piece and PPE** **L8 · Development 2: combine photography styles (PPE) · w/c 2.11.26** L9 · Development 2: combine photography styles · w/c 9.11.26 L10 · Development 3: combine styles · w/c 16.11.26 L11 · Development 3: editing and analysis (PPE week) · w/c 23.11.26 L12 · Final piece: select best development; produce outcome · w/c 30.11.26 L13 · Final piece and evaluation · w/c 7.12.26 **L14 · Portfolio complete (PPE) · w/c 14.12.26**		**Externally Set Assignment: Launch and Photographer 1** L15 · ESA intro (paper released): read the brief; choose theme · w/c 4.1.27 L16 · ESA intro: read the brief; choose theme · w/c 11.1.27 L17 · Title page, mood board, brainstorm (A3 slides) · w/c 18.1.27 L18 · Initial images relating to the chosen theme · w/c 25.1.27 L19 · Statement of Intent 1; choose 3 photographers · w/c 1.2.27 L20 · Photographer 1: research and initial images (PPE) · w/c 8.2.27		**ESA: Photographers 1 to 3** L21 · Photographer 1: editing; favourite analysed (PPE) · w/c 22.2.27 **L22 · Photographer 2: research and initial images (PPE) · w/c 1.3.27** **L23 · Photographer 2: editing and analysis · w/c 8.3.27** L24 · Photographer 3: research and initial images · w/c 15.3.27 L25 · Photographer 3: editing and analysis · w/c 22.3.27		**ESA: Development, 10-Hour Exam and Submission** L26 · Statement of Intent 2; combine photographer styles · w/c 13.4.27 L27 · Development 1: combine 2 styles; edit and analyse · w/c 20.4.27 **L28 · 10-hour externally set exam: session 1 · w/c 27.4.27** L29 · Post-exam: course closed; JCQ retention · w/c 3.5.27 L30 · Post-exam: course closed; JCQ retention · w/c 10.5.27 **L31 · AQA moderation submission window · w/c 17.5.27** L32 · Post-exam: course closed; JCQ retention · w/c 24.5.27	**Course Complete** No lessons: course closed; JCQ retention · w/c 7.6.27 to 21.6.27 Portfolio finalised for AQA submission (as in LTP) · w/c 28.6.27 Course closed; JCQ retention · w/c 5.7.27 to 12.7.27
Additional support links: Topic-specific pages from trusted sources (links checked September 2026)	**AQA** GCSE Art and Design (Photography) 8206 **Tate** Vanitas (art term): still life, decay and time	**Adobe** Double exposure in Photoshop (blend modes, masks) **AQA** GCSE Art and Design (Photography) 8206		**AQA** GCSE Art and Design (Photography) 8206 **The Photographers' Gallery** Learn		**AQA** GCSE Art and Design (Photography) 8206 **Adobe** Photoshop adjustment layers (non-destructive editing)		**AQA** GCSE Art and Design (Photography) 8206 **Discover! Creative Careers** Careers in the creative industries		**Discover! Creative Careers** Careers in the creative industries
Knowledge: The specific knowledge your child will learn in detail	Year 11 completes Unit 2, Growth, Decay and Texture, for the Component 1 portfolio (60%, 96 marks). A second statement of intent reviews the strongest images and plans the developments. A development combines two photographers' approaches (for example one photographer's lighting with another's composition or editing) using the pupil's own subjects, which shows independence and AO2 refinement. Explaining an edit means naming the tool, the setting and why it improves the image.	Each development should move the idea on: a new combination, subject, technique (for example double exposure or layering) or presentation. The final piece selects the strongest development and realises intentions (AO4), with an evaluation explaining decisions and influences. PPE banding shows the current mark band for each AO, and QLA by AO targets the weakest objective before moderation.	**PPE 1** w/c 23.11.26	The Externally Set Assignment (Component 2) is 40% of the GCSE, marked out of 96. AQA releases the paper from 2 January with a choice of starting points; pupils choose one, complete preparatory work, then have 10 hours of supervised time to produce their final outcome. The preparation follows the portfolio journey: mood board and brainstorm, initial images, a statement of intent, three photographer studies and developments. All work must be the pupil's own under JCQ rules.	**PPE 2** w/c 22.2.27 and 1.3.27	Three photographer studies give breadth for AO1: each is researched, shot in style with the pupil's own subject, edited and analysed. The strongest ideas from each are combined in the Summer term. PPE 2 bands the exam preparation against the AOs so that gaps are closed before supervised time.	**10-Hour Exam (ESA)** session 1 w/c 27.4.27	A second statement of intent and a development combining two photographers set up the final outcome. The 10-hour supervised exam is sat under JCQ conditions: work stays in the department between sessions and no new preparatory work can be added. Both components are marked in school against AQA's criteria, internally standardised and submitted for AQA moderation.	Year 11 examinations are complete. Coursework, marks and candidate records are kept securely under JCQ retention rules.
Key vocabulary: Subject terms your child should know, spell and use	*Component 1, portfolio, statement of intent, development, combine, influence, refinement*	*development, double exposure, layering, final piece, realise intentions, evaluation, PPE, band, QLA*		*Component 2, externally set assignment, starting point, preparatory period, supervised time, statement of intent, JCQ*		*photographer study, in the style of, analysis, preparatory work, PPE, band*		*supervised time, JCQ, final outcome, internal standardisation, moderation, submission*		*JCQ retention, results day, post-16*
Camera & Editing Skills: Techniques and AO skills your child will develop	Completing photographer studies; planning developments; combining two styles; explaining edits	Developing ideas across three developments; layering and combining images; producing and evaluating a final piece; acting on QLA		Interpreting a starting point; making a mood board and brainstorm; shooting initial images; choosing photographers; writing a statement of intent		Researching and shooting in three styles; editing; analysing favourite images; acting on PPE feedback		Combining photographers in a development; producing a final outcome in supervised time; evaluating against intentions		Portfolio images kept for college and sixth-form interviews
How it is assessed: Formative checks and summative assessments	Every piece: assessed individually against AQA AO1–AO4 using the technical and editing checklist; WWW/EBI handout; green-pen DIRT on completion; PP prioritised.	Summative PPE (L8, w/c 2.11.26): Unit 2 portfolio banded against AQA AO1–AO4, full QLA by AO and cohort, PP/SEND first, feedback and DIRT inform intervention. PPE week w/c 23.11.26. Summative (L14, w/c 14.12.26): coursework portfolio against AQA AOs with full QLA. Other lessons: assessed individually against AO1–AO4 with the checklist.		Year 11 reports home 7.1.27. Post-PPE QLA actioned with DIRT (L15); AO check across the portfolio (L16); moderation readiness (L17). From L18: assessed individually against AQA AO1–AO4 using the technical and editing checklist; WWW/EBI handout; green-pen DIRT on completion; PP prioritised.		PPE 2 (w/c 22.2.27 and 1.3.27). Summative (L22–L23): exam preparation banded against AOs, full QLA by AO and cohort, PP/SEND first, feedback and DIRT inform intervention. Year 11 reports home 24.3.27. Other lessons: assessed individually against AO1–AO4 with the checklist.		L26–L27: assessed individually against AO1–AO4 with the checklist. Summative: 10-hour ESA under exam conditions with JCQ regulations and access arrangements (session 1, L28). AQA moderation submission (L31).	Course closed; JCQ retention.
Builds on / leads to: How this topic connects to prior and future learning	Builds on: the Year 10 Photographer 1 study. Leads to: Developments 2 and 3 and the final piece (Autumn 2).	Builds on: Development 1. Leads to: the externally set assignment (Spring 1) and moderation.		Builds on: the Unit 2 journey. Leads to: photographer studies (Spring 2) and the 10-hour exam.		Builds on: the ESA launch. Leads to: Development 1 and the 10-hour exam (Summer 1).		Builds on: all Year 10 and 11 work. Leads to: A Level Photography (AQA 7206), Level 3 courses, apprenticeships and creative careers.		Leads to: results day and post-16 study.