Adobe Certified Professional in Visual Design Using Adobe Photoshop

Exam version: 2025 (v 26.x)

Adobe Certified Professional certifications— delivered by Certiport—are the official, industry-recognized credentials that validate proficiency in Adobe Creative Cloud applications and foundational knowledge for digital media careers.

The 50-minute *Visual Design Using Adobe Photoshop* exam is comprised of two sections—selected-response items followed by Live-in-the-App tasks in Photoshop—and designed at the level appropriate for the following Target Candidate:

> *The Target Candidate has approximately 150 hours of instruction and hands-on experience with Photoshop. They are familiar with product features and capabilities as well as relevant career concepts. They are generally self-sufficient and able to apply knowledge of graphic design principles to perform basic or routine tasks involved in their job role with limited assistance from peers, product documentation, or support services. They generally work independently or in collaboration with colleagues, with minimal supervision. Furthermore, they are able to answer most routine conceptual and applied questions about how to use Photoshop and usually do not have to refer basic questions to others. They can speak credibly to other users or clients about what can be done with Photoshop and how to use it effectively.*

1. Working in the Design Industry

This objective covers concepts related to working with colleagues and clients as well as crucial legal, technical, and design-related terminology and principles.

1.1 Identify terminology and interpret communication relating to the purpose, audience, and audience needs for developing designs.

1.1.a Determine whether content is relevant and has an appropriate design for the purpose, audience, audience needs, and user experience.

i. Key Terms: client goals, target audience, demographics, accessibility

1.1.b Identify requirements based on how the designs will be used.

1.1.c Identify techniques for communicating about design plans with peers and clients.

i. Key Terms: sketches, specifications, design process, iterations, change orders, drafts, feedback loop, style guide, project briefs

1.1.d Define basic project management concepts.

i. Key Terms: project scope, scope creep, online and cloud collaboration, file management, project timeline

1.2 Determine the type of copyright, permissions, or licensing required to use specific content.

1.2.a Identify legal and ethical considerations for using third-party content.

i. Key Terms: Usage rights, public domain, copyright, intellectual property, derivative work, commercial use, attribution, work for hire, fair use, fair dealing, stock images and vector graphics, AI-generated content, restricted fonts

1.2.b Determine when and how to obtain permission to use images of people and locations.

i. Key Terms: model release, location release

ii. Key Concepts: permission to use a photo is separate from permission to use a person's face or restricted locations

1.3 Define key terminology related to digital images.

1.3.a Define digital image terminology.

i. Key Terms: image resolution, image size, file types, pixel, raster, vector, path, object, type, rasterizing, rendering, resampling, resizing, units of measurement for digital or print output

1.3.b Explain how color is represented in digital images.

i. Key Terms: color modes, bit depth, gamut, histogram

1.3.c Differentiate between destructive and nondestructive editing.

i. Key Concepts: advantages and disadvantages of each, methods of protecting images from destructive editing

1.4 Evaluate the application of photographic and design principles.

1.4.a Integrate the elements and principles of design to create effective communication.

i. Key Elements: space, line, shape, form, color and color value, texture

ii. Key Principles: emphasis/focal point, unity/harmony, variety, balance, alignment, proximity, repetition, rhythm, scale, movement, negative space, contrast, rule of thirds, foreground, background, framing, aspect ratio, depth of field, field of view, white balance

1.4.b Identify how typographic adjustments create hierarchy and enhanced readability.

i. Key Terms: font, size, font style, color, alignment, kerning, tracking, leading, baseline, horizontal and vertical scale, line length, baseline shift

2. Project Setup and Interface

This objective covers the interface setup, program settings, and reusable assets that assist in an efficient and effective workflow, as well as knowledge about importing digital assets for a project.

2.1 Create or modify a document with the appropriate settings for the intended output.

2.1.a Set appropriate document settings.

i. Key Concepts: width/height, orientation, artboards, resolution, color mode, image mode, bit depth, background, metadata

2.1.b Create and use document presets for specific project needs.

2.2 Navigate and customize the workspace and use design aids to improve workflow.

2.2.a Identify and manipulate elements of the interface.

i. Key Concepts: document tabs; showing, hiding, nesting, and docking panels; saving and resetting workspaces; options bar; menus; panels; toolbar; artboards; contextual taskbar

2.2.b Configure application preferences.

i. Key Concepts: General; File Handling; Export; Units & Rulers; Guides, Grid, & Slices

2.2.c Navigate a document.

i. Key Concepts: panning, zooming, rotating canvas

ii. Key Tools: Hand, Rotate View, Zoom

2.2.d Use rulers, guides, and grids.

i. Key Concepts: adding/removing and locking/unlocking guides, showing/hiding guides and grids, using snap or align options, creating guide layouts, showing and hiding rulers

2.3 Import assets into a project.

2.3.a Open and place assets in a Photoshop document.

i. Key Concepts: embedding, linking, copying and pasting; opening Camera Raw file; drag and drop; the difference between opening a file and placing assets in a document; Convert to Link; Relink to File; linked Smart Objects; Edit Content; packaging linked Smart Object

2.4 Manage colors, swatches, and gradients.

2.4.a Work with color.

i. Key Concepts: Color Picker, swatches, Eyedropper tool, hexadecimal value, setting the active foreground and background color

2.4.b Create, customize, and organize gradients.

i. Key Concepts: Gradient panel, editing color and transparency stops, gradient types, gradient swatch grouping, destructive vs non-destructive gradient

2.4.c Create and organize swatches.

i. i Key Concepts: creating, importing, grouping, renaming, and exporting swatches; exporting to an Adobe Swatch Exchange (ASE) file

2.5 Work with brushes, styles, and patterns.

2.5.a Open, create, group, and import libraries of brushes, styles, and patterns.

2.5.b Create, use, edit, and organize brushes, styles, and patterns.

3. Layers, Masks, and Adjustments

This objective covers using layers and masks to organize content and change content visibility.

3.1 Use layers to manage design elements.

3.1.a Manage, identify, and organize layers.

i. Key Concepts: adding, deleting, hiding/showing, locking/unlocking, duplicating, renaming, creating groups, deleting empty layers, selecting, grouping vs. linking, flattening and merging, identifying layer type by icon/appearance

3.1.b Adjust a layer's appearance.

i. Key Concepts: fill opacity, opacity, blending mode

3.1.c Manage Smart Objects.

i. Key Concepts: Edit Content on a non-linked Smart Object layer, Convert to Layers, Convert to Smart Object

3.2 Modify layer visibility using masks.

3.2.a Manage masks in the Layers panel.

i. Key Concepts: applying, deleting, disabling, and linking/unlinking

3.2.b Create a pixel mask.

i. Key Concepts: black, white, shades of gray, revealing, concealing, gradient mask, Select and Mask

3.2.c Use the frame tool.

3.2.d Create a vector mask.

3.2.e Create a clipping mask.

i. Key Concept: When to use Paste Into

3.3 Use adjustments and adjustment layers.

3.3.a Make adjustments.

i. Key Concepts: adjustments vs adjustment layers; limiting adjustments to specific selections, layers, or groups; Adjustment Brush tool; Smart Filters

3.3.b Create and use adjustment layer presets.

4. Adding Content to a Document

This objective covers core tools used to create content.

4.1 Create and edit using raster drawing tools and features.

4.1.a Use creation tools and features.

i. Key Tools: Pencil, Brush, Smudge, Sharpen, Blur, Paint Bucket

4.1.b Use deletion and revision tools and features.

i. Key Tools: Eraser, Background Eraser, Magic Eraser, Remove Background, History Brush

4.1.c Use AI tools to create content.

i. Key Concept: generative AI prompt writing, Sky Replacement

4.2 Create and edit using vector drawing tools and features.

4.2.a Use vector drawing tools and features.

i. Key Tools: Pen, Freeform Pen, Curvature Pen, Add Anchor Point, Delete Anchor Point, Convert Point, Rectangle, Rounded Rectangle, Ellipse, Triangle, Polygon, Line, Custom Shape

4.3 Add and modify text.

4.3.a Use type tools to add typography.

i. Key Concept: Commit button, Type on a Path, Warp Text, Check Spelling

4.3.b Adjust character and paragraph settings.

i. Key Character Settings: font, size, font style, alignment, and color; kerning, tracking, baseline shift, leading, and horizontal and vertical scale

ii. Key Paragraph Settings: space before and after, paragraph align, indent, margins, bullets and numbering, hyphenation

4.3.c Convert text to graphics.

i. Key Concepts: rasterizing type, converting text to Smart Object

5. Modifying Visual Elements

This objective covers features and functions used to alter the appearance of content.

5.1 Make, manage, and manipulate selections.

5.1.a Make selections using a variety of tools.

i. Key Tools: Quick Selection, Magic Wand, lasso tools, marquee tools, Select Subject, Object Selection, Select Sky, Selection Brush, Select Color Range

ii. Key Concept: vector path to selection

5.1.b Modify and refine selections using various methods.

i. Key Concepts: feather, expand, contract, inverse, add to and subtract from selection, deselect

5.1.c Save and load selections.

i. Key Concepts: channels

5.2 Manipulate images using retouching and repairing tools.

5.2.a Use various tools to restore, retouch, and repair images.

i. Key Tools: healing tools, clone tools, Content-Aware tools, Remove (with or without Generative AI, including Find Distractions), Patch tools, using AI tools to fill

ii. Key Concepts: using destructive tools nondestructively (by creating a new layer)

5.2.b Use Photoshop tools to alter exposure and saturation.

i. Key Tools: Burn, Dodge, Sponge

5.3 Transform digital graphics.

5.3.a Modify the canvas or artboards.

i. Key Tools: Crop, Perspective Crop, Straighten

ii. Key Concepts: non-destructive crop, resizing the canvas or image, resizing with or without resampling, rotating

5.3.b Transform layers, groups, and selections.

i. Key Concepts: rotate, resize, warp, distort, skew, flip, perspective, Commit button

5.4 Modify the appearance of design elements by using filters, styles, and materials.

5.4.a Use filters.

i. Key Concepts: Smart Filters vs filters (excluding neural filters)

5.4.b Apply, modify, copy, and manage layer styles.

5.4.c Apply materials.

i. Key Concepts: changing properties, including adjusting scale

6. Publishing Digital Media

This objective covers saving and exporting documents or assets.

6.1 Export documents and assets.

6.1.a Export elements of a document.

i. Key Concepts: exporting layers and artboards, exporting to files

6.1.b Export a document.

i. Key Concepts: Quick Export, export options, Export As

6.2 Save documents and assets.

6.2.a Save documents.

i. Key Concepts: compatibility, save options including Creative Cloud documents, native file formats, preserving layers when saving

6.2.b Save in appropriate image formats for the intended purpose.

i. Key Concepts: file format, bit depth, color space, resolution, pixel dimensions, saving as a copy, file formats that support transparency

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NOTE: *All key items (Key Terms, Key Tools, Key Concepts, and Key Settings) are examples and not a comprehensivelist. Changes in the industry or application may necessitate coverage of items not listed that apply to the Target Candidate description for the Adobe Certified Professional program.*

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