



Harmonize Academy

Subject Overview

Photography



GCSE Photography at Harmonize Academy is a creative, hands-on course delivered in Year 11. Students develop both technical and creative photography skills while exploring visual storytelling through personal themes and real-world contexts.

Students also benefit from enrichment opportunities, including working with a professional external photography facilitator.

How do we deliver the Photography course?

GCSE Photography (Key Stage 4)

Examination Board: AQA

Specification: GCSE Art and Design: Photography

Course Code: 8206

Duration: 1-Year (Year 11)

Assessment:

- **Component 1: Portfolio (60%)**
- **Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40%)**

Departmental Overview

The Photography team at Harmonize Academy comprises:

- **2 specialist teachers** – Ms Emily Maxwell and Ms Ellie Newton
- **1 teaching assistant** – Ms Sharon Gregson
- **1 external facilitator** – Mr James Reader

Photography work is continuously exhibited around the school, giving students the opportunity to showcase their work publicly—building confidence, pride, and a sense of achievement.

The department is committed to seeking out new opportunities both internally and externally, working with various organisations and subject areas to expand creative experiences for our students.

To recognise and celebrate progress and dedication, the department awards certificates each term to the *“HA Photographer of the Term”*—acknowledging hard work both in and outside the classroom.

Facilities

- **State-of-the-art ICT suites** equipped with the latest photography and editing software
- **Top-of-the-range photography equipment** including cameras, lighting and editing tools
- **Open-plan, modern classrooms** with interactive whiteboards and collaborative workspaces

Component 1: Portfolio (60%)

This is a coursework-based unit where students build a portfolio of work showing their ideas development, technical skill, and creativity. Themes may include:

- Disguise
- Identity
- Landmarks
- Religion
- Environments
- Portraits
- Still Life
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Students are encouraged to explore different genres and techniques to produce personal and meaningful responses.

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40%)

Students select from starting points provided by AQA and independently develop a creative response. This includes a 10-hour practical exam to produce a final outcome.

This component assesses the student's ability to:

- Develop and refine ideas
- Research and reference other artists/photographers
- Experiment with media, techniques, and processes
- Realise a final outcome that meets all four AQA assessment objectives

Skills Students Will Develop

- **Contextual understanding:** exploring historical, cultural, and social influences in photography
- **Technical skills,** including:
 - Lighting
 - Viewpoint
 - Aperture and depth of field
 - Shutter speed and movement
 - Use of digital and darkroom processes
- **Media and materials:**
 - Film and photographic paper
 - Darkroom chemicals
 - Digital programs and editing software
 - Graphic media for planning and storyboarding

Future pathways

Why Choose Photography?

GCSE Photography is ideal for students who enjoy expressing ideas visually, working independently, and thinking creatively. The course also supports progression into further education in Art & Design, Media, Photography, and careers in the creative industries.