

# Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

## Basic Course Information

1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	School of Art and Design/City Campus
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	BA (Hons) Photography 3 Years - Full-time
4.	Normal Duration:	3 Years - Full-time
5.	UCAS Code:	W640

## 6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

Photography at Nottingham Trent University aims to provide an inspirational experience for its students through engagement in the creative practice of photography. The course provides an intellectually stimulating experience of learning, where you are exposed to a wide range of practical skills, critical methodologies and professional strategies as you prepare to become a practicing photographer. The curriculum is inspired by the diversity of contemporary photographic practice and cultural discourse; teaching is informed through staff research and practice. You have the opportunity to explore all aspects of analogue photographic production alongside industry standard digital technologies; we want you to take risks while engaging in familiar and unfamiliar contexts of practices and discourses in photography.

The ethos encouraged on the course is towards helping you become a self-directed independent learner. The integral use of practice and theory enables you to develop criticality and autonomy as you establish your own particular photographic practice. Students demonstrate a high degree of autonomy through working in external venues within the city environment. Internationalisation within the curriculum provides further cultural and experiential contexts for learning and teaching which is achieved through overseas fieldtrips, and European and international exchange opportunities.

This course is designed for students who anticipate careers in all aspects of photography. The challenge that is extended to you is to discover and contribute to **the question of what photography 'is' and what it might become in the future.**

This course aims to produce photographic practitioners who are knowledgeable about key debates, themes, genres and ideas pertinent to and concerning

photography. They will be able to relate this knowledge to their own work and across the wider contexts in which the medium is employed.

The course aims to produce photographic practitioners who are able to operate effectively, ethically and professionally within the breadth of photographic practice. They will recognise relevant issues such as the ethical responsibilities they hold as regards the representation of their subjects, and the technological and cultural developments that effect the wider field.

This course aims to produce photographic practitioners who are able to effectively communicate about their work and the issues which effect it, within national and international contexts. They will be able to make independent judgements and develop critical self-awareness. Students will be able to demonstrate entrepreneurial and self-management strategies that are effective for their practice.

This course aims to produce photographic practitioners who are able to develop imaginative and creative responses to the photographic challenges they encounter and respond critically and analytically to the texts and images which they encounter during the development of their careers.

7. Course Learning Outcomes

The Course Learning Outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

Knowledge and Understanding

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Contextualise and critically evaluate your work in relation to key ideas and debates around photographic practice.
- **Recognise the responsibilities of the photographer's role in cultural representation and ethical practice.**
- Evaluate photographic technologies and practice within historical, cultural and economic contexts.
- Critically respond to texts and images across diverse contexts and within a range of disciplines.
- (B).
- Identify and critically analyse relevant themes and genres in relation to photographic practices.

*(B) outcomes align with QAA Art and Design benchmark statements:*

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-Art-and-Design-17.pdf>

Skills, Qualities and Attributes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Apply professionalism and reflective practice in the effective communication of your own work. (B).
- Evidence critical practice and research by selectively utilising a range of skills, concepts and processes, to develop your projects. (B).
- Communicate and employ appropriate creative skills and use of technology within your practice. (B).
- Demonstrate professional self-management and responsibility for your learning. (B).
- Evidence appropriate skills and professional expertise to engage with photography for career development and progression after graduation.
- Situate your photographic research and professional practice within international and global contexts.
- Consolidate a concept of practice in photography through the production and realization of visual and written work.

8. Learning and Teaching Methods

Teaching and learning on the course is delivered in a variety of ways which capture the breadth and diversity of photographic practice, in order to improve student confidence and develop transferable skills.

Directed Learning

The Critical Practice modules require students to read and engage with a series of core texts and writings on art and photography. Working with these texts forms the basis for interactive group activities which feature questions of interpretation, knowledge and analysis, and prepare students for the production of their dissertations. **Students learn about 'genres' of practice, through working with concepts and themes that link visual and critical photographic practices.**

The Visual Practice modules require students to make photographic works. Throughout the three years, students attend and present their work at a variety of seminar, critique and one-to-one tutorial sessions; organise and display their work in a variety of settings, for example in public exhibitions and/or in photo-books. These activities prepare students for the production of their degree shows, which along with their dissertations represent the culmination of the programme of study.

#### Technical Workshops

Regular technical workshops are delivered throughout the three years. These help to develop **students'** practical skills and include demonstrations in analogue and digital camera use; black and white, colour and digital printing; studio work; lighting; managing digital work flow; Lightroom, Photoshop, InDesign; web design, and preparing work for exhibition.

#### Lecture Series

A series of lectures is delivered by staff at Levels 4, 5 and 6 of the course, featuring photographic media and its discourses. Content is informed by on-going scholarly and artistic research undertaken by the staff team and by guest lecturers. Methodologies, professional practices and employability are also delivered through lectures at Levels 4, 5 and 6.

#### Guest Speakers and Fieldtrips

All three years engage with a series of visiting lectures, delivered by alumni and nationally and internationally recognized artists. **These lectures inform students'** critical, visual and professional practice activities.

Opportunities for national and international study trips to galleries and festivals are built into the course to expand the range of experience and knowledge about contemporary photographic practice.

#### Self-directed Learning

Self-directed learning is developed and maintained through discussion and feedback in group seminars, critiques and one-to-one tutorials. Students explore and express their ideas through photography learning to research, plan and use their time effectively as they respond to briefs, make work, create exhibitions, research ideas and develop their practice around taught sessions. Students explore the subject and work in their own ways, finding solutions to the problems that arise as they proceed through their individual learning journeys. This enables them to work independently and manage the learning process for themselves. In addition, students map their own employability journeys, engage in early career planning activities and (supported by tutors) arrange their own short work placements in the second year.

<p>9. Assessment methods</p>
<p>Written and practical course work, including research and aesthetic practice is presented by students for assessment through written submissions (e.g. text summaries, essays and dissertation submissions), verbal presentations, exhibitions, publications and contextual statements. Students receive marks and feedback on their submissions, with feedback being presented in a variety of ways.</p> <p>Formative feedback, delivered in either written or verbal form, is given to students following and/or during all taught sessions. Students are also provided with detailed written summative feedback and grades, on all formal, assessed module submissions.</p> <p>Some modules are comprised of variously weighted module elements. In these cases, the final assessment grade takes the marks given for each module element into account, according to <b>its'</b> respective weighting.</p>
<p>10. Course structure and curriculum</p>
<p>The course is a full time, three-year experience, with the opportunity to undertake a period of university- based undergraduate study overseas and short periods of work experience, during the second year.</p> <p>Course structure</p> <p>Two distinct modules are studied at each level of the course. One foregrounds visual practice, whilst the other foregrounds critical practice. Each module includes a mix of tasks, with deadlines as appropriate.</p> <p>A feature of the course is that students can work across the subject of photography, choosing to focus and develop through particular areas of competence and practice such as art, documentary, editorial, advertising, fashion and/or critical writing for example. In this way the course can be tailored to <b>students' specific</b> interests and career aspirations.</p> <p>Students who leave the programme at the end of the first year (Level 4) - with 120 credits, may receive a Certificate of Higher Education in Photography. Those who leave the programme at the end of year two (Level 5) and have earned an additional 120 credits, could receive a Diploma of Higher Education in</p>

Photography. The third and final year of study (Level 6) offers a further 120 credits, which enables the student to receive the full BA Hons. Photography award.

#### European and International Exchange Process

The BA Hons Photography course at NTU offers students the opportunity to study abroad for a period of approximately ten weeks, during their second year.

Applications to study abroad are made through the Erasmus programme (the European Union exchange programme) and International Student Exchange Programme (SEP). Students making applications to study abroad will be supported by departmental staff during the process.

The option to study abroad will be explained to students during the second term of their first year at NTU, during a dedicated presentation. The process for applications will be explained at this event, and students will be given details of our exchange partner institutions also. Details will also be available on NOW and in person from the Year Tutor for Level 4.

Students with good Level 4 grades and attendance profiles will be eligible to apply for overseas study. These restrictions are applied because overseas study requires considerable focus, confidence and self-awareness. Students who do not demonstrate these abilities via their grades and attendance profiles may put their ongoing success at risk, as they return to NTU and progress into their final year of study at Level 6

Successful applicants will study abroad during their second year of studies at NTU (Level 5). The placement may take place over term 1 and the first half of term 2, or the second half of term 2 and during term 3. During this period, students will work under the guidance of academic colleagues in our partner institutions. Our students will work to the same briefs as those studying at their host institutions, and their work will be marked and graded alongside the cohort.

Our students need to pass the briefs set by their host institutions, as this will enable them to pass Level 5 and proceed to Level 6 at NTU. Confirmation that a student has achieved a pass will be received by the module leader for Visual and Professional Practice (PHOT20117) and this will be ratified at the NTU Summer Exam Board. Failure to pass might result in the student being given a referral brief at the NTU Exam Board, allowing a second opportunity to pass Level 5 and proceed into Level 6, as per NTU regulations.

Students choosing to study overseas for part of Level 5 will also be given specific Critical and Cultural Practice (PHOT20118) work to undertake whilst they are away. This work will be set by the Critical and Cultural Practice module leader and will be designed to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by the time they have spent away from NTU as regards their Level 6 dissertations.

#### Work Placement

During Level 5 students are encouraged to arrange a short work placement. Supported by staff, students identify and then approach potential employers as they attempt to arrange their 1 or 2 week placements. Whilst often of great value, work placements are not mandatory, and are not assessed.

#### The curriculum

Throughout this course of study, students make photographs whilst writing and speaking about their discoveries and learning. Students explore the subject, doing things in their own way and finding solutions to the problems that they discover for themselves. They are fully supported in this process, as they identify and then gain the practical, technical, academic and transferable skills needed to accomplish their goals.

**The staff team's experience,** expertise and knowledge provides a base from which students develop professional and informed insights of the creative industries. This is aided by the guest speakers programme, fieldtrips, work experience placements, and our visiting alumni.

The breadth of this course is dynamic, because the medium of the image (and therefore photography itself) is in constant flux. For this reason, research and teaching is responsive to changes in industry and practice, and students are given access to the latest digital technologies, alongside analogue photography equipment. In this way, students become fluent with up-to-date global practices, whilst learning to analyse the challenges and limitations of photography in times of media convergence - whether working with digital or analogue, still or moving image technologies.

The Department has extensive black and white darkroom and film processing facilities; a colour darkroom suite, three industry-standard photographic studios and two Apple Mac digital suites. There is also a wide range of camera equipment available for loan, including large and medium format cameras and a comprehensive range of digital photographic equipment.

#### Level 4:

Exploration and Practice 80 Credit Points

History and Theoretical Practice 40 Credit Points

The Exploration and Practice 80 credit module at Level 4 requires students to begin to develop the conceptual, technical, practical research and photographic skills which are needed for their successful progression through the course.

Emphasis is placed on examining a variety of photographic concerns such as narrative and sequencing, objectivity, the staged and constructed photograph, architecture and space, material and objects, the portrait and the manipulated image for example. Students are also encouraged to develop an awareness of traditional genres, historical traditions and their shifting boundaries within contemporary photographic practice.

The recognition of employability skills that underpin photography, such as effective communication, market research, collaborative working and project management are identified through a series of lectures within this module, to help students in their early career planning activities.

This module is comprised of one formative task which is undertaken during the first term, and three subsequent elements which are undertaken during Terms Two and Three. Each element carries its own brief. These variously require the production of portfolios of visual works, research folders, evidence of technical skills and employability (**'Professional Practice'**) tasks.

The History and Theoretical Practice 40 credit module at Level 4 requires students to explore relevant aspects of photographic history, concepts and critical debates.

This module is comprised of one formative task which is undertaken during the first term, and two subsequent elements which are undertaken during Terms Two and Three. Tasks include a text summary and two essay submissions.

#### Level 5:

Visual and Professional Practice 80 Credit Points

Critical and Cultural Practice 40 Credit Points

The Visual and Professional Practice 80 credit module at Level 5 gives students further practical experience of making creative, experimental and critically informed photographic work. Students engage in live exhibition briefs, web design and

content generation briefs, photo-book briefs and professional practice for employability briefs, for example.

Through this module students also gain a thorough understanding of the business practices of photography, through teaching on subjects such as intellectual property rights, the social and ethical practices of being a photographer and contemporary (national and international) commercial practice.

This module is comprised of comprised of one formative task which takes place in Term One, and three elements, each of which carries its own brief, and which variously require the production of portfolios of visual works (which may be required to be presented as a photo-book or public exhibition for example); research folders, reflective statements, evidence of technical skills and Professional Practice tasks.

The Critical and Cultural Practice 40 credit module at Level 5 questions the nature of looking and representation in photographic works. Because these concepts are fundamental to a critical understanding of the engagement of theory with practice within the subject, particular attention is given to questions of identity, gender and political imagery including work focussed on environmental concerns, for example.

This module is comprised of three elements, which include a text summary / written image interpretation and two essay submissions.

#### Level 6:

Degree Show 80 Credit Points

Dissertation 40 Credit Points

The Degree Show 80 credit module at Level 6 requires students to generate a substantial project that consolidates their research and practice.

The module is comprised of three elements, the first of which is an initial Research and Development Project. The second element is the larger Degree Show project with the third element being the Professional Practice and Future Directions Project (synoptic assessment), which includes a description of your future (post-graduation) plans.

The Research and Development Project requires students to begin to develop self-directed works through an engagement with critical research. The project is designed to help students to develop their final Degree Show project, by exploring various image making processes, alongside related creative and conceptual ideas.

For the Degree Show Project, students are required to present work, underpinned and accompanied by a contextual statement, as part of a public group exhibition. Throughout the project students follow a self-directed course of study which is supported by tutors, whilst engaging in independent and critical research. During the module, emphasis is placed on innovation and creativity as students produce their visual work and effectively communicate informed ideas.

Towards the end of Term 3 you will also be required to submit a Professional Practice and Future Directions Project (synoptic assessment) which includes an assessment of your learning and achievements to date; a description of your future (post-graduation) plans; a knowledge of graduate options; an analysis of your current professional attributes and reflection on your future progression as regards employability and appropriate job markets.

The Dissertation 40 credit module at Level 6 requires students to identify an appropriate topic for study in negotiation with tutors, and to produce a dissertation that discusses relevant aspects of the practice and discourse of photography.

This module is comprised of one formative assessment task, which is the production of an extended dissertation plan in Term One, and one element, which is the production of the dissertation.

11. Admission to the course

Entry requirements.

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see **the 'Applying' tab on the NTU course information web page.**

12. Support for learning

The School is committed in assisting students to achieve the best results possible during their studies and will provide a wide range of academic and pastoral help and advice. This includes a learner support system which can be tailored to meet specific needs. Module leaders offer support on matters relating specifically to each module, year tutors offer support across year groups and maintain an overview of issues that

may arise. Additionally, a personal tutor will be assigned with whom students may discuss issues related to both academic and pastoral matters including developing general skills and preparing ahead for next career steps as students approach the end of their course.

There will be an Induction Week at the start of the course that will introduce many of the key facilities available within the University and provide an essential introduction to the course including meeting staff and fellow students. Students will also find out more about how they will be taught and assessed on the course.

As part of Induction Week new students are encouraged to become involved with the wider NTU community at events organized by the Student Union.

NTU's online workspace is called '**NOW**'. **All course and module information is posted** on this site, and can be accessed at any time. NOW is used extensively for communication, distribution of the course information and the use of online learning materials.

The Course Handbook contains details of how to request an interruption of studies or an extension to a deadline. Such requests will normally only be granted due to circumstances outside of your control, or through other factors affecting your academic performance. The School provides three options for requesting consideration and these are found in the section on Exceptional Circumstances.

13. Graduate destinations/employability

Photography has a strong focus on producing highly employable, literate graduates valuable to a broad range of cultural and creative industries. Students develop many skills for careers, and work closely with the Employability Team and academic staff to prepare for their futures in autonomous, collaborative and interdisciplinary creative enterprises. NTU Photography graduates typically go on to become photographers, picture editors, freelancers, stylists, studio managers, writers, picture researchers, web designers, photographers' agents, curators, arts administrators, postgraduate students, education officers and/or teachers.

The School's Work Experience Placement Policy supports students to develop a flexible approach that enables work experience activity to occur within the course, in negotiation with tutors. Staff encourage students to take part in live projects and opportunities to visit exhibitions, festivals and creative companies as an important part of the curriculum.

	<p>The guest speakers provide students with valuable contacts within the creative industries. On-going staff research and visiting alumni, continue to inspire and support graduate employability.</p>				
14.	<p>Course standards and quality</p> <p>The experience that students have whilst studying on this course is important to us. To this end, opportunities will be provided for students to give feedback on individual modules and/or other aspects of the course delivery. Students also have an opportunity to become a course representative at the beginning of each level of study. As part of this role students are invited to attend the course committee meetings that occur three times a year and contribute to the conversations and debate that support the continuing development of the curriculum. Any issues brought up at the course committee meetings are reported to the school academic standards and quality committee and actions identified from thereon in with responses reported back to you either via the next course committee meeting or via the NOW.</p> <p>At the end of each year the course team write an evaluative Interim Course Report (ICR) informed by staff and student feedback. This is received at School level and contains an action plan to ensure that the development of the course continues. A School Report is then passed on to the university and key points then inform new policy which is fed back to the School and External Examiner.</p> <p>An External Examiner is appointed to evaluate the appropriateness of the curriculum, quality of student work and the assessment and moderation processes. Following their visit, they summarise their findings in a report which is received by the School, staff and Course Committee.</p>				
15.	<p>Assessment regulations</p> <p><b>This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook <a href="#">Academic Standards and Quality Handbook</a>).</b> Any course specific assessment features are described below:</p>				
16.	<p>Additional information</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Collaborative partner(s):</td> <td>None</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Course referenced to national (QAA) Benchmark Statements:</td> <td>Course Outcomes are referenced to the <b>Quality Assurance Agency's benchmark statements</b> for subjects in Art &amp; Design</td> </tr> </table>	Collaborative partner(s):	None	Course referenced to national (QAA) Benchmark Statements:	Course Outcomes are referenced to the <b>Quality Assurance Agency's benchmark statements</b> for subjects in Art & Design
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Course recognised by: N/A

Date this course specification approved: DAG approval – 19 June 2018

Innovative features of this course

- External Degree Show Festival held in various venues around the city
- Analogue, black & white and colour printing facilities
- Industry standard studio facilities with digital equipment
- Two Apple Mac digital suites
- Excellent visiting speaker programme
- External student bursary & portfolio awards
- Critical writing as a particular strength within practice
- A diverse range of photographic practices
- Specialist workshops
- Integrated Employability and Enterprise
- Field trips: regional, national and international