

Your Program Requirements

This program guide defines the 20.0 credits required for the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Photography, including Major requirements (specific courses and course options), Arts & Science requirements and open electives.

Of the 20.0 credits required, the following applies:

- No more than 6.0 credits may be at the 1000 level
- At least 5.0 credits must be at the 3000 level or higher, including at least 1.0 credit at the 4000 level or higher
- At least 1.5 credits of Arts & Science courses must be at the 3000 or 4000 level

Reading Your Program Guide

Course Codes

Codes begin with a four letter subject code followed by four digits. The first digit indicates the year level of the course. For example, *GRPH-2004* designates a specific *Graphic Design* course at the *2000 level*. Generally, students complete 1000 and 2000 level courses before 3000 and 4000 level courses.

Course Weight

- 0.5 credit courses typically meet three hours per week for a 12-week term.
- 1.0 credit courses typically meet six hours per week for a 12-week term.

Major Requirements - Course Options

Although a specific number of credits are required from each category, you may choose to take additional courses from these lists as open electives.

Sample 4 Year Plan & Helpful Planning Information (at the end of this package)

The program is structured so that it can be completed in four years, by a student taking 2.5 credits per term in the fall and winter terms (a limited number of courses are also offered in the spring/summer terms). The sample plan will help you plan your courses.

In addition to general planning tips and suggested pathways, the helpful planning information can include recommended courses for your program and tips on meeting prerequisites for electives you may want to take.

If you want to accelerate your program progression, are attending part time or with a reduced course load, and require planning support, please contact **Student**

Advising at ocadu.ca/services/academic-advising.

More Information

Your program and degree requirements are also reflected on your **My Progress** page within My OCAD U Records (Self-Service) at selfservice.ocadu.ca/student.

View course offerings (available sections), course descriptions, prerequisites and more in the **Course Catalogue** at selfservice.ocadu.ca/student/courses.

View **videos and guides** on program planning and registration at ocadu.ca/reg-guides.

Photography – 2026/2027 Program Guide

Major Requirements

Specific Courses:

Course Code	Course Title	Course Credit
GART-1040	Drawing Across Disciplines	1.0 credit
GART-1041	Form and Time	1.0 credit
PHOT-1001	B&W Camera & Darkroom	0.5 credit
CROS-2002	Contemporary Issues	0.5 credit
PHOT-2001	Light & Studio 1	0.5 credit
PHOT-2009	Digital Practices	0.5 credit
VISC-2017	History of Photography	0.5 credit
PHOT-3009	Light and Studio 2	0.5 credit
PHOT-3023	Photography in Relation	0.5 credit
VISC-3011	Photography-Theory & Criticism	0.5 credit
Total Course Credits: 6.0 credits		

Course Options: Complete the identified number of courses from EACH of the categories below.

Course Code	Course Title	Course Credit
Category A – Choose ONE course from the list below:		0.5 credit
PHOT-2003	Colour Photo	
PHOT-2007	Experimental Practices	
PHOT-3002	Historical Processes	
PHOT-3025	Botanical Darkroom	
Category B – Choose ONE course from the list below:		0.5 credit
ASOC-2002	Making Gender: LGBTQ2S+ Studio	
PHOT-2006	Concept Development	
ASOC-3005	Artist & Community: Social Pra	
ASOC-3006	How do we look?	
CRCP-3001	A Question of Beauty: Reframed	
DRPT-3004	Landscape to the Environment	
INTM-3004	Media & Social Change	
IVCA-3002	Indigenous Art Experimentation	
PHOT-3006	Camera and Context	
PHOT-3014	Reconsidering Documentary	
PHOT-3016	Portraiture and Representation	
PHOT-3018	International Collaboration 1	
PHOT-3026	AI Image Lab	
PHOT-4003	Body and Lens	
PHOT-4010	Landscape, Site & Place	
SOSC-4002	Gender and Social Change	

Category C – Choose ONE course from the list below:		0.5 credit
CROS-3018	Networks and Post-Digital Art	
CROS-3019	Complicated Bodies	
CROS-3020	Stories in Expanded Worlds	
CROS-3021	Land at the Centre	
CROS-3XXX	Untitled Studio Presentation (to be developed; not offered in 2023/2024)	
Category D – Choose ONE course from the list below:		0.5 credit
CROS-3001	Professional Practice	
CROS-3023	Learning in the Field I (Must be taken with CROS-3024 Learning in the Field II, which may fulfill another requirement as needed)	
PHOT-3897	Field Placement	
PHOT-3898	Independent Study	
Category E – Complete 1.0 credit from the options below:		1.0 credit
CROS-4901	Open Studio Thesis: Research (CROS-4902 Open Studio Thesis: Presentation may be taken as an open elective below)	1.0 credit
PHOT-4019	Senior Studio Research	0.5 credit
PHOT-4020	Senior Studio Presentation (If taken with PHOT-4019, additional 0.5 credit may fulfill another requirement as needed)	1.0 credit
Level 3000/ 4000	PHOT courses	
Category F – Complete requirements below:		1.0 credit
Level 1000/ 2000	Studio electives	
Total Course Credits: 4.0 credits		

Arts & Science Requirements:

Course Code	Course Title	Course Credit
Category G – Choose ONE course from the list below:		0.5 credit
ENGL-1003	The Essay & the Argument	
ENGL-1004	Essay and the Argument: ELL	
Category H – Choose TWO courses from the list below:		1.0 credit
IVCV-1001	Turtle Island Visual Culture	
VISC-1001	Global Vis & Mat Cult: to 1500	
VISC-1002	Global Vis & Mat Cult: to Pres	
VISC-1004	Contemporary Art and Design	

Category I – Complete requirements below:		
Level 2000/ 3000/4000	Visual culture courses (IVCV, VISA, VISC, VISD, VISM) Fulfilled by VISA-2003 and VISA-3016 required for Major program - replaced with 1.0 credit open elective below.	(1.0 credit fulfilled)
Category J – Complete requirements below:		
Level 2000/ 3000/4000	Breadth elective course (HUMN, IVCL, SCTM, SOSC)	0.5 credit
Level 2000/ 3000/4000	Breadth elective courses (ENGL, HUMN, IVCL, SCTM, SOSC)	1.0 credit
Category K – Complete requirements below:		
Level 2000/ 3000/4000	Breadth elective and/or visual culture courses (ENGL, HUMN, IVCL, IVCV, SCTM, SOSC, VISA, VISC, VISD, VISM)	1.0 credit
Total Course Credits: 4.0 credits		

Open Electives:

Course Code	Course Title	Course Credit
Level 1000/ 2000/3000/ 4000 or higher	Open electives	6.0 credits
Total Course Credits: 6.0 credits		

Notes:

A **studio elective** may be chosen from any of the following subject areas: ADVR, ASOC, BUSI, CRCP, CROS, CRWR, DIGF, DRPT, ENVR, EXAN, FABR, GART, GDES, GRPH, ILLU, INDS, INTM, INVC, IVCA, IVCD, LIFE, MAAD, PHOT, PRNT, PRPB, SCIN.

An **open elective** may be chosen from any of the following subject areas: ADVR, ASOC, BUSI, CRCP, CROS, CRWR, DIGF, DRPT, ENVR, ENGL, EXAN, FABR, GART, GDES, GRPH, HUMN, ILLU, INDS, INTM, INVC, IVCA, IVCD, IVCL, IVCV, LIFE, MAAD, PHOT, PRNT, PRPB, SCIN, SCTM, SOSC, VISA, VISC, VISD, VISM.

Senior undergraduate students in good academic standing may take graduate courses at the **5000 level** from any of the following subject areas: CADN, CRCP, DHEA, DIGF, INCD, SFIN. Inquiries regarding access to 5000 level courses should be directed to the student's Faculty Office.

Students who have completed a minimum of 4.0 credits and are in good academic standing may **declare a minor**. Only open electives and general Arts & Science courses may fulfill both degree and minor requirements, subject to the credit limits stipulated in this program guide. For more information on minors: ocadu.ca/academics/minors.

Sample 4 Year Plan		Photography
<i>Course offerings and scheduling vary by year; in some cases it may not be possible to follow the sample plan exactly as listed.</i>		
YEAR	REQUIREMENTS	COURSE CREDIT
Year 1	Specified Course(s): Take GART-1040, GART-1041, and PHOT-1001	2.5 credits
	Course Option(s): Choose one course from Category F option list	0.5 credit
	Arts & Science: Choose one course from Category G option list	0.5 credit
	Arts & Science: Choose two courses from Category H option list	1.0 credit
	Open Elective(s): Choose one course	0.5 credit
Year 2	Specified Course(s): Take CROS-2002, PHOT-2001, PHOT-2009 and VISA-2003	2.0 credits
	Course Option(s): Choose one course from Category A option list	0.5 credit
	Course Option(s): Choose one course from Category F option list	0.5 credit
	Arts & Science: Choose two courses from Category J and/or K	1.0 credit
	Open Elective(s): Choose two courses	1.0 credit
Year 3	Specified Course(s): Take PHOT-3009, PHOT-3023 and VISA-3016	1.5 credits
	Course Option(s): Choose one course from Category B option list	0.5 credit
	Course Option(s): Choose one course from Category C option list	0.5 credit
	Course Option(s): Choose one course from Category D option list	0.5 credit
	Arts & Science: Choose one course from Category J and/or K	0.5 credit
	Open Elective(s): Choose three courses	1.5 credits
Year 4	Course Option(s): Choose 1.0 credit from Category E option list	1.0 credit
	Arts & Science: Choose two courses from Category J and/or K	1.0 credit
	Open Elective(s): Choose six courses	3.0 credits
Notes:		
Open electives, Arts & Science courses, and Year 3 and 4 requirements, may be taken in any order, subject to meeting course prerequisites.		
Ensure that overall requirements are met (minimum and maximum requirements for year level and Arts & Science).		

Helpful Planning Information – Photography

General Planning Tips:

- When planning your courses, keep in mind that the **Specific Courses** (required) focus on concept and your development of a personal vision. **Course Options** support your technical learning as well as particular themes and genres of photography, allowing you flexibility to direct your studies.
- Pay attention to course pre-requisites and level requirements. There is a great deal of freedom, and you may take many 3000 level courses in second year, 4000 level courses in third year and reach back in fourth year to pick-up desired courses you have missed.
- For more information on specific courses or pathways, reach out to Photography faculty and/or your Program Chair.

Planning Considerations – Option Category A:

- Although you are only required to take one of the three 2000 level introductory courses in **Category A** in darkroom, colour, digital and lighting, it will be advantageous to take more of them, depending on your technical background and interests.

Planning Considerations – Option Category D:

The requirements in **Category D** for professional experience offer a range of options, allowing you to gain professional knowledge. Such experience can provide a significant head start into future opportunities.

- A Field Placement (**PHOT-3897**) is the best opportunity to get hands-on experience in an area of interest with a gallery, photo studio, magazine or other setting of your choice. This will require personal initiative, but the *Centre for Emerging Artists and Designers* is there to assist you. You may take up to 1.5 credits of field study over years 3 and 4. This way you can plan for varied experiences.
- The courses **CROS-3023** Learning in the Field I and **CROS-3024** Learning in the Field II (both courses must be taken in the same academic year) provide more support and structure, but also places you in the field as an intern in the same way.
- If you feel unready for such external professional experience, you may take **PHOT-3898** Independent Study with a faculty member, designing your own extended project.
- The **CROS-3001** Professional Practice course provides information about the practicalities of an art career.
- A combination of the above can greatly supplement your course learning and the right mix can be found to suit the genre of photography you are engaged in.

A complement to fulfilling your Category D requirements would be to take the **PHOT-3012** Creativity on Demand course. This course is an open elective, however it will also support your professional knowledge, with an emphasis on business practices and commercial portfolios.

Planning Considerations – Open Electives:

- When choosing **Open Electives**, we recommend you consider the courses in the Course Option categories (Categories A through E) as these courses are a good fit with your major. Although electives can be fulfilled from across the program, these credits will allow you to take additional Photography courses to address your mix of interests.
- If you take more courses than the minimum requirement to fulfill a Course Options category, these courses will fulfill Open Electives.

Planning for Fourth/Final Year:

Students need a minimum of 1.0 credit at the 4000 level. You can choose to fulfill this by completing Thesis courses, advanced Photography courses or other 4000 level elective courses within the university. If you don't meet this requirement in completing Option Category E, then ensure you meet this requirement when completing Option Category B, Arts & Science electives (in Categories I, J or K) or Open Electives.

Planning Considerations – Option Category E:

PHOT Senior Studio course options (PHOT-4019 and/or PHOT-4020):

- In your fourth/final year, the PHOT Senior Studio courses (ie. PHOT-4019 or PHOT-4020) will allow you to concentrate on a major portfolio of work, either for future exhibition opportunities, graduate school portfolio or commercial portfolio for freelance or employed careers.
- Although you could take Senior Studio Presentation (PHOT-4020) on its own, taking both PHOT Senior Studio courses (PHOT-4019 and PHOT-4020) is highly recommended in providing a concentrated fourth year experience with your peers as you focus on your final body of work. Please view the course descriptions of these courses in the Course Catalogue for the pre-requisite information.

CROS Open Studio Thesis option (CROS-4901 and CROS-4902):

- If you are working in a multi-disciplinary manner, you might consider taking the Open Studio Thesis courses (CROS-4901 and CROS-4902) in order to network with students working in various media. CROS-4901 is the pre-requisite for CROS-4902.

Advanced Studio course option:

- If you would rather fulfil your 4000 level requirements outside of Senior Studio/Thesis courses, you could select advanced studio courses from within Photography or another program area. This could be a good option if you want more time to focus on your skill development or round out your technical learning. Be sure to look at pre-requisites for the courses you might want to take.
- Remember that in your studio and elective credits, you may select from both 3000 and 4000 level courses at the upper year.

Planning for Specific Pathways:

- If you are interested in pursuing particular directions within your Photography studies, plan your option and elective courses to gain the knowledge and experiences that will support you.
- For example, if you are interested in studio shooting, be it for art or commercial approaches, be sure to take the lighting and camera courses in second and third year. This will prepare you well for a studio-based portfolio in fourth year.
- Or, if you know that you will go on to a master's program after OCAD U, plan for the elective concept and theory-focused courses in both Photography and Arts & Science electives.
- Ensure that you review the course description and pre-requisites for all courses so you can plan correctly from year to year.