

# Common questions about Higher Photography

## What is the structure for the Higher Photography course?

There are two externally-assessed components of course assessment:

- ◆ question paper — 20 marks (23% of the total mark)
- ◆ project — 100 marks (77% of the total mark)

## Higher course assessment — project

### How can the project work be presented?

Candidates can present their work in a variety of ways. Examples include sketchbooks, folders and display books.

The selection of candidate work should reflect the requirements of the project assessment task.

The presentation should include the:

- ◆ plan
- ◆ investigative research
- ◆ line of development (contact sheets, edit experiments, shortlist) including evidence of critical reflection, refinement and creative decision-making
- ◆ final 12 prints
- ◆ evaluation

Candidates should present their work in a clear and logical format. Candidates should only submit work for assessment that is relevant to their project topic.

## **How should candidates present their plan?**

Candidates can include their plans at the start of the presentation or submit them as a separate piece of evidence. They can also include evidence of planning throughout the project. Planning should be clearly labelled.

## **How much research should candidates include in their projects?**

This depends on the project and on what the candidate needs to research in order to carry it out successfully. Research material should be relevant to the candidate's topic and approach. Candidates should not include material which does not have a specific relevance to the project. The volume of research should be proportionate to the marks available.

## **Do candidates have to annotate their research?**

There is no requirement to annotate research, as the ability to analyse photographs is demonstrated in the question paper. However, candidates can choose to include brief comments or labels, for example to explain the relevance to their topic. They can also choose to include comments within the research that demonstrate evidence of their creative decision-making.

## **Can work by unknown photographers be included in the research?**

Candidates can include contextual research from a number of sources, including images by unknown photographers. However, candidates must explain external influences on photographers' work and practice. This task will be more accessible if candidates also include relevant work by significant photographers.

## **What is the minimum and maximum number of photographs candidates have to select to explain the impact of social, cultural, historical and/or scientific influences on the photographers' work and practice?**

Candidates must respond on a minimum of two photographs, each by a different photographer. There is no maximum number of photographs. However, the work should be proportionate to the marks available.

## **Do candidates have to include a historical and contemporary photographer?**

No. Candidates should include images by photographers who are most relevant to their topic and approach.

## **Do candidates have to explain the impact of a social, cultural, historical and scientific influence on each photographer's work and practice?**

Candidates must explain the impact of at least one external influence on each photographer's work and practice, although they may choose to explain the impact of more than one.

## **Do candidates have to give biographical information about photographers?**

The task does not ask for biographical information on photographers. However, candidates can give biographical information to support an explanation of the impact of social, cultural, historical and/or scientific influences on a photographer's work and practice. Candidates do not gain marks for general biographical information which they have not related to a selected photograph.

## **How many photographs should be included in the development?**

This depends on the candidate's topic and approach. They should include images which demonstrate a body of photographic work showing a sustained line of development. They should demonstrate the development of ideas in response to their topic and show technical and creative exploration and experimentation.

Candidates should ensure that their contact sheet images can be viewed clearly so that markers can judge how well they have demonstrated applied technical and creative photography skills. Candidates should demonstrate that they have maintained a sustained and creative line of development that is relevant to their project topic and selected approach. They should show purposeful exploration and experimentation with image-making techniques. Candidates can also include edits and test prints in the development.

Candidates should not include images that are not relevant to the project. Candidates should ensure that their final images are evident within their development work.

## **Do candidates have to annotate their photographic work?**

Candidates should demonstrate ongoing critical reflection, refinement and creative decision-making. They can show this in annotation, but could also demonstrate it effectively in shoot reviews, a mid-point review, points for action, or in their shortlisted images. Candidates do not need to annotate all their work. Quality is more important than quantity. Candidates should select methods that work best for them and avoid unnecessary repetition.

## **How should candidates present their final prints?**

Final prints must have dimensions between A5 and A4 (or equivalent area).

Final photographic prints do not need to be mounted. Unmounted photographs are acceptable, and are preferable to poorly mounted prints.

Ideally, candidates should present prints loose rather than stuck into a workbook, folder or sketchbook, unless they must be viewed in a particular order. Candidates can submit loose prints in an envelope or folder for protection. Prints should not be submitted individually in plastic pockets designed for documents, as this can adversely affect viewing.

The Higher Photography course specification (course support notes appendix) has further information on final print production.

## **How should candidates present their evaluations?**

Candidates can include evaluations at the end of the presentation or submit them as a separate piece of evidence. Evaluations should be clearly labelled. There is a 500 word limit for the evaluation. If the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty will apply.

## **Can projects be submitted on digital storage devices?**

No. Projects must be submitted in physical form. Work submitted as digital media does not meet the requirements of the project assessment.

## **Can candidates request the return of their project work?**

Yes, candidates can request the return of their Higher projects. For further information please visit the [return of materials](#) web page:

# **Higher course assessment — question paper**

## **Do candidates have a choice of questions in the question paper?**

No. All questions are mandatory.

## **What is the structure of the Higher question paper?**

Section 1: Multiple choice has 10 marks and contains 10 multiple-choice questions.

Marks are awarded for:

- ◆ demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the properties of light and image formation, camera controls, and image-making techniques and their effects

Section 2: Analysis has 20 marks. It contains two questions (10 marks each) which ask candidates to critically analyse two unseen photographic images from a range of genres and styles.

Marks are awarded for:

- ◆ analysing two unseen photographic images by applying knowledge and understanding of the properties of light and image formation and photographic practice
- ◆ drawing valid conclusions and giving explanations supported by justification

## **Does the Higher question paper have specific categories?**

The question paper samples from the mandatory knowledge and understanding for the course, which is listed in the course specification.

A range of genres and styles is represented in the question paper. Analysis images are selected from the following genres:

- ◆ portraiture
- ◆ still life

- ◆ landscape
- ◆ urban environment
- ◆ natural world
- ◆ documentary

## **Will the structure of Questions 11 and 12 stay the same each year?**

Question 11 changes each year depending on the image. The distribution of marks within Question 11 varies between 2 and 4, but always totals to 10 marks.

For Question 12, the image changes each year but the question remains the same.

Exemplars for all subjects and levels are regularly updated and made available on both the Understanding Standards webpage ([www.understandingstandards.co.uk](http://www.understandingstandards.co.uk)) and on SQA's secure site under the Understanding Standards tab.

National Qualifications questions and answers are available on the [frequently asked questions section](#) of SQA's website.

Questions and answers on the changes to National Courses are available at [www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges](http://www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges).