The Hart School - Faculty of Design
Yr 12 A Level Photography (AQA 7206) Curriculum Overview

Curriculum intent: A-level Art and Design: Photography (AQA 7206) develops independent, critical photographers ready for art foundation courses, degrees, apprenticeships and creative careers. Component 1, the Personal Investigation, is 60% (96 marks) and includes 1,000 to 3,000 words of continuous prose (the essay). Component 2, the Externally Set Assignment, is 40% (96 marks): papers are issued from 1 February, followed by a preparatory period and 15 hours of supervised time, the first 3 hours consecutive.

AO1: develop ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding. AO2: explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops. AO3: record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress. AO4: present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions. Year 12 opens with camera, composition, lighting and editing foundations, then a technique portfolio of layering, alternative processes and camera techniques; statements of intent set a line of enquiry for the Personal Investigation. Year 13 completes the investigation and essay, then the ESA.

Students have 1:1 target conversations and live tracking against AQA grade descriptors, with QLA by AO after every PPE and portfolio review and PP and SEND work reviewed first. Access arrangements are confirmed before supervised time, and JCQ regulations apply.

Yr 12 end points: By the end of Year 12 students can use manual exposure, composition, studio lighting and non-destructive editing with confidence; explore layering, alternative processes and camera techniques in a technique portfolio; write statements of intent; and set a line of enquiry for the Personal Investigation with a first development, judged against AQA AO1–AO4.

Yr 12 key dates (LTP): Statement of intent w/c 25.1.27 · statement of intent 2 w/c 27.4.27 · portfolio review against AQA AO1–AO4 w/c 3.5.27 · AP2 window w/c 7.6.27 to 28.6.27 (summative AP2 recorded in the school data drop) · Year 12 portfolio review and targets into Year 13 w/c 5.7.27 · summer bridging task set w/c 12.7.27 · reports home 14.7.27

	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.	**Foundations: Camera, Composition, Editing, Still Life** L1 · Intro; choose theme; mood board; exposure triangle · w/c 7.9.26 L2 · Formal elements; composition; photographer case study 1 · w/c 14.9.26 L3 · Composition linked to theme; studio basics; initial images · w/c 21.9.26 L4 · Editing foundations (Photoshop/Lightroom); image analysis · w/c 28.9.26 L5 · Still life: shoot and edit · w/c 5.10.26 L6 · Still life: refine; analysis · w/c 12.10.26 L7 · Technique: angles (portrait or natural form); shoot, edit · w/c 19.10.26	**Technique Portfolio: Angles, Layering, Mixed Media, Filters** L8 · Angles: refine; photographer influence · w/c 2.11.26 L9 · Layering technique: digital or physical · w/c 9.11.26 L10 · Layering: refine; analysis · w/c 16.11.26 L11 · Mixed media and alternative processes (paint, biro, bleach, stitch) · w/c 23.11.26 L12 · Filters and experimental processes: refine · w/c 30.11.26 L13 · Filters: refine; review technique portfolio · w/c 7.12.26 L14 · Digital techniques: refine; review technique portfolio · w/c 14.12.26	**Camera Techniques and Statement of Intent** L15 · Digital techniques: refine; review portfolio · w/c 4.1.27 L16 · Panning, aperture, zoom burst, shutter speed · w/c 11.1.27 L17 · Camera techniques: refine; review portfolio · w/c 18.1.27 L18 · Statement of intent; strengths; further intentions · w/c 25.1.27 L19 · Chosen techniques / Photographer 1 link; refine · w/c 1.2.27 L20 · Test shoot; refine ideas · w/c 8.2.27	**Personal Investigation: Photographers 1 to 3** L21 · Techniques / Photographer 1: refine, analyse; review · w/c 22.2.27 L22 · Techniques / Photographer 2 link; refine · w/c 1.3.27 L23 · Test shoot; refine ideas · w/c 8.3.27 L24 · Techniques / Photographer 2: refine; review portfolio · w/c 15.3.27 L25 · Techniques / Photographer 3 link; refine · w/c 22.3.27	**Statement of Intent 2 and a Line of Enquiry** L26 · Test shoot; refine ideas · w/c 13.4.27 L27 · Techniques / Photographer 3: refine, analyse; review · w/c 20.4.27 L28 · Statement of intent 2; plan developments · w/c 27.4.27 L29 · Portfolio review against AQA AO1–AO4 · w/c 3.5.27 L30 · Test shoot; refine before development · w/c 10.5.27 L31 · Test shoot; refine before development · w/c 17.5.27 L32 · Set a line of enquiry; photographer studies in depth · w/c 24.5.27	**Development 1, AP2 and Bridging** L33 · First development shoot linked to enquiry; edit, analyse · w/c 7.6.27 L34 · Development 1: refine against AOs · w/c 14.6.27 L35 · Refinement (AP2 window) · w/c 21.6.27 L36 · Portfolio review (AP2 window) · w/c 28.6.27 L37 · Year 12 mock/portfolio review; targets into Year 13 · w/c 5.7.27 L38 · Summer bridging task; PI continuation · w/c 12.7.27
Additional support links: Topic-specific pages from trusted sources (links checked September 2026)	**AQA** A-level Art and Design (Photography) 7206 **Canon** How to control exposure: aperture, shutter speed and ISO **Canon** Composition techniques: rule of thirds, leading lines **Canon** Still life lighting: window light, diffusers, reflectors	**Adobe** Double exposure in Photoshop (blend modes, masks) **Tate** Photogram (art term) **Flowers Gallery** Julie Cockburn: embroidered photographs **Adobe** Photoshop adjustment layers (non-destructive editing)	**Nikon** Freezing or capturing motion: shutter speed and panning **Nikon** What is aperture? F-stops and depth of field **AQA** A-level Art and Design (Photography) 7206	**AQA** A-level Art and Design (Photography) 7206 **The Photographers' Gallery** Learn	**AQA** A-level Art and Design (Photography) 7206 **National Portrait Gallery** Photographs collection	**AQA** A-level Art and Design (Photography) 7206 **Discover! Creative Careers** Careers in the creative industries
Knowledge: The specific knowledge your child will learn in detail	Manual control starts with the exposure triangle: aperture sets depth of field, shutter speed freezes or blurs motion, and ISO trades brightness against noise. The formal elements of photography (line, shape, form, tone, texture, pattern and colour) and composition (rule of thirds, leading lines, framing and viewpoint) are applied to the chosen theme. In the studio, a key light, a fill light or reflector and a plain background control shadow and mood. Editing in Lightroom or Photoshop should be non-destructive so every change can be reviewed. Case studies analyse a photographer's context, meaning and technique, not just describe the images.	Layering combines images digitally (blend modes, masks, double exposure) or physically (printed overlays and transparencies). Alternative and experimental processes treat the photograph as an object: painting, drawing, bleaching and stitching into prints, or camera-less photograms made by placing objects on light-sensitive paper. Bleach is used only with gloves, eye protection and ventilation. Filters can be physical (on the lens) or digital. Each experiment is reviewed in the technique portfolio: what was done, why, how it links to the theme and whether to develop it.	Shutter speed controls motion: fast speeds freeze action and slow speeds blur it. Panning follows a moving subject with a slower shutter so it stays sharp against a streaked background. A zoom burst changes the focal length during a long exposure to create lines radiating from the centre. Wide apertures (small f-numbers) give a shallow depth of field; narrow apertures keep more of the scene in focus. The statement of intent sets the focus of the Personal Investigation (theme, question, photographers and techniques) and links the chosen techniques to Photographer 1.	The Personal Investigation (Component 1) is 60% of the A Level, marked out of 96, and includes 1,000 to 3,000 words of continuous prose (the essay) linked to the practical work. Each photographer link connects a chosen technique to a photographer's practice, and test shoots try ideas before development. Analysis at A Level is critical and contextual: why the photographer works this way, how the work relates to its time and audience, and how it changes your own practice.	A second statement of intent narrows the investigation from experiments to developments. A line of enquiry is a focused question that the work answers through a sequence of shoots, each building on the last. The portfolio review against the four AOs shows strengths and gaps. In-depth photographer studies inform both the practical developments and the essay.	Development 1 is the first shoot that directly answers the line of enquiry. AP2 records progress in the school data. The Year 12 review against AQA standards sets targets for Year 13, and the bridging task continues shooting and reading for the essay over the summer. Routes such as art foundation diplomas, degrees and apprenticeships are explored.
Key vocabulary: Subject terms your child should know, spell and use	*exposure triangle, aperture, depth of field, shutter speed, ISO, noise, formal elements, composition, key light, fill, reflector, non-destructive editing, case study*	*layering, blend mode, mask, double exposure, alternative process, photogram, bleach, stitch, filter, technique portfolio*	*shutter speed, motion blur, freeze, panning, zoom burst, long exposure, f-number, depth of field, statement of intent, test shoot*	*Component 1, Personal Investigation, continuous prose, essay, contextual analysis, influence, test shoot*	*line of enquiry, sustained, development, portfolio review, band, in-depth study*	*development, AP2, band, target, bridging task, essay, foundation diploma*
Camera & Editing Skills: Techniques and AO skills your child will develop	Manual exposure; composing to a theme; basic studio lighting; Lightroom and Photoshop edits; still life shoots; exploring angles; analysing a photographer	Digital and physical layering; mixed-media changes to prints, handling materials safely; experimental processes; filters; reviewing and annotating a technique portfolio	Panning, zoom bursts and long exposures; controlling depth of field; writing a statement of intent; planning and running a test shoot	Linking techniques to photographers; critical and contextual analysis; test shoots; reviewing the portfolio	Evaluating strengths; setting a line of enquiry; test shoots; self-review against AO descriptors	Shooting and editing a development; self-assessing against AO descriptors; setting targets
How it is assessed: Formative checks and summative assessments	Every lesson: live tracking against AQA AO1–AO4 with grade descriptors; self- and peer-review; WWW/EBI and green-pen DIRT; PP prioritised; 1:1 target conversations.	Every lesson: live tracking against AQA AO1–AO4 with grade descriptors; self- and peer-review; WWW/EBI and green-pen DIRT; PP prioritised; 1:1 target conversations.	Every lesson: live tracking against AQA AO1–AO4 with grade descriptors; self- and peer-review; WWW/EBI and green-pen DIRT; PP prioritised; 1:1 target conversations.	Every lesson: live tracking against AQA AO1–AO4 with grade descriptors; self- and peer-review; WWW/EBI and green-pen DIRT; PP prioritised; 1:1 target conversations.	Every lesson: live tracking against AQA AO1–AO4 with grade descriptors; self- and peer-review; WWW/EBI and green-pen DIRT; PP prioritised; 1:1 target conversations. Portfolio review against AQA AO1–AO4 (L29).	AP2 window w/c 7.6.27 to 28.6.27: summative AP2 recorded in the school data drop, skill-level analysis by criterion and cohort, PP and SEND first, next-step targets set. Year 12 portfolio against AQA standards with targets into Year 13 (L37). Bridging-task brief set (L38). Reports home 14.7.27.
Builds on / leads to: How this topic connects to prior and future learning	Builds on: GCSE Photography or GCSE Art photography. Leads to: technique exploration (Autumn 2) and the Personal Investigation.	Builds on: Autumn 1 foundations. Leads to: camera techniques (Spring 1); Personal Investigation developments.	Builds on: the technique portfolio. Leads to: Photographer 1 to 3 links (Spring 2).	Builds on: the statement of intent. Leads to: statement of intent 2 and a line of enquiry (Summer 1).	Builds on: the photographer links. Leads to: the first development shoot (Summer 2); the Year 13 Personal Investigation.	Builds on: the line of enquiry. Leads to: Year 13 Personal Investigation developments and essay.

AP2 Assessment
w/c 7.6.27 to 28.6.27