



DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY 50.0605.00

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

An Industry Technical Standards Validation Committee developed and validated these standards on March 24, 2026. The Arizona Career and Technical Education Quality Commission, the validating authority for the Arizona Skills Standards Assessment System, endorsed these standards on July 12, 2026.

Note: Arizona's Professional Skills are taught as an integral part of the Digital Photography program.

The Technical Skills Assessment for Digital Photography is available SY2027-2028.

Note: In this document i.e. explains or clarifies the content and e.g. provides examples of the content that must be taught.

STANDARD 1.0 ANALYZE THE PHOTOGRAPHY INDUSTRY

- 1.1 Analyze the evolution and current state of the photography industry, including technology, processes, and production methods
- 1.2 Examine the impact of social media and emerging technologies on the photography industry (i.e., AI, mobile content creation, platform-driven media, emerging digital tools, etc.)
- 1.3 Analyze the societal, cultural, and economic impact of the photography industry
- 1.4 Examine the impact of photography on marketing practices
- 1.5 Identify professions and career pathways that incorporate photography skills [i.e., animation, social media, web design, user experience/user interface (UX/UI), illustration, audio and video productions, graphic design, printing, publishing, etc.]
- 1.6 Comply with safety standards applicable to the photography industry, including studio and classroom safety, equipment and tool handling, electrical safety, ergonomics, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) considerations
- 1.7 Identify photographic styles, photographers, and movements that have shaped visual communication and professional practice in the photography industry
- 1.8 Consider the growth implications of rising trends in photography styles and applications [e.g., rise of AI (i.e., event branding and luxury photography), diversification and services working across multiple business models (i.e., drone photography and video production), increased pricing and profitability (i.e., outcome-based pricing), steady job growth, etc.]

STANDARD 2.0 ANALYZE ETHICAL AND LEGAL ISSUES RELATED TO EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN THE PHOTOGRAPHY INDUSTRY

- 2.1 Differentiate among copyright, intellectual property, and proprietary rights in photography
- 2.2 Analyze ethical and legal issues related to generative AI, plagiarism, and software licensing (i.e., fonts, stock photography, illustrations, etc.)
- 2.3 Discuss ethical, social, and legal consequences in violating copyright, privacy, and data security laws (i.e., monetary penalties, prison, injunctions, financial restitution, etc.)
- 2.4 Explain fair use (i.e., authorships, credit lines, parody, news reporting, criticism and commentary, AI-generated images, etc.)
- 2.5 Differentiate between legal and ethical standards in photography decision-making, considering audience, purpose, and the use of AI-generated or AI-assisted imagery (e.g., branding vs. advertising vs. informational or editorial design)
- 2.6 Examine libel, censorship, and First Amendment rights related to digital photography
- 2.7 Explain different permissions, usage, and rights agreements used in photography (e.g., model releases, property releases, licensing agreements, and content usage permissions)

STANDARD 3.0 APPLY PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS PRACTICES FOR SUCCESS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHY INDUSTRY

- 3.1 Demonstrate professional communication skills appropriate for clients, including meetings and planning events, and in other general business environments (e.g., written, verbal, and nonverbal)
- 3.2 Use appropriate interpersonal skills when communicating with colleagues, clients, and vendors (i.e., active listening, empathy, body language, openness, negotiation, problem-solving, conflict resolution, assertiveness, positive attitude, etc.)
- 3.3 Develop and deliver a presentation using appropriate industry vocabulary and terminology
- 3.4 Develop clear, professional written communication using proper formatting, editing, and proofreading (e.g., emails, proposals, and contracts)
- 3.5 Demonstrate professional dress, appearance, and behavior for the job and client expectations

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- 3.6 Develop an ATS-friendly (Application Tracking System) résumé designed to satisfy AI screening and human hiring requirements
- 3.7 Research professional portfolios that showcase technical skills, visual style, and marketable work (e.g., case studies; collection of writing, graphics, and projects; artifacts showcasing talents and skills; and summary of professional growth)
- 3.8 Develop a professional portfolio that provides evidence of skills and showcases work experience and talents (e.g., resume that highlights education outcomes and work experiences and examples of work that show the creative process/visual work examples, published or printed work, and client-based projects)
- 3.9 Develop a portfolio intended for different purposes (e.g., employment, college application, and client acquisition)
- 3.10 Identify and evaluate personal digital footprints (i.e., posting on social media, sending emails, filling out online forms, etc.)
- 3.11 Describe a healthy workplace environment (i.e., fair treatment and policies, open and transparent communication, flexible work policies and accommodations, opportunities for growth, continuous education and training, etc.)
- 3.12 Apply time management practices appropriate to all digital photography industries
- 3.13 Identify key components for establishing a freelance photography business [i.e., professional portfolio, license(s), billing, contractual agreements, onboarding and invoicing system, process for handling legal/tax compliance, etc.]
- 3.14 Identify preproduction steps for a photo shoot (i.e., planning, packing, location scouting, equipment list, client planning, etc.)
- 3.15 Execute a photo shoot according to a client's needs

STANDARD 4.0 ANALYZE PHOTOGRAPHY AS A VISUAL COMMUNICATION TOOL

- 4.1 Differentiate among photographic genres and styles (i.e., portrait, landscape, macro, street, editorial, sports, journalistic, architectural, fine art, commercial, lifestyle, events, etc.)
- 4.2 Analyze the role and cultural significance of photographers and photographic imagery in society
- 4.3 Examine criteria that impact/influence photographic decisions (i.e., demographics, culture, race, traditions, religions, Brenizer and Orton effects, photo composites, etc.)
- 4.4 Give examples of photography as a visual communication tool creating images that convey clear messages to a specific audience and purpose

STANDARD 5.0 MANAGE PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE

- 5.1 Demonstrate proper use and care of tools and equipment (e.g., cameras, lights, ruler, X-Acto knives, computers, storage devices, printers, input devices)
- 5.2 Identify technological threats to technology devices and computer system networks that jeopardize data, infrastructure, and privacy (i.e., viruses, ransomware, phishing, AI-enabled attacks)
- 5.3 Utilize software to meet requirements of the final product (i.e., page layout, photo manipulation, editing, illustration, etc.)
- 5.4 Apply effective digital file management techniques (e.g., data capture, file transfer, file naming, organization, storage, and backup)
- 5.5 Differentiate among file types (i.e., JPG, TIFF, RAW, PSD, PDF, AI, GIF, PNG, etc.)
- 5.6 Apply effective use of menus, buttons, and functions of cameras
- 5.7 Differentiate among types and uses of digital cameras, equipment, and accessories (i.e., point-and-shoot, cell phones, mirrorless, DSLR, lenses, filters, tripods, lighting equipment, etc.)
- 5.8 Compare the impact of resolution, file size, and format on the final photo (i.e., JPEG, RAW, etc.)
- 5.9 Explain the importance of using an industry-standard color management system

STANDARD 6.0 APPLY THE ELEMENTS OF ART AND PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN AND COMPOSITION

- 6.1 Incorporate elements of art when composing photographs (e.g., line, shape, form, texture, pattern, color, value, and space)
- 6.2 Incorporate principles of design when composing photographs (e.g., contrast, repetition, balance, movement, emphasis, proportion, and unity)
- 6.3 Utilize composition guidelines to arrange visual elements within a frame to create intentional photos (e.g., simplicity, framing, rule of thirds, focal point, emphasis, hierarchy, point of view, camera angle, and symmetry)
- 6.4 Communicate a specific idea through the subject matter and the composition of a photograph (i.e., storytelling)
- 6.5 Use critical thinking skills to describe, interpret, analyze, and make judgments about composition
- 6.6 Define basic color schemes (i.e., complementary, analogous, triadic, tetradic, split complementary, monochromatic, and grayscale)
- 6.7 Analyze the psychology and theory of color in images
- 6.8 Utilize posing techniques and product arrangement for visual impact (i.e., portraits, fashion, product, etc.)

STANDARD 7.0 DEMONSTRATE PROPER EXPOSURE SETTINGS TO ACHIEVE DESIRED OUTCOMES

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- 7.1 Describe the basic elements of exposure (e.g., ISO, aperture, and shutter speed)
- 7.2 Utilize appropriate shutter speed to create panned, intentional blur, and stop-action photos
- 7.3 Apply the appropriate aperture setting for large or shallow depth of field
- 7.4 List the factors that affect depth of field (e.g., aperture, focal length, and distance to subject)
- 7.5 Apply the appropriate ISO settings for various lighting conditions
- 7.6 Calculate exposure equivalents
- 7.7 Utilize in-camera light meters to guide desired exposure
- 7.8 Discuss various in-camera metering modes (i.e., center-weighted, spot, partial, evaluative/matrix, etc.)
- 7.9 Analyze a histogram to evaluate the exposure
- 7.10 Discuss manual versus autofocus modes (i.e., eye detection AF, One Shot AF/AF-S, AI Servo/AF-C, single, continuous, 3-D tracking, etc.)
- 7.11 Discuss exposure modes [e.g., auto, program (P), Aperture Priority (AV/A), Shutter priority (Tv/S), Manual (M), and Bulb (B)]
- 7.12 Identify common photo errors (i.e., under/overexposure, artifacting, camera shake, fast sync too fast, etc.)

STANDARD 8.0 DEMONSTRATE PROPER LIGHTING TECHNIQUES TO ACHIEVE DESIRED OUTCOMES

- 8.1 Identify additive colors (e.g., RGB – red, green, and blue) and subtractive colors [e.g., CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black/key)]
- 8.2 Explore color spaces (e.g., RGB, CMYK, grayscale, L*a*b, Adobe RGB, sRGB, P3, and ProPhoto)
- 8.3 Explain the importance of the quality of light (e.g., hard or soft light, fall-off, and color temperature)
- 8.4 Explain light placement (i.e., key/main, fill, background, back, rim: kicker or hair light, etc.)
- 8.5 Demonstrate traditional studio portrait lighting patterns (e.g., split, loop, Rembrandt, butterfly/Paramount, short, and broad)
- 8.6 Utilize natural/ambient light (e.g., direct, indirect, reflective, and diffused)
- 8.7 Describe how environmental conditions affect the quality of light and its effects on the subject (i.e., direct sunlight, cloud cover, etc.)
- 8.8 Utilize artificial light sources (e.g., flash/speedlight, strobes/studio lights, and constant light/LEDs)
- 8.9 Utilize light modifiers to adjust the quality of light (i.e., reflector, umbrellas, softboxes, grids, honeycombs, gels, snoots, etc.)
- 8.10 Balance natural/ambient light and artificial light sources
- 8.11 Use handheld light meters and in-camera meters (e.g., reflective versus incident)
- 8.12 Explain sync speed and high-speed sync

STANDARD 9.0 IMPLEMENT DIGITAL WORKFLOW PROCESSES

- 9.1 Demonstrate digital image input (i.e., camera cards, wireless, tethered, direct download, etc.)
- 9.2 Generate metadata (i.e., copyright, keyword, tag, alt-text, etc.)
- 9.3 Differentiate between nondestructive and destructive editing and software usage (i.e., develop module in lightroom, Adobe Camera RAW, ACR Filter in Photoshop, Capture One, On1 Photo Raw, Affinity, etc.)
- 9.4 Demonstrate nondestructive editing techniques (i.e., adjustment layers, layer masking, smart objects, Lightroom's Develop Module, Adobe Camera RAW, ACR Filter in Photoshop, etc.)
- 9.5 Apply image adjustments (e.g., sizing, cropping, retouching, orientation, and resolution adjustment)
- 9.6 Apply color correction (i.e., white balance, saturation, hue, luminance, etc.)
- 9.7 Explain the benefits of batch processing
- 9.8 Export images for final output
- 9.9 Mount, matte, and frame a print

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