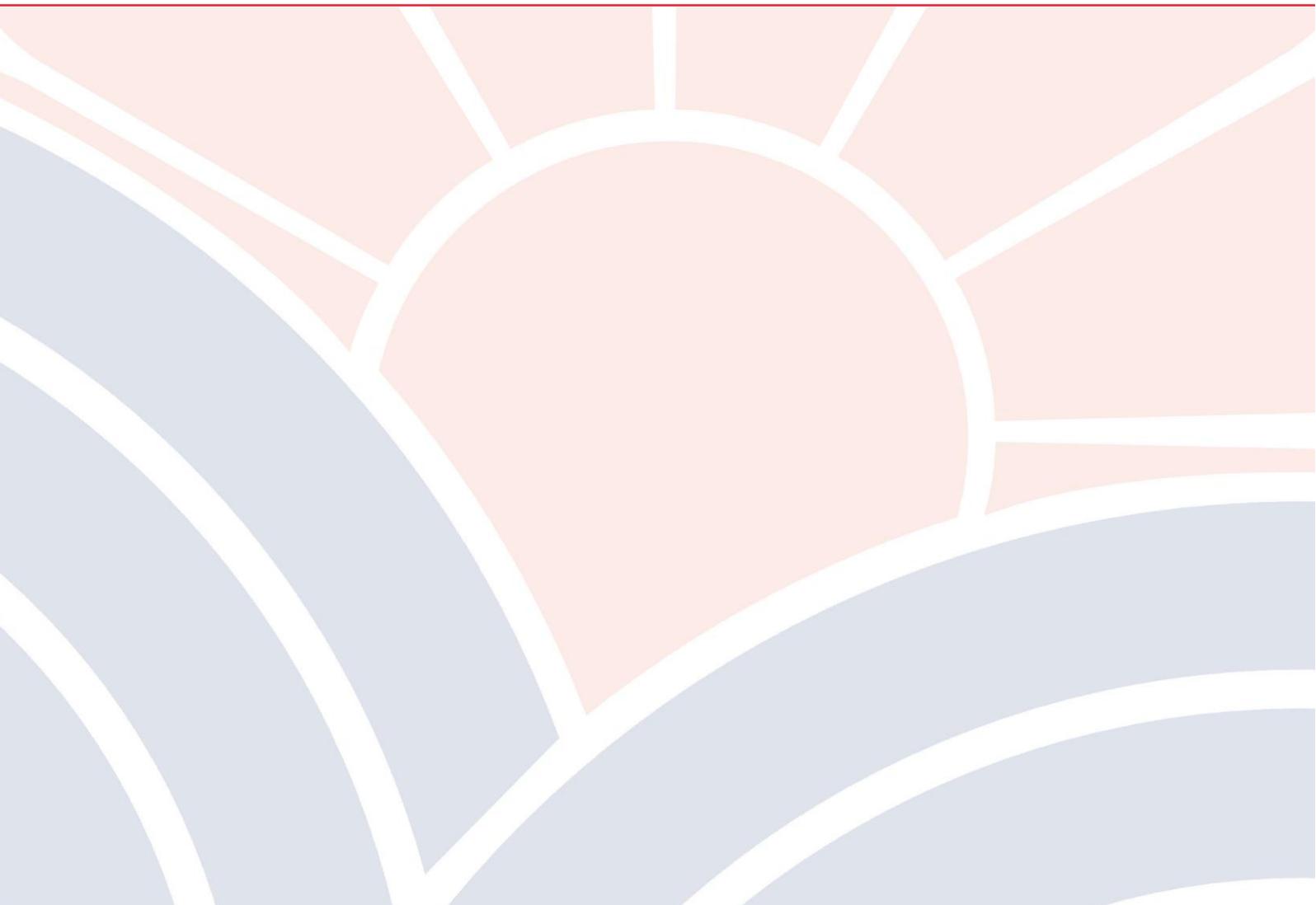


# Programme Specification

HNC PHOTOGRAPHY FOR ENGLAND (HTQ)



Awarded by

# Programme Specification

---

## Title of Programme: **Higher National Certificate in Photography for England (HTQ)**

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1. Awarding Body</b>   | Pearson  |
| <b>2. Teaching location</b>   | Solihull College and University Centre, Blossomfield Campus, Solihull B91 1SB        |
| <b>3. Accreditation details</b>   | N/A  |
| <b>4. Final award</b>   | Higher National Certificate  |
| <b>5. Name of award</b>   | HNC Photography for England (HTQ)  |
| <b>6. Codes</b>   |  |
| <b>a. UCAS code</b>   | a. UCAS course code PH01, Institution code S26; Campus code: Main site               |
| <b>b. Solihull Qualification Code</b>   | b. MEHEA093BCF0  |
| <b>c. Pearson Programme Code (&amp; approval dates)</b>   | c. <b>610/4076/9</b>   |
| <b>7. QAA Subject Benchmark or other external reference such as published by Pearson if the course is a Higher National</b> | Published by Pearson. Mapped to Level 4 Photographer (ST1388) occupational standard. |
| <b>8. Date this specification applies from</b>  | 30/10/2025   |

Approved

Please pass by HoS and Head of HE

### RECORD OF UPDATES

Date amended*	Nature of amendment**	Reason for amendment**

## 1. Educational Aims of the Programme

---

### Level 4 Higher National Certificate

The purpose of these qualifications is to develop students as independent-thinking professionals who can meet the demands of employers and adapt to a constantly changing world. The qualifications aim to widen access to higher education and improve the career prospects of those who take them

The objectives of this qualification are:

- to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding that students need to achieve high performance in the photography environment
- to develop students with enquiring minds, who have the abilities and confidence to work across different photography functions and to lead, manage, respond to change, and tackle a range of complex photography situations
- to provide the core skills required for a range of careers in photography
- to offer a balance between employability skills and the knowledge essential for students with entrepreneurial, employment or academic ambitions
- to develop students' understanding of the major impact that new digital technologies have on the photography environment
- to provide insight into photography operations and the opportunities and challenges presented by a global marketplace
- to equip students with knowledge and understanding of culturally diverse organisations, cross-cultural issues, diversity, and values, and to allow flexible study to meet local and specialist needs.

The Level 4 units lay the foundation of learning by providing a broad introduction to photography. This develops and strengthens core skills while preparing students for specialist subjects at Level 5 or to enter employment with the qualities necessary for job roles that require some personal responsibility. Students will gain a wide range of photography knowledge linked to practical skills obtained through research, independent study, directed study and workplace scenarios. Students are involved in vocational activities that help them to develop behaviours (the attitudes and approaches required for a competence) and transferable skills. Transferable skills are those such as communication, teamwork, research and analysis, which are highly valued in higher education and in the workplace. By the end of Level 4 study, students will have sound knowledge of the basic concepts of photography. They will be competent in a range of subject-specific skills as well as in general skills and qualities relevant to these key areas of photography.

## 2. Programme structure

---

The Higher National Certificate in Photography is a Level 4 qualification made up of 120 credits. Students study full-time over one year. A full-time mode of study requires students to attend

college a minimum of two days per week with the intention to complete the programme in a single year.

The HNC Photography Level 4 qualification is worth 120 credits. Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals in Photography use modules to define the overall structure of the qualification. Each module includes at least one assessment unit, which provides the definition of Learning Outcomes and Essential Content for delivery.

Units are designed around the amount of time it will take for a student to complete them and receive a qualification. This is known as the total qualification time (TQT). TQT includes guided learning activities, directed learning activities and assessment. The TQT for this HNC is 1200 hours.

Examples of activities that can contribute to TQT include:

- guided learning
- independent and unsupervised research and learning
- unsupervised creation of a portfolio of work experience
- unsupervised e-learning
- unsupervised e-assessments
- unsupervised coursework
- watching a recorded podcast or webinar, and
- unsupervised work-based learning.

#### **Guided learning hours:**

These are the hours where a tutor is present to give specific guidance towards the learning aim being studied. Guided learning hours (GLH) include classroom-based learning supervised by a tutor, work-based learning supervised by a tutor, a live webinar or telephone tutorial with a tutor, live e-learning supervised by a tutor, and all forms of assessment guided or supervised at the time by a tutor. The total number of GLH for this HNC is 480.

#### **Independent Learning hours:**

These are the hours where a student is learning without the direct guidance of a member of centre staff. They are critical to the student's ability to develop knowledge and skills, as well as providing them with the opportunity to develop key transferable skills such as self-discipline, time management and self-motivation. Total number of ILH for this HNC is 720.

#### **Modules**

	<b>Guided learning hours</b>
<b>Module A Process and Practice</b>	<b>480</b>
A1 Concept and Development	340
A2 Creative Project	140

Each module defines the following:

- A broad area of creative practice where the student will learn, develop work and be assessed.
- An Introduction, which provides an overview of the module, highlighting what students will learn and how this fits into their overall development of creative practice.

- An Assessment Summary, which provides a brief overview of the approach to assessment and the Learning Outcomes, defined within the assessment units.
- The Essential Content that must be taught to support the student in achieving the Learning Outcomes:
  - Essential Content is divided into key areas that correspond to the standard assessment criteria
  - Essential Content may be further divided to include specific Subject Domain content where there are differences between what may be necessary for different domains
- Essential Information for Assessment, which provides support for teaching and assessment teams:
  - Recommended Evidence provides an overview of the strategy for assessment and types of evidence that may be appropriate for the assessment unit. These are provided for guidance only and teaching assessment teams are encouraged to explore other forms of evidence that may be appropriate to the module, assessment unit and subject.

### 3. Calculation of the final qualification grade

---

To achieve a Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate qualification, a student must have:

- completed units equivalent to 120 credits at Level 4, and
- achieved at least a Pass in each of the 5 assessment criteria areas.

A student's overall qualification grade is based on their performance in all modules. They are awarded a Pass, Merit or Distinction using the points gained through all 120 credits, at Level 4 for the HNC. Students must have attempted all modules and assessment units.

#### Points available per credit

Points per Credit		
Pass	Merit	Distinction
1	2	3

#### Point Boundaries

Grade	Point boundaries
Pass	10
Merit	16
Distinction	23

## Modelled learner outcomes

The tables below demonstrate potential outcomes of different learners, using unit grades to calculate the qualification grade.

Module A										
	Student 1		Student 2		Student 3		Student 4		Student 5	
	Grade	Grade points								
<b>Assessment Unit A1</b>										
A1.AC1	P	1	P	1	M	2	P	1	M	2
A1.AC2	P	1	M	2	M	2	M	2	M	2
A1.AC3	P	1	D	3	D	3	D	3	P	1
A1.AC4	P	1	M	2	D	3	D	3	P	1
A1.AC5	P	1	P	1	D	3	M	2	D	3
<b>Assessment Unit A1 total points</b>		5		9		13		11		9

Module A										
	Student 1		Student 2		Student 3		Student 4		Student 5	
	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points
<b>Assessment Unit A2</b>										
A2.AC1	P	1	P	1	M	2	P	1	M	2
A2.AC2	M	2	P	1	M	2	M	2	M	2
A2.AC3	P	1	D	3	D	3	D	3	P	1
A2.AC4	D	3	D	3	D	3	D	3	M	2
A2.AC5	P	1	D	3	M	2	M	2	M	2
<b>Assessment Unit A2 total points</b>		8		11		12		11		9
<b>Total qualification points</b>		13		20		25		22		18
<b>Overall Higher National Certificate grade</b>	Pass		Merit		Distinction		Merit		Pass	

## 4. Teaching and Assessment

Teaching methods are varied and informed by contemporary practice in teaching in higher education.

Delivery of all elements of the course use the College Virtual Learning Environment (typically for locating course and module resources, but also for discussion forums, collaborative information gathering, journal logs and coursework submissions and feedback). This allows for inclusive learning and digital inclusion.

Learners will study a range of photographic techniques, materials and technology, which includes both digital and darkroom, location photography, studio practice, photographic theories, as well as the professional skills needed to run a business and thrive as a freelancer. This is a very practical programme and allows learners to explore their creative practice along with pushing them to improve creative techniques. Learners will also work on live project briefs and benefit from masterclasses delivered by industry professionals.

Not all assessment results in a final grade. Formative assessment is intended to provide students with a sense of their progress and support them to improve and develop their knowledge and skill as they work towards summative (final) assessment. Formative assessment will be provided throughout the course. Formative assessment may be undertaken through many of the same types of activity that are used in summative assessment. An approach to formative assessment that supports students to build their knowledge and skill, through ungraded activities that 'model' aspects of what will be required in summative assessment, provides students with learning that is focused on their development. As a minimum, students will receive formative assessment feedback at least once on unit A1 and at least twice on unit A2. Formative feedback will be aligned with the five common assessment criteria:

- Contextual knowledge
- Ideas generation and development
- Technical knowledge and skill
- Professional practice
- Communication

Assessment is 100% coursework (no exams on this programme) and assessment methods may include:

- Portfolio creation
- Written assignments
- Practical projects
- Presentations
- Peer critiques and reflective journals

Learners are allowed to submit the same work for summative (final) assessments as they submitted for formative assessment, and there will be a sufficient gap between formative and summative assessment to allow reflection and for learning to take place.

## 5. Support for Students and Their Learning

---

Solihull College and University Centre operate a proactive approach to personal tutoring. It recognises that students need to make various adjustments as they move into higher education, whether from school or employment.

Firstly, an induction process is conducted where initial course expectations, rules, and regulations (via handbooks), enrolment and team building activities are undertaken in the week prior to commencing the course. This helps students gain an understanding of what the course involves and allows them to interact with their peers. Late enrollers have a shorter but none the less comprehensive induction.

Secondly, Tutors monitor student progress regularly in 1:1 tutorial to check that they are maximising their potential. Students have access to an academic skills tutor, where they can join group sessions or book one-to-one support with aspects of HE study, such as Harvard referencing or critical thinking. Close links between specific learning difficulty co-ordinators and tutors is used on a regular basis for tracking students with additional learning needs. If students are faced with challenges that affect their ability to study, such as illness, bereavement, depression, financial difficulties, or accommodation issues, we will collaborate with them in finding a way forward.

Thirdly, careers advice (academic and employment) is available through-out the course and within the programme which enables inclusivity as well as employability skills (Curriculum Vitae building, application forms, interview techniques)

There are also support services both that the students will have access to, including learning and personal support services. These range from programme liaison managers, advisers, support co-ordinators, mental health team to specialist subject librarians, career advisers and other learning support staff all designed to ensure that students get the best out of their studies.

## 6. Admission to the Programme

---

Students must:

- Have a GCSE in Maths and English (grade 4-5 (C) or above) or equivalent at level 2.
- Have a qualification worth 80 UCAS tariff points (e.g. two A levels, ideally in a relevant topic)

Equal consideration is given to applicants who are currently in relevant work and wish to apply to Solihull College & University Centre. To apply, they must have a minimum of 3 years' relevant work experience, demonstrating technical, management or supervisory duties. Any application must also include a reference from their line manager which supports entry to higher education. If self-employed, applicants will need to demonstrate suitability for the course through their professional portfolio. Candidates are required to provide a suitable reference.

To encourage widening participation, we will consider offering contextualised admissions to applicants who have experienced barriers to their educational progress. Contextual admissions is a university admissions process that takes into consideration an applicant's individual circumstances and background when reviewing their application, rather than solely focusing on

their academic achievements. Contextual admission offers are 16 UCAS tariff points below the standard offer.

## 7. Programme Resources

---

- Photography studio and darkrooms on campus
- Computer rooms with vocationally relevant software
- Student resource facility for the loan of specialist equipment (e.g. lap top computers, digital cameras, video cameras)
- Well stocked library with frequent review and update of books.
- E-library resources.
- A wide range of external links with industry for student trips or external specialist speakers

## 8. Preparation for Employment

---

Students need both relevant qualifications and employability skills to enhance their career prospects and contribute to their personal development. A range of employability skills are embedded throughout the programme in preparation for employment:

This qualification has been developed by Pearson in conjunction with several stakeholders. Pearson has worked with employers, students, professional bodies, education providers and other experts to design qualifications with the future workforce in mind. Higher National qualifications blend employability skills with academic, business and technical knowledge. They support trainees and apprentices in their Higher Apprenticeships and other technical education programmes, as well as students working towards a degree. Pearson programmes are regularly updated to maintain their high quality and meet the changing needs of the workforce.

Employers contribute to develop of Pearson Higher Nationals in several ways:

- They are involved in every stage of designing the qualifications, from developing the structure and pathways to selecting subjects, developing content and approving qualifications
- They help with delivery of qualifications, for example through vendor accreditation, letters of support and co-badging. Pearson qualifications actively encourage training providers to work with employers. Work placements and work-related learning are key features of BTEC Higher Nationals
- They help us review and update our qualifications to meet Occupational Standards and provide supporting material such as case studies to reflect the world of work.

### **The Solihull College and University Centre commitment to student employability**

This programme is part of Solihull College's commitment to meeting the needs of local, national, and international employers by delivering a diverse range of educational models including parttime and work-based study for learners drawn from non-traditional backgrounds in addition to internal progressions from FE vocational programmes.

**As part of this commitment, Solihull College and University Centre will:**

- Support students by providing professional, impartial advice and guidance to enable students to make considered career decisions before and during their studies to enable them to be prepared for their future employment and development by:
- Identifying the skills needed for progression into employment,
- enhancing their existing employment prospects.
- Provide subject-related resources and information on local, national, and international labour markets.
- Be responsive to the needs of employers to maximise students' employability and career progression prospects.
- Include study skills which will improve students' academic writing and research capabilities to enable further study and facilitate career progression.
- Support equality and diversity, and minimise barriers to learning, as described in the college's Equality Policy which can be found on the website under Mission and Policies.
- Ensure that employers play a key part in module content, course design and assessment criteria by formally seeking their views through employer forums, staff liaison visits, work experience coordinators, meetings with industry groups, and the use of a specialist employer service researcher to help to ensure that the course content meets industry expectations and requirements.

## **9. Evaluation of Teaching & Learning**

---

Evaluation of the Standards of Teaching and Learning is undertaken using the results of the following documents.

- Student feedback questionnaires, both initial impressions and the spring survey
- Module review forms completed by students at the end of every module and summarised by the course leader.
- Student input to the Programme Quality Board held twice a year.
- Student representations made through the HE Student Council.
- Action areas fed by the above to the course based Annual Monitoring report.
- Findings of the peer teaching observation scheme and recommendations for improvement that are made.
- External Verifiers report and audit of assessed work.
- Students can submit module evaluation questionnaires which are shared in team meetings and relevant actions raised are included in the Annual Monitoring Review.
- Student Representatives volunteer from each group to bring forward the views of their colleagues informally and within bi-annual programme quality boards (PQB).
- Annual module review in the form of student evaluations which are discussed in a team meeting.
- Periodic programmes review to identify best practice and invite employers to contribute to the design of the programmes.

- Invitation to attend Programme Quality Boards to all students and create a transparent discussion to share ideas, best practice, and areas for improvement.

## 10.Regulation of Assessment

---

- The programme is the subject of an Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) the last section of which is a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), written by the course leader with help and input from the teaching and tutoring team this is passed to the Head of School for audit and from them to the quality unit for further audit and acceptance as part of the College plan.
- Assessment rules and regulations and quality standards are those that are laid down in the Quality standards requirements of the College Academic Board.
- Assessment and assessment vehicles are regulated by the internal verification system for each programme which is itself audited by the quality unit within the College and by the External Verifier appointed by Pearson.
- External verification of assessment and of the provision and standards of teaching are regulated by Pearson and their quality unit, the programme must seek approval for continuance every 5 years. Their requirements are monitored annually by the visit and report of their appointed external verifier (Standards Verifier)
- Also, the programme must comply with the conditions of registration (notably the B conditions surrounding the quality) as set out by the Office for Students (OfS).

Pearson appoints Standards Verifiers (External Examiners).

The role of Standards Verifier is that of moderator. To do this they check and review:

- Action points from previous reports
- Centre assessment policy and boards effectiveness of assignments and internal verification maintenance and audit of assessment records student registration and certification claims
- student support and review
- areas of good practice

Note:

For further details on regulation of assessments, grading criteria, submissions, and resubmissions of assignments, please refer to the BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Enhanced Quality Assurance and Assessment by [clicking online.](#)

## 11.Progression Opportunities

---

The Level 4 Higher National Certificate provides a solid grounding in photography on which students can build should they decide to continue their studies beyond the Certificate stage.

On successful completion of the Level 4 Higher National Certificate, students can develop their careers in the photography sector through:

- Entering employment
- Continuing existing employment
- Linking with the appropriate professional body
- Committing to Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Progressing to degree level qualifications in Photography, Photography with Film, Photography and Creative Writing, Digital Photography or similar courses offered by higher education providers.

Some institutions may allow advanced entry for holders of Level 4 qualifications, direct to Level 5, however students should always check the entry requirements with specific higher education providers, and not assume entry is automatic.