

DEPARTMENT: PHOTOGRAPHY
2025 FINAL EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDATION



Student work:
Klarene Wattenbach
Pangolin Award Best
Commercial Work

FIRST YEAR / HIGHER CERTIFICATE

- **Mirrorless camera or Digital DSLR camera body**
If buying a new camera body we strongly recommend buying a mirrorless camera as DSLR camera bodies are starting to fade out of the industry.
- **1x Good multi-purpose zoom lens.**
Generic lenses like SIGMA and Tamron are more than adequate. Please discuss your options with the relevant service providers attached later in the document.
- **1x Reflector board (107 - 110cm).**
Please do not buy a reflector smaller than this.
- **1x Strong sturdy tripod**
Invest in a good tripod that can support your camera and lens. Arca-Swiss base plates are more general and therefore recommended. We strongly recommend not buying a tripod under R1000, a decent tripod that will last will be around R4000- R6000. We see Benro, Manfrotto and 3 Legged Thing as reputable brands.
- **1x Cable Release**
A cable release is better than a phone for triggering the shutter because it minimizes camera shake, ensures reliability without signal issues, and provides precise, instant control.
- **1x Extra Camera battery**
Please be aware that some generic brands are not compatible with certain camera bodies. We find that KnF works well in general but there are exceptions. This is important for long exposure photography that can cause your battery to drain quickly.
- **2x Memory card**
A memory card with a write speed of at least 150mb/s. A micro SD Card in an adapter is not acceptable. The cards are camera model dependent so they change from camera to camera, but we recommend "Professional series" cards from Lexar, Sandisk and Delkin. Lexar's "silver and gold coloured" memory cards, Sandisk's "Black and Red colored" memory cards and Delkin prime memory cards. They have a lifetime warranty on the cards. We do not recommend Transend cards. The cheaper/ slower cards do not have the same warranty on them. Please speak to our recommended suppliers.
- **Cleaning kit**
- **Memory Card Reader**
Using a phone to transfer images from a camera to a computer is not ideal because it often compresses files, reducing image quality, and may lack support for RAW formats. It adds unnecessary transfer steps, risks data loss, and can quickly drain phone storage and battery. In contrast, a memory card reader is important for transferring, editing, and backing up data from memory cards used in cameras, smartphones, and other devices. It provides faster and more accurate file transfers, supports multiple card types, enables access on devices without card slots, and helps recover or format cards. Compact and portable, it's essential for photographers. Faulty memory card readers are one of the top reasons for corrupted files. PGYTECH is a reputable brand.

(Please refer to the FAQ section on Page 13 of the document for more information)

RECOMMENDED CAMERA BODIES

FujiFilm, Nikon, Canon and Sony are the only four digital camera brands we recommend. Although there are other great brands on the market; we have found that in terms of product range and support these brands have a very strong presence in South Africa.

The following camera bodies are especially popular:

FUJIFILM MIRRORLESS CAMERAS

FUJIFILM X-S20



FUJIFILM X-T50



FUJIFILM X-T5



FUJIFILM XH-2 s



FUJIFILM GFX-50s II



FUJIFILM GFX-100S



FUJIFILM LENSES

FUJIFILM XF 16 - 55MM F2.8



FUJIFILM XF 16 - 80MM F4



FUJIFILM XF 18 - 55MM F2.8 - 4



NICE TO HAVE (FUJIFILM XF 56MM F1.2)



NICE TO HAVE (FUJIFILM XF 80MM F2.8 MACRO)



SONY MIRRORLESS

SONY A6700



SONY A7 IV



SONY A7R5



SONY A1 II



SONY LENSES

SONY FE 24-105MM F4 G OSS



SONY FE 85MM F1.8



SONY FE 24-70MM F2.8 GE



SONY FE 16-25MM F2.8 GE



SONY FE 24-50MM F2.8 GE



SONY FE 24-70MM F2.8 GE GENERATION 2



NIKON MIRRORLESS

NIKON Z50 II



NIKON Z5



NIKON Z6 II



NIKON Z6 III



NIKON Z8



NIKON Z9



NIKON MIRRORLESS LENSES

Nikon Z 85mm F1.8 S



NIKON Z 24-70MM F4 S



NIKON FTZ II ADAPTER



*Nikon FTZ I adapter is not recommended

Nikon Z 28-75mm F2.8



CANON MIRRORLESS

CANON EOS R8



CANON EOS R5



CANON EOS R5 II



CANON EOS R6 II



CANON EOS R7



CANON MIRRORLESS LENSES

CANON MOUNT RF-EF
ADAPTER EF-EOS R



CANON RF 24-70MM F2.8



CANON RF 24-105MM
F4 USM



CANON RF-S 18-150MM F3.5-F6.3
* SPECIFICALLY FOR R7



CANON RF 24-105MM F4-F7.1
* SPECIFICALLY FOR R7



EXTRAS (SEE PAGE 2 & 8 FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING BELOW)

5-IN-ONE REFLECTOR



TRIPOD



CABLE RELEASE



MEMORY CARD READER



CLEANING KIT



MEMORY CARD



NEUTRAL DENSITY FILTER



CAMERA CAGE



CAMERA GIMBAL



SECOND YEAR / HIGHER CERTIFICATE *PLUS FIRST YEAR EQUIPMENT

- **1x Speedlight flash**
Generic brands like the Yongnuo and Godox flashes are more than adequate, we strongly recommend Godox
- **1x wireless flash trigger**
- **1x Studio Light with Battery Pack.**
It is important for this light to be battery operated as it is portable to move round to outside remote locations.
- **1x Light stand**
We recommend a boom stand. A C-stand is expensive but durable and is multi purpose.
- **1x Any light shaper**
Umbrella, beauty dish, softbox, zoom reflector etc.
- **8x AA batteries**
Recyko or similar with a charger
- **8x AAA batteries**
(We found that Duracell actually lasts longer than rechargeable AAA's)
- **1 x Gimbal**
A gimbal is essential for achieving smooth, professional-quality video footage, especially when filming while in motion, and it's an important tool for videographers and content creators looking to produce high-end video work.
- **1 x Cage**
A camera cage is a protective frame that surrounds your camera, providing additional support and mounting options for accessories like microphones, lights, and monitors. It offers protection, improves ergonomics with added grips or handles, and enhances stability for smoother shooting.
- **1 x ND Filter**
A nice to have but by no means a must-have: (It is recommended to acquire 1x good portrait lens (i.e the Nikon 105mm Macro f2.8 lens or the Fuji XF 50-140mm F2.8R LM WR lens or Sony 85MM F1.8 or Sony 85mm F1.4 G Master).

Second-year equipment is an extension of gear already purchased in first year. If a student does not have a proper DSLR camera it is recommended to purchase one in the second year, as students are already encouraged to do real industry-related assignments from the second semester in second year.

It is always great to have one professional lens. (Consult the list of recommended camera dealers). Keep in mind that in commercial photography professionals always make sure they have one good portrait lens, as people are more often a photographer's subject matter, irrespective of the genre of photography you end up pursuing. Students will by no means be penalized if they cannot acquire such a lens at this stage. Studio and flash (Strobist) photography make out a big part of a professional's kit. Students need to purchase at least one Speedlight. FujiFilm, Nikon and Canon flashes are very expensive so we always recommend that students settle for generic brands like Yongnuo and Godox flashes. Our students have been using them frequently in the past and we are confident in endorsing them.

STUDIO AND FLASH LIGHTING EQUIPMENT (SEE PAGE 8 & 10 FOR MORE INFORMATION)

PROFOTO B10 PLUS WITH RADIO TRIGGER



GODOX AD600PRO WITSTRO ALL-IN-ONE OUTDOOR FLASH



GODOX AD 400 PRO



GODOX AD200 PRO TTL POCKET FLASH KIT



GODOX TT685 TTL FLASH



GODOX V860II TTL LI-ION FLASH KIT



GODOX XPRO TTL WIRELESS FLASH TRIGGER



GODOX X2T TTL WIRELESS FLASH TRIGGER TRANSMITTER



GODOX X3 TOUCHSCREEN TTL WIRELESS FLASH TRIGGER
*RECOMMENDED FOR ADVANCED PHOTOGRAPHERS



GODOX LITEMONS LP600R RGB LED LIGHT PANEL



THIRD YEAR *PLUS FIRST & SECOND YEAR EQUIPMENT

- **1x Studio Light with Battery pack**
- **1x Light stand**
- **1x Any light shaper**
- **1 x Continuous LED light**

We can recommend the Godox Litemons LP600 R RGB LED lights as good continuous lights, they however are not as powerful as a studio light. They can also make use of a battery pack for on location shooting.

A student now needs to acquire one extra studio light to make them ready for the industry or a continuous light. Third-year is about introducing students to the market and kick-starting their business, in order to do that students not only need to have the right equipment, but they must also be familiar with their equipment. Over the years, continuous light sources have transitioned from inefficient and bulky options to highly versatile, energy-efficient tools powered by LED technology. While studio strobes remain essential for certain photography needs, modern continuous lights have become a strong competitor, especially in video production and beginner-friendly setups. The choice between the two often depends on the specific requirements of the project. We highly recommend purchasing a continuous light as videography is growing day by day and plays an integral role to support the still image.

Third-year equipment is an extension of gear already purchased in first year and second year. If a student does not have a proper DSLR camera it is recommended to purchase one in the second year, as students are already encouraged to do real industry-related assignments from the second semester in second year.

It is always great to have one professional lens. (Consult the list of recommended camera dealers). Keep in mind that in commercial photography professionals always make sure they have one good portrait lens, as people are more often a photographer's subject matter, irrespective of the genre of photography you end up pursuing. Students will by no means be penalized if they cannot acquire such a lens at this stage. Studio and flash (Strobist) photography make out a big part of a professional's kit. Students need to purchase at least one Speedlight. FujiFilm, Nikon and Canon flashes are very expensive so we always recommend that students settle for generic brands like Yongnuo and Godox flashes. Our students have been using them frequently in the past and we are confident in endorsing them.

PROFOTO is the top professional studio lighting equipment brand on the market. If the student has the budget to purchase a PROFOTO the B1 or B2 lighting kit is recommended, but Camera Stuff and Kameraz in Johannesburg and Outdoor photo in Pretoria offer a wide range of generic lighting equipment at a third of the price. Please refer to the list of retailers. They will be able to assist you in buying the right equipment within your budget.

CAMERAS SUITABLE TO BE PURCHASED AS 2ND HAND UNITS

NIKON DSLR CAMERAS

NIKON D7500



NIKON D500



NIKON D850



NIKON D780



NIKON DSLR LENSES

CROP SENSOR: (D7500 AND D500)

Nikon DX 17 – 55mm
Nikkor, Sigma or Tamron

FULL FRAME: (D780 AND D850)

Nikon FX 24 – 70mm F2.8
Nikkor, Sigma or Tamron

Please do not invest in a Nikon D3000 series body. If you do however own one please talk to your lecturer.

CANON DSLR CAMERAS

CANON EOS 6D MARK II



CANON EOS 90D



CANON EOS 5D MARK IV



CANON EOS 80D



CANON DSLR LENSES

CROP SENSOR: (80D AND 7D MARK II)

Canon EF 17 – 55mm
Sigma or Tamron

FULL FRAME: (5D MARK IV, 5DS, 5DS R AND 6D MARK II)

Canon EF 24-70mm F2.8
Sigma or Tamron are generic lenses
you can also consider

CANON EF 17 – 55MM



CANON EF 24-70MM F2.8



Please do not invest in the following models, Canon 250D, Canon 1200D, Canon 2000D, Canon 4000D. If you do however own one please talk to your lecturer.

SERVICE PROVIDERS

Buying equipment is more than just finding the best bargain or buying the cheapest camera available. It is also about building relationships. The following list of service providers are people that we have found are not only committed to giving our student's good deals and outstanding service but also committed in supporting students in establishing their careers.

NAME	NUMBER	SERVICE
ATPHOTO Henry Tope	(012) 348 4890 info@atphoto.co.za henry@atphoto.co.za Unit C One Highveld Centre 5 Bellingham Street Centurion	Printing lab
CAMERASTUFF Delton Naidoo	(011) 880 4155 delton@camerastuff.co.za 473 Jan Smuts Ave, Blairgowrie, Randburg	Flash equipment Light stands Reflector boards Light shapers Cable releases Rechargeable Studio lighting batteries Location lighting
CAPE FILM SUPPLY Jo / Sales CJ / Darkroom	(087) 470 0421 getfilm@capefilmsupply.co.za 7 Orphan St, Cape Town City Centre, Cape Town	Film developing lab Film suppliers
GLOWHIRE Chantell	(011) 880 8124 chantell@glowhire.co.za 70 Oxford Rd, Riviera, Johannesburg	Camera and equipment rentals
LUDWIG'S PHOTOGRAPHIC Ludwig	(012) 362 4268 ludwigsphoto@gmail.com 160 Lynnwood Road, Hillcrest, Pretoria, South Africa	Repairs Second hand gear Support
OUTDOOR PHOTO Lappies Labuschagne Steph Boonzaaier Rayden van den Berg Lundi Mbanga Jerrie Lewis Bernard Koch	(012) 348 3693 lappies@outdoorphoto.co.za steph@outdoorphoto.co.za rayden@outdoorphoto.co.za lundi@outdoorphoto.co.za jerrie@outdoorphoto.co.za bernard@outdoorphoto.co.za	Second-hand equipment -All sales personnel will be able to assist with any second hand queries. All second hand items have been tested, cleaned and photographed. Outdoorphoto's 2nd hand equipment comes with a 6 month warranty. New Cameras & Lenses Location lighting Tripods Light stands Flash equipment Light shapers Reflector boards Rechargeable Batteries Cable releases Workshops Studio lighting Printing
ODP -ART OF PRINT Tammy Marshall	(012) 761 3700 tammy@artofprint.co.za 322 Garsfontein Road, Waterkloof Glen, Pretoria	Flash equipment Rechargeable Batteries Reflector boards Workshops Cable releases Printing Studio lighting

NAME	NUMBER	SERVICE
KAMERAZ	(011) 880 2885 info@kameraz.co.za pierre@kameraz.co.za dylan@kameraz.co.za thandeka@kameraz.co.za samu@kameraz.co.za garreth@kameraz.co.za printlab@kameraz.co.za (printing) Stonemill Office Park, 300 Acacia Road, Darrenwood, Johannesburg	Second-hand equipment (6 month warranty) New Cameras & Lenses (Photo & video) Tripods Flash equipment Reflector boards Cable releases Studio lighting Location lighting Light stands Light shapers Rechargeable Batteries Workshops Printing

FAQ

Q: I am a first-year student and already have a camera. Can I just use the one I have?

A: The list that we have compiled was done in such a way to assist students who would like to pursue photography as a career in the future. Entry-level cameras (even those not on the list) should be fine for first year, but when you enter second year you will be competing with professionals and unfortunately better equipment give better results. First-year is your most expensive year, as you have to lay the foundation for future purchases. **Please do not invest in the following models, Canon 2000D, Canon 1200D, Canon 250D, Canon 4000D and the Nikon D3000 series. If you however do own one of these camera bodies they will work for your first year. There are limitations to these cameras that can be problematic, especially on second and third year level. If you do however do own one of these cameras they will work for your first year.**

If you already own a camera and you are unsure, you can email our studio manager at photo@openwindow.co.za and she can assist you.

Q: Should I invest in an expensive camera if I'm unsure about pursuing photography as a major in my second year?

A: If you buy one of the cameras on the list we can assure you that we will be able to sell it at second-hand value (60% of the purchase value and depending on the technology) to a first-year the following year. Provided that the camera is in good condition. See our supplier list for second hand retailers.

Q: What else should I budget for?

A: (All students): We are committed to giving students a pleasant learning experience, therefore, we always organise field trips and workshops outside usual class times as practical exercises. All students can expect an additional fee of R600 per year that should cover these field trips. Also, printing is an integral part of photography. Students are therefore expected to complete some printed assignments per term.

Second and Third Years: students will be working on professional portfolios and sourcing models, make-up artists, procuring props for shoots and location scouting can be a costly exercise. A maximum of R2000 per term should cover these expenses. Creative solutions go a long way to keep these costs down. An additional R2000 for exhibitions and material for their darkroom and fine arts module. Please keep in mind that Open Window works tirelessly to keep these costs affordable and also gets lots of support from the industry to cover these costs. Students (third year) should budget for approximately R5000 for the printing of their final portfolios and artist book at the end of the year.

Q: How relevant is photography as a career today?

In many ways the doom and gloom talk on the future of photography is actually fuelled more by the fear of change than the reality of the art form. Yes analogue photography together with chemicals and silver halide crystals might have died a quick death so without question photography has changed and we are all having to adapt as a result.

The good news is that the ease of travel, the availability of cameras, the opportunity to reach a global audience thanks to the Internet, have contributed to it being one of the most exciting times in history to become a photographer. Not to mention the fact that technology itself has brought wonderful tools with it to create different and exciting new imagery with this medium.

If anything, we are witnessing a grand revival of the art. More photographs are created and sold today than ever before. The creative elite of every generation has always, by definition, sat ahead of the masses who followed. And make no mistake The Open Window Photography department is very much a part of that elite.

Q: What is the difference between mirrorless and DSLR?

A: The main difference between a DSLR and a mirrorless camera lies in the mechanism they use to capture light. A DSLR uses a mirror to reflect light onto the image sensor, while a mirrorless camera lets light directly hit the sensor, resulting in a quieter and quicker process.

Mirrorless cameras are quickly becoming the dominant technology in photography, with major brands like Canon, Nikon, and Sony focusing heavily on advancing these systems. They are introducing groundbreaking features and expanding their range of dedicated lenses, ensuring mirrorless systems stay at the forefront of innovation. Meanwhile, DSLRs remain a reliable option but are seeing less development, as some brands have shifted their resources away from DSLR systems to prioritize the future of mirrorless technology.

Q: What is the difference between a micro SD card and SD card?

MicroSD cards are the smaller-sized version of SD cards and the biggest difference between the two is the form factor. BUT as photographers it is essential to have a SD card to avoid data loss or malfunction of communication between the card and the camera.

Q: What is a hybrid camera and why is it important if I want to study photography?

A hybrid camera is a versatile tool that blends the features of both DSLR and mirrorless cameras, enabling you to capture high-quality still images and videos with ease.

For photography students, it is a valuable asset because it allows you to explore both photography and videography, expanding your skill set and preparing you for a wide range of creative projects.

In today's visual-centric world, many photographers are expected to produce video content as well, and a hybrid camera makes it easier to meet this growing demand in the industry.

It offers a cost-effective solution by combining the functions of two separate cameras into one, saving money while allowing you to develop both photography and videography skills.

As hybrid cameras continue to evolve, they ensure you stay competitive and adaptable in the dynamic creative industry.

Learning videography alongside photography enhances career opportunities, improves storytelling abilities, and aligns with industry trends that require both still and moving images.

Videography helps refine your understanding of light, composition, and post-processing, complementing your photography skills while preparing you for the evolving needs of the industry.

Embracing videography ensures you remain versatile and relevant in an ever-changing creative landscape.

Q: When do I need to purchase the equipment?

A: You can plan your year according to the following:

	SEMESTER 1.1	SEMESTER 1.2	SEMESTER 2.1	SEMESTER 2.2
FIRST YEAR				
	Camera & Lens Tripod Cable release Memory Card Memory Card Reader Reflector Workshop	Printing Workshop	Workshop	Printing Workshop
SECOND YEAR				
	Flash with a flash trigger Studio light/ location light			Portfolio Printing
THIRD YEAR				
	Studio light Weekend Trip Away Continuous Light	Fine Arts Photography module – material, darkroom rental and exhibition print and framing	Fashion Production	Student exhibition printing and portfolio (personal project) printing
HIGHER CERTIFICATE				
	Camera Tripod Memory Card Reader Memory Card Cable release	Reflector board Printing	Location light Flash and trigger	End of year portfolio: Printing Portfolio book

Please be advised that workshop expenses may apply on any level. This changes from term to term and is very difficult to predict as venues and bus fees can change last minute.