

Photography

Interested students can pursue degrees and certificates in photography at U.S. universities/colleges, community colleges, technical/vocational schools, and/or private trade schools. Photography programs include studies in lighting, composition, exposure, focus, film selection, lenses, filters, camera handling techniques, and use of specialized equipment.

Arts School/Institute vs. University

An Arts School or Arts Institute is a school designed to offer coursework specific to the arts with a focus more on the practical applications of a degree in the arts. A college or university will incorporate a more multidisciplinary approach that includes general education courses along with art-specific course work.

Undergraduate Degrees: Students pursuing an undergraduate program in photography may receive a Certificate or Associate of Science in Photography (AA), or Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Fine Arts (BFA) in Photography. Whereas the coursework for AA and BFA degrees focus more on photography, the BA provides well-rounded academic programs, including general education course requirements in social sciences and humanities. An AA degree prepares individuals for entry-level careers in photographic, electronic imaging, and communications industries such as a photographer's assistant, digital imaging artists, or studio, commercial, and product photographers. Programs are often shorter than those at a university/college, consisting of no more than two years. A sample of courses available at the undergraduate level include: Principals of Photography, Lighting, Color and Design, History of Photography, Image Manipulation, Digital Illustration, and Studio Photography.

Graduate Degrees: Students pursuing a graduate program in photography may earn a Master of Art (MA) or Fine Arts (MFA) in Photography or Doctor in Photography (PhD). Degree titles vary by institution and academic program. However, MA degrees are usually targeted toward people who want to use their photography skills to teach. Courses provide an in-depth background to photography, focusing on the academic, scholarly, and critical study of the field. MFA degrees are targeted more towards the professional, those who want to use their photography skills to earn a living as a practicing photographer. Graduate students usually will choose among a variety of degree concentrations in the field of photography such as Illustration, Print Media, Visual Communications, Graphic and Interactive Communications, Digital Imaging, Advertising, Graphic Design, Printmaking, and Visual Effects.

Occupations in Photography

According to the 2010-11 Occupational Outlook Handbook, more than half of all photographers in the U.S. are self-employed, a much higher proportion than for most occupations. Many own studios or work from their homes as portrait or special events photographers. Other photographers may work for the government, advertising agencies, newspapers, or research, scientific, or medical institutions.

Choosing a Photography Program

Photography is used for a variety of purposes from portraits to advertising. Therefore, if you are considering continuing your education in this field, you should become familiar with the different styles used in each occupation and research photographic newsletters and magazines. EducationUSA Centers provide advising services and a diverse collection of materials to assist students searching for schools and financial aid program. To find the nearest EducationUSA Advising Center, visit www.educationusa.info/centers.php.





In addition to researching regionally accredited colleges and universities which offer study in photography, prospective students, particularly for graduate-level study, can also identify academic programs with professional accreditation. The profession accrediting organization for art and design schools is the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), <http://nasad.arts-accredit.org>.

Undergraduate Program Search Print and Online Resources:

- College Board, www.collegeboard.com
- Search for schools with the College Board's online, "College Matchmaker."
- Read about specific majors and careers using the "Major and Career Profiles" search www.collegeboard.com/csearch/majors_careers/profiles/
- National Association of Schools of Art and Design's Directory of Programs, <http://nasad.arts-accredit.org>
- Peterson's College Guide for Visual Arts Majors

Graduate Program Search Print and Online Resources:

- Peterson's, www.petersons.com
- The National Association of Schools of Art and Design, www.nasad.arts-accredit.org/
- National Association of Schools of Art and Design's Directory of Programs
- Peterson's Graduate Programs in the Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences; Book 2
- Peterson's Graduate and Professional Programs, An Overview; Book 1
- Shaw Guides: The Guide to Photography Workshops & Schools

Scholarships to Study Photography:

- EducationUSA Financial Aid links, www.educationusa.info/pages/students/finance.php
- Funding U.S. Study, www.fundingusstudy.org
- Peterson's Scholarship Directory, www.petersons.com
- The Fulbright Program, <http://fulbright.state.gov>
- W. Eugene Smith Grant in Humanistic Photography, www.smithfund.org

If you are interested in pursuing higher education in the U.S. and would like further guidance please contact your local EducationUSA Advising Center

Camera Clubs and

Photography Associations

- American Photographic Artists, www.apanational.com
- American Photographic Artists Guild, www.apag.net
- Evidence Photographers International Council, www.epic-photo.org
- International Fire Photographers Association, www.ifpaweb.org
- National Press Photographers Association, www.nppa.org
- National Stereoscopic Association, www.stereoview.org
- North American Nature Photography Association, www.nanpa.org
- Wedding and Portrait Photographers International, www.wppionline.com
- White House News Photographers' Association, www.whnpa.org

Magazines and Newsletters related to the Study of Photography:

Amateur Photographer, Blind Spot, Photo Media, Shutterbug, Travel Photography, and Underwater Photography.