Unit 25: Studio Photography

Unit code: H/502/5489

QCF Level 3: BTEC National

Credit value: 10

Guided learning hours: 60

● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to enable learners to gain skills, knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of studio-based photography. Learners will create studio photographs using technology, techniques and media in the studio. Learners will develop ideas for their own studio photography with reference to published examples of historical and contemporary studio photography practice.

● Unit introduction

This unit introduces the characteristics of studio photography and the ways in which studio photographs can be created through the effective use of photographic technology, techniques and media in the studio. Many photographs of consumer goods seen in magazines and on the internet will have been made by professional photographers who regularly work in a studio. Using their high level of technical skill, together with their knowledge of the subject, professional photographers will produce results of a high technical standard.

Successful studio photographers plan their studio set in advance, drawing on their visual skills to develop their ideas. The studio environment must be controlled very effectively to produce imaginative results within a short timeframe. For example photographing prepared foods needs to be undertaken quickly for the food to remain looking fresh and appetising. Sometimes professional photographers work with others to realise an idea which has been developed by a team. Sound knowledge of the tools of photography enables the photographer to concentrate on the client requirements and the specific qualities of the subject to be photographed. This permits the photographer to create a unique visual environment to present the subject in a way that realises the creative intentions.

Learners will develop their understanding of the characteristics of studio photography. They will extend their visual language with reference to key practitioners and historical and contemporary examples of studio photography. Learners will create studio photographs using technology, materials and techniques and review their work from technical and aesthetic perspectives. Learners will also develop an understanding of the importance of health and safety in the studio environment.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

1   Understand the characteristics of studio photography

2   Know about studio photographic media, techniques and technology

3   Be able to make photographs in a studio

4   Be able to review own studio photography

Unit content

1   Understand the characteristics of studio photography

Characteristics: distinctive features of types, eg advertising, editorial, commercial, industrial, scientific, technical, social; historical and contemporary practice in studio photography, eg leading photographers, styles, influences, subject type; approach, eg lighting, composition, presentation, professional practice

2   Know about studio photographic media, techniques and technology

Technology: camera types, eg SLR, view; camera formats, eg small, medium, large; lens types, eg wide angle, standard, telephoto, zoom, angle of view, covering power, focal length and format; camera accessories, eg tripod, studio stand, cable release, lens hood, filters; light, eg flash, slave, continuous light, reflectors, diffusers, screens; exposure measurement devices, eg TTL, hand held

Recording media: digital, eg flash cards, hard drives, file size, file format, file handling, white balance; film, eg monochrome, colour, negative, transparency; characteristics, eg speed, contrast, grain, resolution, colour balance, exposure latitude

Techniques: eg camera movements, differential focus; lighting, eg lighting ratios, flash synchronisation, freezing movement, motion blur; exposure measurement, eg reflective, incident, compensation, lighting ratios; controls, eg aperture, shutter speed, focusing, depth of field, depth of focus, viewpoint, perspective

3   Be able to make photographs in a studio

Develop ideas: client requirements, eg creative intention, target audience, content, styling; output requirement eg screen, print, size; constraints, eg financial, commercial, technological; practices, eg historical, contemporary; approaches and influences, eg commercial, ethical, political, professional practice, subject types, presentation; visual language, eg composition, framing, colour, shape, line, texture

Image capture: technology selection and use, eg camera type, lens type, camera accessories, lighting, exposure measurement; media selection and use, eg digital file management, film handling; use of technique

Safety: setting up equipment; movement around studio; electric cabling eg adhere to relevant legislation such as Electricity at Work Regulations (Portable Appliance Testing) 1989, risk assessment, minimisation

Output: digital file handling, eg resolution, file format, processing; darkroom eg film processing, print processing; manipulation, eg cropping, contrast management, montage

4   Be able to review own studio photography

Product: fitness for intended purpose, eg comparison with intentions, comparison with client requirements, aesthetic qualities, technical qualities, technical competence

Production process: ideas generation, eg planning, research sources, ideas refinement

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 explain the characteristics of studio photography [IE, EP]	M1 analyse the characteristics of studio photography	D1 evaluate the characteristics of studio photography
P2 select studio photographic media, techniques and technology [CT, IE, RL]	M2 outline photographic technology with associated media comprehensively when identifying techniques for making photographs in the studio	D2 describe photographic technology with associated media comprehensively using correct technical language when identifying techniques for making photographs in the studio
P3 create studio photographs that realise planned intentions [SM, CT, RL]	M3 create studio photographs that realise planned intentions with consistent demonstration of skill in capture	D3 create studio photographs that realise planned intentions and demonstrate sophistication in capture
P4 review own studio photography. [RL]	M4 discuss own studio photography with considered reflection upon the production process.	D4 explain own studio photography with considered reflection upon the production process using correct technical language.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

For successful delivery of this unit learners will need to explore the characteristics of studio photography and create photographs in the studio. The emphasis placed upon digital and traditional wet-based modes of production can best be managed with consideration of current vocational practice. Learners should be encouraged to develop personal approaches and use visual language effectively when developing their ideas for studio photographs. Assignment work for this unit will require learners to undertake research activities which will develop their understanding through exploration and experimentation. Learners should include their annotated test images and record findings from their own studio photography experiments in their sketchbooks as they progress their work and produce their final photographs. Learner experimentation should be supported by practical demonstrations to support learner confidence and safe practice in the studio environment.

To enable learners to develop an understanding of the characteristics of studio photography independent research of published examples of studio photography for different purposes should be a key feature of delivery. Learner research should be supported by teacher led presentations about the characteristics of studio photography for different purposes. Tutors should demonstrate studio photography for different purposes with published examples of the work of historical and contemporary practitioners to enable learners to identify the different technical and aesthetic qualities. Learners should be involved in group discussion and presentations in which their views on the published examples of studio photography are explored and expressed. Evidence for this outcome can be collated in sketchbooks and will include learner annotations to demonstrate their understanding of the characteristics of the researched examples of published studio photography. Research material may also include annotations of published written material for example editorial articles in periodicals and findings related to own studio photography. Review of this collated information will enable learners to reach informed judgements about the characteristics of studio photography. Annotations should evidence understanding of visual language together with a technical appreciation.

To enable learners to select appropriate photographic technology, techniques and media to make photographs in the studio learners need to know what technology and media is available and how it may be applied. Tutors will need to support learners in their knowledge acquisition by providing demonstrations and directing learners to appropriate research sources and technical material. Learners will need to be taught how to select photographic technology, techniques and media with reference to the specified purpose of the studio photography. Learning for this outcome could be effectively delivered if combined with formative practical tasks in which learners are actively engaged in using technology and media and exploring techniques. Alternatively learning for this outcome can be linked to outcomes 3 and 4 and the photographic technology, techniques and media selections based upon the purposes specified in those assignments. The scenario for this could be research work undertaken when developing ideas to market specific products for a client eg fashion accessories or stationery. Evidence for this outcome should be included in the sketchbooks and will include annotated researched material which evidences an informed approach to making appropriate selections. The sketchbooks may also include findings from own studio photography experiments.

To be able to create photographs in the studio learners need to develop their ideas with reference to their understanding of the characteristics of studio photography. Learners will also need to use their knowledge of photographic technology, techniques and media during ideas development, image capture and production. Tutors will need to demonstrate studio equipment and simple techniques to support learner confidence when working in the studio. The health and safety considerations of working in the studio must be emphasised by tutors and recorded by learners in their sketchbooks. Tutors may support learners in their technical skills acquisition through group critiques and one to one tutorials where learners may present and review practical work in progress. Learners should include their annotated test images, technical information and record

findings from their own studio photography experiments in their sketchbooks as they progress their work and produce their final photographs. A structured process of tutorial, group discussion and presentation will also support learners in their ideas development and refinement. Presentation of their ideas through material collated in sketchbooks will enable learners to reflect upon their learning and use contextual reference material when generating their own person approaches to studio photography.

To be able to review their own studio photographs learners will need to reflect upon the production process and their ability to realise their creative intention in the final product. Learners will be supported in their reflection on the production process if tutors have established an ongoing structured approach to group critique through which an evaluative approach to working practices is encouraged. Learners will be able to make oral presentations describing their own studio photography with reference to the evidence collated in their sketchbooks. Learners should review their photographs from technical and aesthetic perspectives.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to unit and structure of the programme – whole class
Introduction to the characteristics of studio photography – whole class and group work
Technology, media and techniques for making photographs in the studio – whole class and group work
Creating studio photographs – whole class and group work
Learners review own studio photography – whole class and group work
Assignment 1: Characteristics of Studio Photography Learners work in groups to present and discuss characteristics of studio photography Learners collate their annotated research material from discussion above, independent research and findings from their own practical experiences in a sketchbook, to include comparisons, eg advantages, disadvantages, strengths
Learner-initiated study
Assignment 2: Select Technology, Media and Techniques to Make Studio Photographs for a Specified Purpose Learners work in groups to present and discuss: • technology, media and techniques to produce photographs in the studio • potential combinations, advantages and disadvantages Learners collate their annotated research material from discussion above, independent research and findings from their own practical experiences in a sketchbook, to include comparisons and selection of technology, media and techniques
Learner-initiated study

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Assignment 3: Create Photographs of Objects in the Studio Learners work independently to: - develop ideas - select technology, media and techniques for specified purpose Learners work in groups to discuss ideas and planned intentions Learners collate their annotated research material from discussion, independent research and findings from their own practical experiences in a sketchbook to include ideas refinement and production planning Learners produce, present and review their own studio photographs
Learner-initiated study
Assignment 4: Create Photographs of People in the Studio Learners work independently to: - develop ideas - select technology, media and techniques for specified purpose. Learners work in groups to discuss ideas and planned intentions Learners collate their annotated research material from discussion, independent research and findings from their own practical experiences in a sketchbook to include ideas refinement and production planning Produce, present and review their own studio photographs
Learner-initiated study
Unit review and assessment

Assessment

The approach used in this guidance is sequential delivery of a programme of assignments which guides learners through the outcomes consecutively. A valid alternative approach would be a programme of assignments each of which facilitates concurrent delivery of all 4 outcomes enabling learners to visit the outcomes on several occasions.

To achieve P1, learners must explain the characteristics of studio photography to demonstrate their understanding. Sketchbook content will provide evidence for assessment and will include annotated examples of studio photographs for different purposes and annotations of published written texts. Learner review and annotation of researched material together with explanations and reviews of their own practical experiences will evidence understanding. At pass grade the level of detail may be limited to the essential characteristics of different types of studio photography.

For P2, learners must select photographic technology with associated media when identifying techniques for making photographs in the studio. When making selections learners at pass grade may demonstrate knowledge limited to the basic features of the identified technology and simple techniques. For example identifying the technology of studio flash with a soft box to achieve a technique of soft even lighting to photograph an object.

For P3, when creating studio photographs which realise planned intentions, learners will typically demonstrate ideas which may be literal and show limited evidence of development or refinement. Learners will demonstrate technical competence in capture and production of studio photographs but may need tutor support.

For P4, when describing own studio photography learners should be able to make simple links between their studio photography and researched examples. Descriptions about their production process may be focused on a literal account of their activities with limited reference to areas for improvement.

For M1, learners must analyse the characteristics of studio photography. The sketchbook evidence for assessment will demonstrate some criticality in the annotations of published examples of studio photographs for different purposes. Learners will identify the different technical and aesthetic qualities of studio photography. The sketchbook may also demonstrate evidence of experimentation with their own studio photography with accompanying annotations.

For M2, learners must outline photographic technology with associated media comprehensively when identifying techniques for making photographs in the studio. Learner understanding will be evidenced through some reflection in which conclusions are reached following identification of contributory factors. For example the benefits of providing soft even lighting may be compared with an alternative approach to representing the subject and a more complex solution may be considered.

For M3, learners will create studio photographs which realise planned intentions with consistent demonstration of skill in capture. Ideas are likely to demonstrate individuality and have been reached following refinement, links with researched findings will clearly relate to the ideas presented. Learners will work with independence in their production of studio photographs.

For M4, learner discussion of own photography will demonstrate considered reflection upon the production process. Learners will articulate their engagement with the process through reference to research and will present their photographic outcomes coherently.

For D1, learners must demonstrate an evaluative approach to their enquiries concerning the characteristics of studio photography. Sketchbook evidence for assessment will show perceptive evaluations about the characteristics of studio photographs for different purposes. Evaluations of the different technical and aesthetic qualities of studio photography will be fluent, detailed and conclusions formed with clear reference to evidence.

For D2, learner descriptions of photographic technology with associated media will be comprehensive and correct technical language will be used when identifying techniques for making photographs in the studio. Learner understanding will be evidenced by systematic detailed descriptions in which conclusions are reached following thorough identification of contributory factors. Techniques identified will involve a degree of complexity and decisions will be reached following detailed analysis of a range of potential solutions. For example after considering ways to represent an object several single and multiple lighting techniques may be considered. Reference to contrast and lighting ratios may be made and the technology to handle each of the scenarios will be evaluated.

For D3, when creating studio photographs, learners will demonstrate sophistication and individuality in their ideas generation. Learners will also demonstrate a high level of responsiveness in refinement and reflection with reference to research work. When creating studio photographs which realise planned intentions learners will demonstrate sophisticated technical skills and a high level of independence during production.

For D4, learner explanation of own studio photography will demonstrate considered reflection upon the production process and will be articulated using correct technical language. Learners will express their engagement with the process through clear reflection upon research and present their photographic outcomes coherently with sophistication in the arguments presented.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1 M1 D1	**Assignment 1**: Characteristics of Studio Photography	Photographer creates a 10-minute presentation to photography students	• oral presentation • written sketchbook annotations of research material
P2 M2 D2	**Assignment 2**: Select Technology, Media and Techniques to Make Studio Photographs for a Specified Purpose	Photographer undertakes research into the photographic technology, techniques and media for forthcoming commission	• oral presentation • written sketchbook annotations of research material
P3, P4 M3, M4 D3, D4	**Assignment 3**: Create Photographs of Objects in the Studio	Client brief to produce photographs of vegetables for recipe book	• oral presentation • written sketchbook annotations of ideas development and refinement • studio photographs • review of own studio photographs
P3, P4 M3, M4 D3, D4	**Assignment 4**: Create Photographs of People in the Studio	Photographer briefed by fashion magazine to photograph models wearing new range	• oral presentation • written sketchbook annotations of ideas development and refinement • studio photographs • review of own studio photographs

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Art and Design sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Art and Design suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Introduction to Photography	Photography Techniques	Photographic Media, Techniques and Technology
Introduction to Lighting for Photography	Working with Photography Briefs	Darkroom Practice
	Building an Art and Design Portfolio	Photographic Studio Techniques

National Occupational Standards

This unit also provides development opportunities for some of the underpinning skills, knowledge and understanding of the following National Occupational Standards:

Skillset Sector Skills Council

Photo Imaging

- P1 Store and Retrieve Photographic Equipment and Material
- P2 Organise and Carry Out Photographic Assignments
- P3 Take Standardised Portrait Photographs
- P4 Take Standardised Still-life Photographs
- P5 Take Specified Photographs
- P6 Conceive and Take Photographs
- C1 Contribute to Effective Performance at Work
- C3 Contribute to The Maintenance of Health, Safety and Security at Work
- C6 Contribute to The Development of The Photo Imaging Brief

Essential resources

For this unit, learners need access to appropriate image capture devices, media and lighting equipment for photography in the studio. Technology for image capture, processing and output will depend on the chosen media and may include access to traditional darkroom or digital image capture, processing and output facilities.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres should develop links with photographers who undertake studio photography, for example social photographers and others who operate their own studios. This will enable learners to understand the characteristics of working in a studio to produce photographs for different purposes.

Centres should develop links with practising photographers, to deliver assignments to learners or to provide work experience.

Links with employers are essential to the delivery of the programme for work experience and future employment.

Vocational learning support resources:

- Learning and Skills Network – www.vocationallearning.org.uk

Business and finance advice:

- local and regional Business Link – www.businesslink.gov.uk

Assignments should be vocationally relevant; centres should consider the delivery of 'live projects', for example, to support the vocational content of the unit and programme.

Creative and Cultural Skills (www.ccskills.org.uk), the Sector Skills Council for Arts, Crafts and Design, has launched the web portal Creative Choices (www.creative-choices.co.uk). This portal has a range of information about careers in the arts, crafts and design sector, including job descriptions.

Skillset, the Sector Skills Council for Creative Media (www.skillset.org), provides details on its photo pages (www.skillset.org/photo) careers and the industry and has a regularly updated news and events page.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Bilissi E and Langford M – *Langford's Advanced Photography* (Focal Press, 2008) ISBN 978-0240520384

Biver S, Fuqua P and Hunter F – *Light: Science and Magic: An Introduction to Photographic Lighting* (Focal Press, 2007) ISBN 978-0240808192

Child J – *Studio Photography: Essential Skills* (Focal Press, 2008) ISBN 978-0240520964

Farace J – *Getting Started with Digital Imaging: Tips, tools and techniques for photographers* (Focal Press, 2007) ISBN 978-0240808383

Faris Belt A – *The Elements of Photography: Understanding and Creating Sophisticated Images* (Focal Press, 2008) ISBN 978-0240809427

Freeman M – *The Photographer's Eye: Composition and Design for Better Digital Photos* (Focal Press, 2007) ISBN 978-1905814046

Hedgecoe J – *John Hedgecoe's Photography Basics* (Sterling, 2006) ISBN 978-0806903750

Hedgecoe J – *The Book of Photography* (Dorling Kindersley, 2005) ISBN 978-1564585080

Hirsch R – *Light and Lens: Photography in the Digital Age* (Focal Press, 2007) ISBN 978-0240808550

Ingledew J – *Photography* (Laurence King, 2005) ISBN 978-1856694322

Jeffrey I – *The Photo Book* (Phaidon Press, 2005) ISBN 978-0714844886

Kelby S – *The Digital Photography Book, Volume 2* (Peahpit Press, 2008) ISBN 978-0321524768

La Grange A – *Basic Critical Theory for Photographers* (Focal Press, 2005) ISBN 978-0240516523

Langford M, Fox A and Sawdon Smith R – *Langford's Basic Photography: The Guide for Serious Photographers* (Focal Press, 2007) ISBN 978-0240520353

Marr D – *Beginner's Guide to Photographic Lighting: Techniques for Success in the Studio or On Location* (Amherst Media, 2004) ISBN 978-1584281337

Peres M – *The Focal Encyclopaedia of Photography* (Focal Press, 2007) ISBN 978-0240807409

Read S – *Exhibiting Photography* (Focal Press, 2008) ISBN 978-0240809397

Tarrant J – *Understanding Digital Cameras: Getting the Best Image from Capture to Output* (Focal Press, 2007) ISBN 978-0240520247

Journals

British Journal of Photography

Digital Photo

Practical Photography

Websites

www.skillset.org   The Sector Skills Council for Creative Media

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)

The following table identifies the PLTS that have been included within the assessment criteria of this unit:

Skill	When learners are …
Independent enquirers	researching characteristics of studio photography
	researching photographic technology, techniques and media used to make photographs in the studio
	researching and generating ideas for their own studio photographs
Creative thinkers	generating ideas for their own studio photographs
Reflective learners	reviewing their own studio photography
Self-managers	selecting resources and organising their own time when creating their own studio photographs
Effective participators	discussing characteristics of their studio in group activities.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are …
Independent enquirers	undertaking research and planning their own studio photography
Creative thinkers	exploring different approaches to making photographs in the studio
Reflective learners	evaluating their experiences and using these to inform future progress
Self-managers	using opportunities to explore characteristics of studios independently
Effective participators	working in a group to critically review work in progress
Independent enquirers	undertaking research and planning their own studio photography.

Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are …
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	researching examples of studio photography
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	preparing their own studio photographs if using digital techniques
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	researching examples of studio photography and written information
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: - text and tables - images - numbers - records	preparing their own studio photographs if using digital techniques
Mathematics	
Identify the situation or problem and the mathematical methods needed to tackle it	calculating light output from studio flash units
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts.	discussing ongoing work with others.