

Unit 26: Specialist Studio Photography

Unit code:	Y/502/5019
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit aims to develop learners' skills in their chosen specialist field, or fields, under the 'umbrella' of studio photography. This may be used to develop earlier study of studio photography units within the I photography pathway.

● Unit introduction

Practitioners in studio photography produce work for a variety of commercial and industrial applications. Through this practice they will often develop a skill in or an affinity with a particular area. For instance, a commitment to portrait photography could develop out of contact with the world of fashion photography. Alternatively, exposure to work within the field of product development could grow into photographing intimate set-ups or still lives loaded with meaning.

Learners will experience the requirements of working to client-led briefs. These will involve aspects such as communication, time management and professional practice, giving learners the opportunity to work in a vocational context. Learners will also be taught how to develop their skills and understanding in using visual language to meet the brief in the most innovative and exciting manner.

In this unit, learners will gain knowledge of how to manage the studio environment, in terms of working with sets, props and people. They will need to work professionally to produce client-led practical work within an agreed timescale and with identified resources. Learners will present their work at the end of the unit, and this will give them the opportunity to clarify and evaluate their progress. This will allow learners to develop identity and distinctiveness in their practical work.

Learners will synthesise their understanding of their chosen specialist field with a growing knowledge of how visual language works. In doing this they should be moving closer to becoming proficient at developing their own personal approach to studio photography.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to produce a visual solution within the context of a client-led brief
- 2 Be able to use the tools of visual language within the context of a client-led brief
- 3 Be able make studio sets
- 4 Be able to produce studio photography in a chosen specialist field.

Unit content

1 Be able to produce a visual solution within the context of a client-led brief

Client-led brief: identify eg requirements of brief, research, analysis, synthesis, information, product promotion, service; document eg evidence, record, objects, editorial features, fine art themes; establish relationships eg client, assistant, art director, stylist, professional culture, teamworking, communication, responsibilities

Visual solution: primary sources eg research industrial visits, interview, questionnaire; secondary sources eg websites, periodicals, brochures, monographs, historical, contemporary practitioners

2 Be able to use the tools of visual language within the context of a client-led brief

Tools of visual language: eg communication, intended meaning, composition, tonal range, colour, depth of field, depth of focus, viewpoint and perspective

3 Be able to make studio sets

Design and make studio sets: eg use props, backdrops, designs for still life, scientific, technical, portraiture, advertising, fashion, organise appropriate lighting

4 Be able to produce studio photography in a chosen specialist field

Produce a body of work: production eg lighting, set construction, temperature control, subject matter (food, models, portraits, advertising); work eg portfolio, image folders, transparencies, contact sheets, thumbnails, proofs, final pieces

Present a body of work: eg presentation methods, formats, on screen, digital projection, print, poster, website tutorials, group critiques, seminars, books, window mounts, transparencies; evaluate eg technical language, technical qualities, aesthetic qualities, fitness for purpose

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 produce a visual solution within the context of a client-led brief [CT, IE]	M1 demonstrate purposeful research and exploration to generate effective ideas that experiment with the potential and limitations of studio photography	D1 show an individual, exciting and imaginative approach in creating and presenting an innovative body of work.
P2 use the tools of visual language within the context of a specific client brief [CT, RL]	M2 apply critical and visual analysis throughout to produce a coherent body of effective work	
P3 produce studio sets [SM]		
P4 produce studio photography work a chosen specialist field. [RL, CT]		

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

Delivery of this unit will need to feature both practical and theoretical sessions, linked to the production of a client-led brief.

Delivery of this unit will involve sessions that address the underpinning aspects of visual language and how it could be used within practical work. Learners should be able to choose an aspect of studio-based work they are interested in and produce their practical work in this area, for example advertising related photography. It will be important to use either a suitable client-led brief or an appropriate simulation. An example of this is shown in Assignment 1 in the *Outline learning plan*. It may be possible to ask the centre's marketing or publicity department to commission a brief that asks for suitable images for publicity purposes. Tutors may need to demonstrate certain aspects of specialist equipment in the studio.

Learning outcome 1 should be based on the client-led brief. Learners will need to be familiar with aspects of professional practice such as time management. Learners should also be aware of learning outcome 2 when devising the solution to the brief. Delivery of learning outcome 1 must include sessions where the brief is introduced and discussed. There may need to be a mid-point presentation for learners to see how well their ideas and initial work meet the brief. Theoretical sessions should look at examples of studio-based photography and consider how visual language has been used by practitioners to achieve an intended result or communicate a message.

Learning outcome 2 requires learners to reinforce their existing knowledge of visual language. Tutors may need to deliver short seminars, discussion groups or lectures to give learners sufficient examples of the visual language used in photography. Learners should be encouraged to support this by finding examples themselves.

For learning outcome 3, learners should work with the practical requirements of producing sets and work with the props, models and technical support that are needed to execute the studio-based work effectively and safely. This will involve learners producing plans and designs for the construction of sets, with attention given to creating a safe working environment. It may be possible to divide groups into smaller sub-groups, with learners adopting different roles to achieve this. Alternatively, learners will need to liaise with other departments or areas and source models, props and so on themselves.

For learning outcome 4, learners will present the body of work that they have produced for the unit. Learners will need to develop their existing knowledge of presentation techniques, and adopt as professional a range of methods as possible to present their work. This may involve some time spent downloading or scanning work into a suitable digital format. Learners should be able to explain how they used visual language to control and enhance their intended message, in relation to their chosen area. Learners should be encouraged to work experimentally, provided that adequate professional practice is followed. They must observe all relevant health and safety legislation and good working practice in general.

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
Unit introduction
Assignment 1: Photographing Food
Read through and group discussion
Individual tutorial/action planning
Stage 1: Learners develop ideas for project/pre-production <ul style="list-style-type: none">• outline subject matter for project• identify sources• undertake any required research• develop ideas for project• present ideas for project
Stage 2: Learners use photographic studio <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify equipment required for production• use digital equipment safely• design and make studio sets• independently capture and store digital imagery correctly
Stage 3: Learners complete project <ul style="list-style-type: none">• undertake required production methods independently• present all finished work, paperwork and production file for assessment
Assessment – group crit
Review of unit and assessment

Assessment

Evidence can be generated through a live project or client-led studio-based set brief, which focuses on in one area of expertise professional photographic studio practice. Learning outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4 will be evidenced through the brief.

For P1, learners will be able to produce a visual solution that successfully meets the brief. The work will show a basic level of skill and understanding. They will have shown an ability to work with the client and understand what is required.

For P2, learners will show an understanding of how visual language works and how it can be applied to a brief. Their work will meet the brief. Their application of visual elements will tend to be obvious and straightforward. Work produced will not demonstrate any significant exploration of or experimentation with visual language. Potential for combining visual elements, such as composition and lighting, in interesting or original ways will not be explored.

For P3, learners will be able to make sets and models and use the studio environment to meet the requirements of the brief. The use of sets and models will be satisfactory. The range of choices that they consider may be limited.

For P4, learners will be able to present their work in their chosen specialist field. They will be able to explain their use of visual language by using basic technical terms. They will also be able to relate their work to their chosen specialist area and describe the characteristics of this field. The presentation methods that they use will be fit for purpose.

For M1, learners will be able to show a sense of purpose in engaging with their research tasks. They will show an ability to produce effective work that embraces a degree of experimentation in the studio, with aspects such as lighting and position of props. They will be able to show a deeper understanding of their chosen specialist field than learners working at pass level.

For M2, learners will be able to show a consistent and coherent approach to producing their practical work that is underpinned and informed by critical analysis. They will understand how visual language can be exploited to meet the requirements of the client-led brief in effective ways. They will have explored combinations of visual language and used their understanding to exploit the potential of using visual elements to make their work more purposeful than work assessed at pass level.

For D1, learners will show an imaginative and individual approach to developing their solution to the brief. This is likely to be informed by a strong theoretical understanding of how visual language operates. Learners will have synthesised their understanding of visual language with their practical output. They will be able to use a range of presentation methods with confidence and imagination.

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
PI, P2, P3, P4 M1, M2 D1	Assignment 1: Photographing Food	A client brief that commissions a series of studio-based photographic images for an advertising campaign promoting healthy food.	Portfolio of evidence consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work journals, containing notes and initial ideas • preliminary work • presentation of ideas for project • set designs and production of sets • use of traditional and digital photography technologies in sourcing, capturing, manipulating and outputting digital files • tutor observation of studio practice • practical work and final outcomes • review of working practices and outcomes • presentation at close of assignment to client.

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 Photographic Image Making	Working with Photography Briefs	Darkroom Practice
Introduction to Lighting for Photography	Studio Photography	Photographic Studio Techniques
	Photography Techniques	Studio Photography

National Occupational Standards

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

CCSkills Sector Skills Council

Design (revisions in draft form June 2009)

- DES5 Follow a Design Process
- DES6 Work Effectively with Others in a Creative Environment
- DES38 Manage Design Realisation
- DES39 Manage a Design Project

Skillset Sector Skills Council

Animation

- ANIM12 Create 2D Animation
- ANIM18 Set Up Lighting and Cameras For Stop Motion Animation

Photo Imaging

- P2 Organise and Carry Out Photographic Assignments
- P4 Take Standardised Still-life Photographs
- P5 Take Specified Photographs
- P6 Conceive and Take Photographs
- C6 Contribute to The Development of The Photo Imaging Brief
- D1 Create Original Artwork for Digital Images

Skillfast-UK Sector Skills Council

Textiles and Material Design

- D2 Develop and Communicate Design Ideas for Textiles and Materials

Essential resources

Adequate access to appropriate studio space, cameras, lighting and associated apparatus will be necessary for learners to gain practical knowledge and skills. Access to facilities for processing various film formats and/or digital studios will be essential.

Sufficient resource-based learning facilities must also be made available.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

This unit may be delivered through a live project. Centres should aim to develop links with appropriate local organisations, which would be willing to support projects such as the Studio Photography brief shown in the Outline learning plan. This may have a range of applications from advertising materials, catalogues, fashion and product/interior design.

Skillset, the sector Skills Council for the audio visual industries has a section of their website dedicated to careers, see www.skillset.org/careers. There are opportunities to relate the work carried out for this unit to the Skillset National Occupational Standards in Photo Imaging, Camera, Lighting and Generic.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Busselle M – *The Perfect Portrait Guide: How to Photograph People* (Rotovision, 2005) ISBN 978-2940361298

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

Hoddinott R – *The Digital Photographer's Guide to Filters* (David and Charles, 2007) ISBN 978-0715326541

Hedgecoe J – *The New Photographer's Handbook* (Ebury Press, 1992) ISBN 978-0091753634

Ingledew J – *The Creative Photographer: A Complete Guide to Photography* (Harry N Abrams, 2005) ISBN 978-0810992412

Langford M – *Langford's Basic Photography* (Focal Press, 2007) ISBN 978-0240520353

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

Montizambert D – *Creative Lighting Techniques for Studio Photographers* (Amherst Media US, 2003) ISBN 978-1584280934

Phillips N – *Advanced Studio Lighting Techniques For Digital Photographers* (Amherst Media US, 2006) ISBN 978-1584281863

Weston C – *Exposure Handbook* (Photographers Institute Press, 2005) ISBN 978-1861084309

Journals

British Journal of Photography – Incisive Media

Portfolio – Portfolio Photographic Workshop (Edinburgh) Ltd

Websites

www.vam.ac.uk/collections/photography

Photography Collection, Victoria and Albert museum

www.photonet.org.uk

The Photographers Gallery

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit:

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	developing alternative approaches to using source material and presenting ideas
Creative thinkers	producing photographic studio sets adapting ideas in response to results client feedback working with elements of visual language producing the final outcome and ensuring it meets the brief
Reflective learners	considering how to apply visual language in the brief
Self-managers	planning the different stages of producing the studio sets.

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	exploring examples of visual language in a wider context
Creative thinkers	trying out alternative ideas reacting on the spot to suggestions or ideas
Reflective learners	considering the use of visual language in examples of still photography in magazines and publications
Team workers	working as a part of a small production team.

● 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	using computer controlled studio flash
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	saving work to folders on hard drives
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	sourcing information from websites and electronic publications about photography and the subject matter for the brief
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	producing a digital portfolio
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	presenting a digital portfolio to clients
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	
Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists	managing client lists
Draw conclusions and provide mathematical justifications	
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	taking part in a group critique
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	sourcing and reading information about studio photography reading and absorbing information about health and safety relating to peripherals/equipment to be used
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively.	gathering and recording relevant technical information about equipment compiling information from reviews or client presentations.