



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Photography: Portraiture Skills (SCQF level 6)

CODE F51P 12

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to enable the candidate to research styles of photographic portraits from both historical and contemporary periods and apply the acquired knowledge of skills and techniques in the production of their own portraits in a studio and on location. The Unit requires the candidate to be reflective and evaluative about their own work.

The Unit is suitable for candidates who have some previous photographic experience and have an interest in developing the knowledge and skills required for photographic portraits.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Research the photographic styles and techniques used in historical and contemporary photographic portraits.
- 2 Produce finished photographic portraits in a studio and on location to a given brief.
- 3 Evaluate the finished photographic portraits.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would benefit from having had some experience in basic photography.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher level (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Administrative Information

Superclass: KE

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Photography: Portraiture Skills (SCQF level 6)

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit.

The Unit provides opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skills:

- ◆ Information and Communication Technology (SCQF level 5)
- ◆ Working with Others (SCQF level 5)
- ◆ Problem Solving (SCQF level 5)

These opportunities are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Photography: Portraiture Skills (SCQF level 6)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

OUTCOME 1

Research the photographic styles and techniques used in historical and contemporary photographic portraits.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Select a range of historical and contemporary photographic portraits.
- (b) Describe accurately the background and composition of the subject in each photographic portrait.
- (c) Explain clearly the effect that the background and composition has on each photographic portrait.
- (d) Describe accurately the lighting technique used in each photographic portrait.
- (e) Explain clearly the effect the lighting technique has on each photographic portrait.

OUTCOME 2

Produce finished photographic portraits in a studio and on location to a given brief.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Select the correct camera and lighting equipment for each photographic portrait in a studio and on location in response to the given brief.
- (b) Choose a suitable background and position the subject appropriately to create different styles of photographic portraits in response to the given brief.
- (c) Use the correct lighting techniques and exposure to create photographic portraits in a studio and on location in response to the given brief.
- (d) Select and present the finished photographic portraits.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate the finished photographic portraits.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the finished photographic portraits in terms of aesthetic quality, style and technique.
- (b) Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the presentation format chosen for each of the photographic portraits.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria for this Unit.

Written and/or oral recorded evidence and product evidence is required. This evidence will be produced under open-book conditions in response to a given brief.

The candidate will produce a folio of work which will include:

- ◆ a workbook which contains a range of gathered historical and contemporary photographic portraits and annotations about the style and techniques used
- ◆ five finished photographic portraits
- ◆ an evaluation of three of the finished photographic portraits

The evidence required for each Outcome is as follows:

Outcome 1

Written and/or oral recorded evidence and product evidence to include five different photographic portraits which candidates have personally selected is required. The range of portraits selected must:

- ◆ reflect different historical and contemporary styles of portraiture
- ◆ be examples of formal and informal portraiture
- ◆ have been taken in a studio and on location

The term contemporary will mean within the last 30 years.

It would be appropriate for this evidence to be in the format of a traditional or electronic annotated workbook.

Outcome 2

Product evidence in the form of five different finished photographic portraits which the candidate has produced, on their own, is required for this Outcome.

The candidate must work to a clear, given brief which details that the finished images must:

- ◆ include a minimum of one studio and a minimum of one location portrait
- ◆ demonstrate the correct use of all the following lighting techniques: 45 degree lighting; side lighting; rim lighting; frontal lighting; controlled natural window lighting by producing photographs for each lighting type
- ◆ demonstrate their ability to produce technically accurate and aesthetically pleasing photographic portraits

It would be appropriate for this evidence to be presented in the format of traditional prints, electronic display or digital print. The minimum print size should be 6 x 4" (10 x 15 cm).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Photography: Portraiture Skills (SCQF level 6)

Outcome 3

Written and/or oral recorded evidence which the candidate has generated in open-book conditions is required to demonstrate achievement of this Outcome.

The candidate will select three finished photographic portraits from Outcome 2 for evaluation.

This evaluation should be approximately 400–500 words.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Photography: Portraiture Skills (SCQF level 6)

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

This Unit is an optional Unit of the National Certificate in Art and Design, but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

The Unit is designed to familiarise the candidate with the process of researching historical and contemporary practice found in the genre of portrait photography and applying the acquired skills and techniques to the production and evaluation of their own photographic portraits.

The intention is to provide an opportunity for the candidate with some experience in photography to engage in the process of creating photographic portraits in a studio and on location. Work undertaken in the research stage will provide candidates with an understanding of the skills and techniques required to produce creative and aesthetically pleasing portraits. The production of their own photographic portraits will require the candidate to work to the given brief — which will outline all the lighting techniques to be used — and apply the acquired knowledge of techniques and skills to their images. The Unit also requires the candidate to be reflective and evaluative about their own work.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Many of the skills achieved in this Unit will be transferable to other photography Units. The candidate should be given the opportunity to gather relevant information on their own and should be encouraged to make use of relevant websites and other resources.

Outcome 1

The candidate could gather a minimum of five examples of historical and contemporary portraiture from at least three different sources and from the mid nineteenth century to the present day.

The candidate should be encouraged to explore different sources such as photographic journals, news media, magazines and gallery guides rather than simply taking from books on photography. The intention is that the candidate will gather experience and knowledge of the different approaches taken to portrait photography by describing each image gathered in terms of lighting, position, photographic techniques, aesthetic quality and links to the culture of the period.

The teacher/lecturer may wish to provide information on historical and current professional portrait photographers but should ensure that each candidate supports their own photography through their own research. The candidate could be given a series of questions linked to portraiture and the culture of the period to assist them in having a direction and purpose to their work. For example they could be encouraged to look at how the family has been recorded by portrait photographers over the ages or how women have been portrayed in portraits, both historically and contemporarily.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Outcome 2

The teacher/lecturer should provide the candidate with a clear and detailed brief outlining the requirements to: produce a range of aesthetically pleasing photographic portraits in a studio and on location; to produce a minimum of one portrait for each of the lighting types listed below.

- ◆ 45 degree lighting
- ◆ side lighting
- ◆ rim light
- ◆ frontal light
- ◆ window lit

The candidates could work in a team of two, alternating between the roles of photographer and assistant. Each lighting technique could be introduced in the form of a practical demonstration and supported by classroom instruction.

It should be stressed to the candidate that the above lighting approaches are a means to an end and not an end in themselves. There needs to be an aesthetic consideration given to how these techniques are applied. The candidate should not see this as purely a technical exercise and care should be taken to ensure that this Outcome does not just encourage a formulaic approach to lighting and technique. It would be very easy to set up lighting and have a virtual production line of sitter and photographer. This is, however, unlikely to lead to any meaningful experience for the candidate.

Instead, the candidate should be encouraged to think about what the lighting is actually doing to the appearance of the subject. The candidate could take some of their portraits against a plain background but they could also be encouraged to photograph their sitter a distance from the background and thereby contextualise the sitter and their environment. Perhaps they could use limited depth of field to isolate the sitter from any background.

The candidate should also be encouraged to consider the choice of sitter — young and old, dark haired and fair haired, dark skin and fair skin as well as the awareness of the effect of clothing, fashion, make-up and hair has on the portrait. Other factors to be considered would be the arrangement of backgrounds and props, pose of sitter, focal point of picture, and the different conditions likely to be encountered when on location and which may require portable lighting units etc.

Opportunities for the candidate to discuss their work and their practical assignments as a group would be advantageous. Regular reviews of the candidate's work and ideas to apply the research to their own image making would be beneficial.

The candidate should be given Health and Safety guidance relating to studio practice and location work. The candidate will be expected to adopt safe working practices at all times.

Outcome 3

This Outcome is designed to allow the candidate to reflect on their work and identify and evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the application of skills and techniques acquired throughout the process to their own portraits.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

In this Unit the candidate will be researching a variety of photographic portraits, following a brief to produce their own portrait images and evaluating their own photographic skills. This offers ideal opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving*.

If using electronic formats for their portraits, candidates would have the opportunity to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology*.

The candidate will be required to work closely with models and possibly an assistant during Outcome 2. This offers ideal opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Working with Others*.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The Evidence Requirements provide specific requirements for this Unit assessment. They clearly set out what is to be addressed by candidates and what evidence teacher/lecturers should look for.

Outcome 1

An appropriate instrument of assessment is a suitable structured assignment resulting in an annotated workbook.

Outcome 2

An appropriate instrument of assessment is a structured practical assignment resulting in the production of five portrait images. Much of the evidence should arise out of the photo shoots but may also include reflective statements made by the candidate on his/her experience related to the work produced and previous research.

Centres must ensure the folio is the candidate's own work and the five photographic portraits produced should show technical skill and aesthetic judgement.

Outcome 3

A suitable instrument of assessment could be a written and/or oral recorded report with a suggested word count of approximately 400–500 words.

Teachers/Lecturers may wish to provide a pro forma for this assessment.

This Outcome is designed to encourage the candidate's critical analysis and self evaluation of their own work.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information and communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).