Curriculum Rationale:

The Photography curriculum is designed to develop students from confident users of photographic equipment into independent, reflective, and creative photographers who can communicate personal ideas through photography and mixed media. Across Years 10 and 11, students progressively develop the technical knowledge, contextual understanding and creative independence required to meet the Eduqas GCSE Photography assessment objectives: AO1 - develop ideas through investigations, AO2 - refine work through experimentation, AO3 - record ideas, observations, and insights, and AO4 - present a personal and meaningful response.

Year 10 begins with a strong foundation in photographic practice. Students develop knowledge of photographic history, the exposure triangle, and compositional techniques, learning how aperture, shutter speed and composition influence the visual qualities and meaning of an image. This technical knowledge is then developed through a lighting project, where students investigate cyanotypes, studio lighting, coloured gels, shadows, and natural light. Artist research is embedded throughout, establishing the relationship between contextual investigation and practical experimentation.

Students then explore photography through mixed media, experimenting with drawing, collage, photomontage, weaving and sewing into photographs. This encourages creative risk-taking and develops their ability to select and refine appropriate materials and processes. The Identity project brings together these skills, requiring students to independently research artists, plan photoshoots, experiment with processes and produce a personal outcome. This provides an important transition from teacher-directed skills development towards independent GCSE practice.

The independent Portfolio Project, beginning in Year 10 and continuing into Year 11, further develops students' ability to sustain an investigation. Students select a theme and sub-theme, conduct independent artist research, complete photoshoots, experiment with mixed media and develop a clear visual narrative. Mock examinations introduce students to the demands of working under timed conditions while developing planning and time-management skills.

In Year 11, students complete and refine their portfolio before progressing to the Eduqas Externally Set Assignment. Students respond to an examination starting point by developing their own sub-theme and undertaking independent research, photography, and experimentation. They revisit and apply previously developed skills in new contexts before planning and producing a final response during the ten-hour practical examination.

Throughout the course, annotation, evaluation, and presentation are integral to the creative process. Contact sheets, editing evidence, experiments, planning, and final outcomes enable students to demonstrate progression across all four

assessment objectives. Overall, the curriculum follows a clear progression from technical foundations, through experimentation and contextual understanding, towards personal expression, sustained independent investigation and examination practice, equipping students with the skills, confidence and independence required for successful GCSE Photography.

Year 10			
Term	**Unit Title**	**Unit Purpose**	**Knowledge and Skills**
Autumn 1	Key skills – Exposure Triangle and Compositional Techniques	This introductory unit establishes the technical and visual foundations of GCSE Photography, equipping students with the knowledge and practical skills required to produce intentional, well-considered photographic outcomes. Students investigate the historical development of photography to understand the evolution of the medium and its creative possibilities. They explore the exposure triangle, developing an understanding of how aperture and shutter speed influence the appearance and meaning of an image. Alongside this, students investigate a range of compositional techniques, learning how photographers use visual structure to communicate ideas and direct the viewer's attention. The unit encourages students to move beyond simply recording images towards making purposeful creative decisions. It	Students develop foundational photographic knowledge through research into the history of photography, the exposure triangle and a range of compositional techniques. Practical investigations into shutter speed and aperture develop their understanding of exposure, movement and depth of field. Students apply compositional techniques through their own photographs, fully annotating and evaluating their outcomes. AO1 is developed through historical research and investigation of photographic conventions, informing students' understanding of the medium. AO2 is addressed through experimentation with camera settings and compositional approaches, allowing students to explore and refine visual outcomes.

		establishes the importance of research, experimentation, annotation and evaluation, preparing students to apply technical knowledge and visual understanding independently throughout subsequent GCSE projects.	AO3 is evidenced through their photographic recording, annotations and evaluations, documenting practical investigations and explaining creative decisions. AO4 is introduced through the selection and presentation of photographs that demonstrate purposeful application of techniques and an emerging personal response. This unit establishes the technical and analytical foundations required for subsequent GCSE projects.
Autumn 2	Identity - Lighting	This unit develops students' understanding of lighting as a fundamental photographic tool for communicating atmosphere, meaning and personal identity. Building on their knowledge of exposure and composition from Term 1, students investigate how different lighting conditions and techniques can transform the appearance and interpretation of a subject. Through artist research and practical experimentation, they explore cyanotypes, studio lighting, coloured gels, shadows and natural light, considering how photographers manipulate light to achieve specific visual effects. Students are encouraged to make increasingly purposeful creative decisions, connecting their technical experiments to the theme of identity. The unit reinforces the	Students develop practical knowledge of cyanotypes, high-, mid- and low-key studio lighting, coloured gels, shadows and natural lighting through planned photoshoots. They investigate how lighting influences exposure, contrast, atmosphere and the representation of identity. Building on Term 1, students apply their understanding of aperture, shutter speed and composition to produce controlled and expressive images. AO1 is developed through artist research and analysis, using contextual understanding to inform photographic intentions. AO2 is addressed through experimentation with lighting techniques, editing processes and the refinement of photographic outcomes.

		importance of investigating relevant artists, planning photoshoots and evaluating outcomes. It also establishes a structured approach to presenting photographic development, preparing students to refine their work and make informed creative choices in subsequent mixed media and independent projects.	AO3 is evidenced through contact sheets, unedited and edited photographs, editing screenshots, annotations and evaluations, recording the development of ideas and technical decisions. AO4 is demonstrated through the selection and presentation of final photographs that communicate students' interpretations of identity and show how their intentions inform their creative decisions.
Spring 1	Identity - Mixed Media	This unit extends students' understanding of photography by introducing mixed media as a means of transforming photographic imagery and developing personal responses to identity. Building on the lighting techniques and photographic outcomes produced in Term 2, students investigate how combining photography with drawing, collage, weaving and sewing can alter meaning, texture and visual communication. Artist research provides contextual inspiration, encouraging students to consider how other practitioners manipulate photographic images to communicate ideas and concepts. Students initially experiment with found photographs before applying their learning to a selected image from their own lighting project. This progression supports a shift	Students develop practical knowledge of drawing onto photographs, photomontage and collage, weaving, and sewing into photographic prints. They investigate how materials, layering and image manipulation transform photographic meaning and communicate identity. Building on Term 2, students select their own lighting photographs as starting points for more personal experimentation. AO1 is developed through artist research and analysis, identifying relevant ideas, materials and techniques to inform their own investigations. AO2 is addressed through experimentation with mixed media processes, exploring combinations of materials and refining outcomes through practical testing.

		from teacher directed technical exploration towards increasingly personal and purposeful decision-making. The unit develops students' confidence in experimenting with materials, evaluating outcomes and refining ideas, preparing them to combine photographic and mixed media processes within their independent identity project.	AO3 is evidenced through the recording of experiments, annotations and evaluations, documenting creative decisions and explaining how techniques influence meaning. AO4 is developed through the creation and presentation of personal mixed media responses, demonstrating how students translate contextual inspiration and their own photographic imagery into meaningful outcomes connected to identity.
Spring 2	Identity	This unit consolidates the technical, creative, and conceptual learning developed throughout Terms 1–3, enabling students to produce an independent, personal response to the theme of identity. Students undertake independent artist research and use their contextual understanding to inform the planning and development of a photographic or mixed media outcome. They are encouraged to make purposeful decisions about subject matter, photographic techniques, materials, and presentation, drawing on their previous experience of lighting and mixed media experimentation. The unit marks an important progression towards GCSE independence, as students take greater responsibility for developing their own	Students develop independent research, planning and creative decision-making skills through an extended investigation of identity. They research and analyse artists, identifying visual approaches and techniques to inform their intentions. Building directly on Terms 2 and 3, students select and combine lighting techniques, photographic processes, and mixed media approaches to develop a personal response. They plan photoshoots, mixed media experimentation and mock-ups, using testing to refine their final outcomes. AO1 is developed through independent artist research and the critical application of contextual understanding.

		ideas and translating them into a resolved outcome. Through sustained planning, experimentation, annotation and evaluation, students learn to refine their intentions and demonstrate how their research and practical investigations contribute to a meaningful final response.	AO2 is addressed through purposeful experimentation, refinement, and selection of appropriate photographic and mixed media processes. AO3 is evidenced through planning, contact sheets, editing screenshots, annotations, and evaluations, recording ideas and insights throughout development. AO4 is demonstrated through the presentation of a personal outcome that realises students' intentions and communicates their individual interpretation of identity.
Summer 1	Portfolio Project	This unit initiates students' independent GCSE portfolio project, providing opportunities to apply and extend the knowledge, skills and creative approaches developed throughout the year. Students select a theme and sub-theme, establishing individual intentions that guide their research, photography, and experimentation. Through independent artist investigations and planned photoshoots, they develop personal responses informed by relevant contextual sources. The unit also introduces students to the demands of a timed GCSE mock examination, requiring them to plan and develop an artist-inspired photographic and mixed media	Students develop independent project management, research, and photographic development skills by selecting a theme and sub-theme, investigating relevant artists and planning photoshoots. Building on Term 4, they apply their knowledge of exposure, composition, lighting, editing and mixed media to a self-directed portfolio. AO1 is developed through independent artist research and critical analysis, informing individual intentions and contextual understanding. AO2 is addressed through planned photoshoots, mixed media experimentation, mock-ups, and refinement of techniques in
Summer 2	Portfolio Project		

		response within a five-hour period. Students continue to develop their portfolios following the mock, refining ideas through further research, practical experimentation, and evaluation. This unit supports progression towards greater independence, sustained project development and the ability to produce meaningful, personally informed outcomes in preparation for the externally set assignment.	preparation for the five-hour GCSE mock examination. AO3 is evidenced through contact sheets, selected unedited and edited photographs, editing screenshots, planning, annotations, and evaluations, documenting the progression of ideas and recording relevant insights. AO4 is developed through the production and presentation of personal responses that realise students' intentions. The mock examination strengthens students' ability to organise their practice and translate research and experimentation into a resolved outcome within a timed context.

Year 11			
Term	**Unit Title**	**Unit Purpose**	**Knowledge and Skills**
Autumn 1	Portfolio Project	This unit consolidates and completes students' independent portfolio projects, building on the foundations established during Year 10. Students review their existing work, including summer developments, and make informed decisions about the direction of their projects before continuing their	Students develop independent project management and refinement skills by reviewing their Year 10 portfolio and summer work, evaluating progress, and adjusting their direction where appropriate. Building on their previous experience of artist research, photoshoots, lighting, and mixed media, they
Autumn 2	Portfolio Project		

		investigations. Through further artist research, photoshoots and mixed media experimentation, students develop a clear visual narrative and strengthen the personal significance of their work. From October half term, the focus shifts towards planning and producing a resolved final piece during a ten-hour GCSE mock examination. Students draw together their contextual research, photographic outcomes, and experimentation to realise their intentions. Following the mock, they refine and complete their portfolio for submission. The unit develops independence, sustained creative decision-making and the ability to present a coherent body of work that demonstrates progression and personal engagement.	investigate further contextual sources and develop a clearer visual narrative. AO1 is developed through continued artist research and critical analysis, informing their intentions and project direction. AO2 is addressed through further photographic and mixed media experimentation, testing techniques and refining ideas before the final piece. AO3 is evidenced through photoshoots, contact sheets, planning, annotations, and evaluations that document their development. AO4 is demonstrated through the creation of a personal final piece during the ten-hour mock examination, bringing together research and practical investigations. Subsequent refinement strengthens students' ability to present a coherent, resolved portfolio.
Spring 1	ESA	This unit introduces students to the Eduqas externally set assignment, requiring them to develop an independent response to a theme selected from the examination board's prescribed starting points. Building on the structure and independence developed through their portfolio project, students establish a personal sub-theme	Students develop independent investigation and project development skills by selecting an Eduqas starting point, establishing a personal sub-theme, and researching relevant artists. They plan and complete photoshoots, applying knowledge of exposure, composition, lighting, and mixed media developed throughout Year 10.
Spring 2	ESA		

		and investigate it through contextual research, photography, and experimentation. They are encouraged to draw upon the lighting, photographic and mixed media techniques developed during Year 10, applying these skills to new ideas and subject matter. Through sustained investigation, students develop a coherent direction and begin planning a personal final outcome. Regular formative assessment and written feedback support the development of their work, helping students identify areas for improvement and manage their progress ahead of the practical examination. The unit prepares students to translate independent research and experimentation into a meaningful response to the externally set theme.	AO1 is developed through independent artist research and critical analysis, connecting contextual sources to their chosen theme and intentions. AO2 is addressed through experimentation with photographic and mixed media techniques, refining ideas and selecting appropriate processes for their developing response. AO3 is evidenced through photographic recording, contact sheets, annotations, evaluations, and planning, documenting the progression of their investigations. AO4 is developed as students begin planning a personal final outcome that responds to the examination theme and their individual research. Live marking and formal feedback support reflection, refinement, and independent decision-making before the examination period.
Summer 1	ESA - exam	This unit brings students' externally set assignment investigations to a conclusion through the planning, preparation, and production of a personal final outcome. Building on the independent research, photoshoots and experimentation completed during the Spring term, students consolidate their ideas and	Students consolidate their photographic, mixed media and independent planning skills through final preparation for the ten-hour ESA practical examination. Building on their Spring term investigations and the portfolio experience, they review their artist research, photoshoots, and experimentation to make informed decisions about their final outcome.

		ensure that their final intentions clearly respond to the original Eduqas examination theme. They use the final preparation period to refine their plans, test practical approaches and produce practice examples that inform their decisions before the ten-hour practical examination. The unit emphasises the importance of translating sustained investigation into a resolved, meaningful response under timed conditions. Students are expected to demonstrate how their contextual research and photographic development have informed their final work. This final stage of the GCSE course brings together the knowledge, skills and independent working practices developed across both Year 10 and Year 11.	AO1 is demonstrated through the application of contextual research and artist inspiration to their final intentions. AO2 is developed through final experimentation, practice examples and refinement of materials, techniques, and processes before the examination. AO3 is evidenced through the recording of ideas, observations, planning and practical testing that inform their final decisions. AO4 is demonstrated through the production of a personal and meaningful final piece during the ten-hour examination, clearly connecting the original Eduqas theme with students' independent investigations. Students apply time management and practical decision-making skills to realise their intentions under examination conditions.
Summer 2			