

# MA Photography and Urban Cultures

## Programme specification

### 1. Programme details

Item	Information
a) Programme name (incl. pathways):	MA Photography and Urban Cultures
b) Programme code(s)	TBC
c) Programme credit value(s)	180 CATS 90 ECTS
d) Programme author(s)	Alex Rhys-Taylor / Svenja Bromberg / Lee Douglas / Martin Webb / Laura Cuch
e) Entry requirements	Students will normally hold a first or second class degree in a related subject in the humanities, social sciences, or visual arts. Students will also be expected to have a basic competence in photographic practice. In exceptional circumstances, where students can demonstrate that they would be able to produce work of Masters standard, then practical experience in the field of photography and urban research may be considered as equivalent qualifying experience for the programme. Where equivalent experience is considered candidates may be asked to demonstrate their competence through written essay submission, portfolio review and interview.  IELTS 6.5 (with a minimum of 6.5 in the written element).
f) Academic year effective from	2026/27

### 2. Programme Aims & Overview

#### Aims

This programme has been developed in collaboration with sociological and anthropological researchers in response to the increasing interest in urban theory and the visual representation of urban cultures and places.

It is designed to encourage creative interplay between practice and theory; you will have the chance to consider cutting-edge debates in cultural and social theory in a research setting that actively encourages the development of visual, photographic practice.

The programme offers working photographers, visual artists and media practitioners space to reflect critically on their practice. It also offers those with a background in sociology, urban and cultural geography, cultural studies or anthropology the opportunity to combine visual forms of representation with standard forms of research techniques in investigating urban life and the physical environments of the city.

## Overview

The programme offers an integrated experience combining cutting edge debates in urban photography, visual research, sociology, and urban theory. It develops students' ability to connect theoretical perspectives with photographic practice, fostering critical engagement with representations of contemporary city life. Students gain practical skills within a community of urban researchers and apply them across diverse research and visual practice contexts. Designed for photographers, visual artists, and urban researchers, the MA supports both portfolio development and theoretical inquiry. Graduates progress into fields such as urban research, ethnography, teaching, curating, arts practice, and human rights.

### 3. External reference

Item	Information
a) FHEQ Level of Award:	7
b) UCAS Code(s):	N/A
c) HECoS Code(s):	(100505) Sociology
d) QAA Benchmark group:	NA

### 4. Awards

Item	Information
a) Awarding institution:	Goldsmiths, University of London
b) Teaching institution:	Goldsmiths, University of London
c) Home School:	Global Change <b>If other, name here:</b> N/A
d) School(s) also involved in teaching of the programme:	1. None 2. None 3. None <b>If other, name here:</b> N/A
e) Entry awards:	<input type="checkbox"/> Foundation Cert <input type="checkbox"/> CertHE <input type="checkbox"/> DipHE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PGCert <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PGDip
f) Interim exit awards:	<input type="checkbox"/> Foundation Cert <input type="checkbox"/> CertHE <input type="checkbox"/> DipHE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PGCert <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PGDip
g) Final awards:	PGCert Photography and Urban Cultures, PGDip Photography and Urban Cultures, MA Photography and Urban Cultures,

## 5. Delivery

Item	Information	
a) Language of study:	English	
b) Valid intake points in year:	<input type="checkbox"/> January <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sept/Oct <input type="checkbox"/> Other If other, specify: Click or tap here to enter text.	
c) Mode of study:	On Campus  Indicate the overall balance of teaching modes in the rows below. Row d) shows total hours of directed learning, with e) and f) showing how this is broken down in in-person vs. online learning, in hours and percentages.	
d) Total hours directed learning/year	120	
e) In-person hours	120	100%
f) Online hours	0	0%
g) Pace of study:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part time	
h) Duration of programme	Full time: 12 <input type="checkbox"/> years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> months Part time: 24 <input type="checkbox"/> years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> months	
i) External accreditation:	N/A	
j) Apprenticeship Standard:	N/A	

## 6. Programme Learning Outcomes

Also, see the [curriculum map](#) at the end of document.

For UG exit awards, Learning Outcomes must be achieved in the level indicated below:

- CertHE = Level 4
- DipHE = Level 5

**Learning outcomes are grouped in categories of:**

- **Declarative learning** - knowledge, thinking & facts (D1-3)
- **Functional learning** - application of knowledge, thinking & facts (F1-3)
- **Professional and transferable skills and behaviours** (P1-3)

**On successful completion of the programme, you will be able to:**

	Learning Outcome	Level	Graduate Attribute
D1	Acquire conceptual and methodological knowledge of the key concepts and debates in urban studies	7	Diversity of perspective
D2	Critically analyse the literature on, photography and urban life in the context of the history of sociology and related academic areas	7	Diversity of perspective
D3	Distinguish and appraise a range of research methodologies and their potential applicability as well as their possible limitations	7	Responsible agency
F1	Engage with debates on photographic representation, urban development, change, governance, culture and economy	7	Diversity of perspective
F2	Establish creative connections between previous academic and work experiences with themes emerging from the programme	7	Political in the personal
F3	Compare, sociological and anthropological perspectives on photography and urban cultures with the perspectives of other disciplines	7	Diversity of perspective
P1	Adapt concepts and methods flexibly and imaginatively to pursue future specific aims relating to career development or further research	7	Responsible agency
P2	Design, formulate and conduct research on a topic relevant to contemporary debates in photography and urban studies	7	Responsible agency
P3	Deploy a range of research methods and utilise computer applications for data collection and processing, bibliographic searches, and the editing and production of visual work	7	Diversity of perspective

## 7. Programme Structure

For Undergraduate programmes (UG), each level must amount to at least **120 CATS** (60 ECTS).

Postgraduate (PGT) programmes must amount to at least 180 CATS (90 ECTS), with exception to interim exit awards.

Programmes are staged in **Phases**, where each Phase relates to an exit award.

**Compulsory** modules must be taken by all students.

**Option** modules – you must choose one or more of the options available to this programme at this level and point. The option modules available from this list may vary from year to year, depending on student numbers and staff availability. Selection takes place during your studies, not before.

Also, see [curriculum structure grid](#).

**Programme structure notes (where relevant):**

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**Phase 1 (FT)**

Module Name	Code	Credit	Level	Type	Term	Year PT	Pathway
Cities & Society	SO71042 C	30	7	Compulsory	1	Y1	NA
Through the Lens: Art & Contemporary Practice (subject to name change)	AN71004 B	30	7	Compulsory	2	Y1	N/A
Audio/Visual Production (subject to name change)	AN71083 A	60	7	Compulsory	1-2-3	Y2	N/A
Directions and Diversions in Visual Ethnography (subject to name change)	AN71041 C	30	7	Compulsory	1	Y1	N/A
Counter Mapping and the Politics of Space	PO71047 B	30	7	Option - Shared	2	Y2	NA
Methodology Now	SO71148 A	30	7	Option - Shared	1	Y2	NA
Borders and Migration	AN53077 A	30	7	Option - Shared	2	Y2	NA
Museum Anthropology	AN71150 A	30	7	Option - Shared	1	Y2	NA

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## 8. Learning, Teaching & Assessment

### Learning & Teaching methods

Teaching will be via a range of formats to be as relevant as possible to the topic and learning outcomes. This may be through workshops, practical labs, lectures and seminars. It may have a mix of in-person and online activities, designed to give you the best learning experience and to make the most out of your learning experience. You are expected to attend all of your timetabled learning activities.

**Specifically, this programme will be taught in the following ways:**

We recognise the importance of supporting students working in small groups on MA modules. Compulsory modules and options are delivered through small-group seminars, reinforced where appropriate with tutorial support. Alongside this, students take part in a series of urban walks and engage directly with photographic professionals, expanding learning beyond the classroom. Through a series of un-assessed practical workshops, the students also develop key specialist skills in photography and visual production.

The specialist skills outlined above form central components of the programme's teaching, enabling students to develop both their practical photographic abilities and their understanding of urban cultures. Presentational and communication skills are fostered through seminar-based activities, group work, and opportunities for students to share and discuss their developing photographic projects.

Students work both independently and collaboratively, undertaking individual photographic work as well as group-based tasks and field activities. They are encouraged to attend departmental seminars, workshops, and conferences where staff, research students, and invited speakers present their work. Students also benefit from access to the academic libraries of the University of London, supporting the development of their written coursework and project research.

Assessment across the programme includes photographic work, project development, and written coursework, ensuring a balanced evaluation of practical, conceptual, and critical skills.

## **Assessment modes and approaches**

You will be assessed in a range ways throughout your course. These will be both Formative (for feedback and development), and Summative (required to pass and progress to the next level). Summative assessments are compulsory.

Feedback is a crucial part of your learning and development in this programme. You will receive feedback both on your Formative (work in progress) tasks/assessments, and your Summative (graded) assessments. This feedback will help the assessment to be a part of your learning, not just a test. It may be verbal, written or video based. Please engage with this feedback to improve your future work.

**Specifically, this programme will be assessed in the following ways:**

Throughout the MA, you will be assessed in ways that reflect the programme’s unique blend of visual practice, urban research, and critical theory. The aim is to help you develop as both a reflective practitioner and an independent researcher, building confidence across written, photographic, and audio-visual forms of work.

You will encounter a range of assessment types that allow you to demonstrate different skills. In the more theory-focused modules, such as Cities & Society and Directions and Diversions in Visual Ethnography, you will complete substantial written essays. These assessments help you deepen your understanding of urban theory, anthropology, and visual research, and give you the opportunity to apply these ideas to your own interests and fieldwork.

In practice-based modules, assessment centres on visual and audio-visual work. Photography students will produce curated portfolios that demonstrate their ability to use image-making as a research method. These practical pieces are accompanied by written production essays, where you reflect on your methods, ethical choices, creative decisions, and the theoretical frameworks behind your work.

Assessment is also supported by collaborative activities such as group crits, workshops, and field exercises. These do not count directly towards your final grade, but they play an important role in helping you refine your ideas, learn from your peers, and gain the confidence to discuss and develop your visual work.

Your final major assessment takes place in the 60-credit Visual Production & Practice module. This is the equivalent of your dissertation and brings together everything you have learned across the programme. You will complete a substantial photographic project of 20-30 images in the form of a portfolio, video production, book, digital media, installation, or other relevant visual output as discussed with your project supervisor. This will provide you the chance to undertake an original piece of research and produce a substantial visual outcome supported by an analytical written component.

Overall, assessments are designed to help you grow as a researcher, visual practitioner, and critical thinker, giving you the skills and experience needed for careers in photography, visual anthropology, urban research, and the cultural and creative sectors.

### Assessment diet (number of assessments for compulsory modules)

Mode	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Total
Coursework	0	0	0	0	3	3
Exam	0	0	0	0	0	0
Live	0	0	0	0	0	0
Portfolio (multi-modal)	0	0	0	0	1	1
Practical / multimedia	0	0	0	0	3	3
Written	0	0	0	0	3	3
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Of which...</b>	<b>Individual:</b>	7	<b>Group:</b>	3		

## 9. Other information

Item	Information
a) Assessment regulations	<a href="https://www.gold.ac.uk/gam/taught-programmes/assessment/">https://www.gold.ac.uk/gam/taught-programmes/assessment/</a>
b) Placement opportunities	NA
c) Programme-specific requirements	NA
d) Programme specific costs and resources	Students will be expected to have access to a personal computer. Goldsmiths has multiple editing suites and cameras available to students.
e) Employability and potential career opportunities	<p>Graduates of the programme have progressed to the following areas and careers: doctoral studies, professional photographic practices (including architectural, fine art, photojournalism) visual arts practice, curating, publishing, graphic design, digital media, film-making, advertising, public relations, journalism, community arts development, urban planning, human rights, education (primary, secondary, further and higher education, professional training), and social research skills.</p> <p>This MA develops skills in urban photography, visual ethnography and urban research, communications for urban planning, community arts and visual arts practice. Graduates have found employment in a wide range of areas and a number have become members of the growing international Urban Photographers Association.</p>

## 10. Academic support

There is a range of support available to you to give you the best possible chance of success in this programme.

Please see your tutors and student portal/VLE for details of what's available and how to access this support.

## 11. Curriculum map

### Programme Learning Outcomes assessed by each module:

Module name	Code	Type	D1	D2	D3	F1	F2	F3	P1	P2	P3
Cities & Society	SO71042 C	Compulsory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Through the Lens: Art & Contemporary Practice	AN71004 B	Compulsory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audio/Visual Production	AN71083 A	Compulsory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Directions and Diversions in Visual Ethnography (subject to name change)	AN71041 C	Compulsory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counter Mapping and the Politics of Space	TBC	Option - Shared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Methodology Now	TBC	Option - Shared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borders and Migration	TBC	Option - Shared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Museum Anthropology	TBC	Option - Shared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

