

Module Outline

Visual Design using Adobe Photoshop

Course Code: [...]

Module Leader: Sandra Picarra

Course Duration: 16 weeks (180 hours)

Starting Date: 26 January 2026

Grading Type: Percentage Scale (0-100%)

Method of Study: Online

ECTC credits: N/A

Rationale and Purpose of the Module

This module introduces learners to the fundamental and intermediate skills required to use Adobe Photoshop confidently and creatively. Through a combination of demonstrations, guided practice, and project-based learning, learners will explore the full workflow of digital image creation, from concept development and visual planning to editing, compositing, and exporting finished work for print or digital use.

The module is structured around practical, real-world tasks that encourage learners to apply design principles and technical processes in meaningful ways. Each week builds progressively, allowing learners to develop fluency with key Photoshop tools while strengthening their creative decision-making, visual communication skills, and ability to respond to a brief.

Learners will undertake a portfolio-based assignment that reflects professional design practice. This includes research and idea development, experimentation with techniques, understanding layout and composition, working with layers and effects, and preparing files to industry standards. The module also embeds exam-relevant skills to support those preparing for the Adobe Certified Professional (ACP) certification.

Live classes, step-by-step tutorials, and peer/teacher feedback will support learners' progress, while independent exploration is encouraged to build confidence and personal style.

By the end of the module, learners will be able to produce a coherent body of work that demonstrates both technical competence and creative intent.

Syllabus

This module integrates theoretical knowledge with advanced practical skills in Adobe Photoshop across six fundamental domains, following study weeks with exam preparation.

Week	Topic / Domain	Objectives
1	Getting Started	To introduce learners to the module structure and course expectations.
2	Introduction	To provide learners with guidance and orientation on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), system requirements and assessment.
3	Working in the Design Industry Copyright, Licensing & Permissions	To give learners an understanding of the application of essential legal, technical, and design-related terminology and principles
4	Working in the Design Industry Design Process	To give learners an understanding of digital media devices in daily life in a business environment.
5	Working in the Design Industry Design Principles	To enable learners to demonstrate professional practices for working in the design industry, including effective collaboration with colleagues and clients.
6	Feedback Q&A Live class – Synchronous	To encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning through independent practice, reflection, and self-directed skill development.
7	Project setup and interface	To enable learners to configure and set up a project environment and confidently navigate the Photoshop interface, including adjusting interface settings, managing reusable assets, and importing digital assets to support an efficient and effective workflow.
8	Layers, Masks and Adjustments	To support learners in organising and controlling visual content using layers, masks, and adjustments to manage document structure and content visibility effectively
9	Adding content to a document PBL Orientation	To enable learners to create and incorporate visual and textual content into documents using core Photoshop tools
10	Modifying Visual elements PBL – Project Design Submission	To develop learners' ability to modify and enhance visual elements, applying tools and features that change appearance, style, and overall presentation.
11	Publishing Digital Media	To equip learners with skills to prepare and publish digital media, including selecting appropriate file formats, saving methods, and export settings for different output requirements.
12	Exam Preparation and Orientation	To prepare learners with the tools, documentation and procedures required to successfully participate in the Adobe Certified Professional exam environment.

13	GMetrix exam preparation	To provide learners with opportunities to practice under simulated exam conditions using GMetrix to reinforce skills and build exam confidence
14	GMetrix exam preparation	To provide learners with opportunities to practice under simulated exam conditions using GMetrix to reinforce skills and build exam confidence
15	Exam Week	To encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning through independent practice, reflection, and self-directed skill development.
16	Repeat Exam week	To support learners in completing the Adobe Certified Professional exam in Visual Design using Adobe Photoshop.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

1. Understanding key Moodle features and structure
2. Identifying and interpreting terminology and communication relating to design purpose, target audience, and audience needs.
3. Determining the appropriate copyright, permissions, or licensing required for the use of specific content.
4. Defining key terminology related to digital images, including resolution, colour modes, and file formats.
5. Evaluating the application of photographic and design principles with digital visual content.

Psychomotor Domain (Practical and technical skills)

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

6. Creating or modifying a document using appropriate settings for the intended output.
7. Navigating and customising the Photoshop workspace and use design aids to improve workflow effectively.
8. Importing and managing digital assets within a project.
9. Managing colours, swatches, and gradients to support consistent visual design.
10. Working with brushes, styles and patterns to enhance creative output.
11. Using layers to organise and managing design elements effectively.
12. Modifying layer visibility using masks to support non-destructive editing.
13. Applying adjustments to elements and adjustment layers to modify image appearance.
14. Creating and editing using raster drawing tools and features.

15. Creating and editing vector-based shapes and paths using Photoshop vector tools.
16. Adding, formatting and modifying text within design documents.
17. Making, managing and manipulating selections accurately.
18. Manipulating images using retouching and repair tools.
19. Transforming digital graphics using scaling, rotation, distortion, and alignment tools.
20. Modifying the appearance of design elements by using filters, styles and materials
21. Exporting documents and assets using appropriate formats and settings for different output needs.
22. Saving documents and assets using correct file management and versioning practices.

Affective Domain (Professional Attitudes and Learning Behaviours)

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

23. Demonstrating responsibility for their own learning through independent practice, reflection, and skill development
24. Applying ethical and professional judgement when selecting and using digital content.
25. Demonstrating confidence and professionalism when discussing design choices and workflows with peers or clients
26. Engaging positively with feedback, using it to refine work and improving performance.

Learning plan

Live synchronous sessions are offered to support this learning approach by enabling active participation, real-time iterations, collaborative activities, immediate feedback, troubleshooting, and Q&A. Attendance is optional, and recording will be made available for those who cannot join live.

Learning effort

Including both directed and self-directed learning.

The module is self-paced and is designed to run over 180 hours across 16-week periods. Learners are encouraged to dedicate 2-3 hours per weekday, or around 11-12 hours per week, which aligns with completing one domain each week.

Week	LO	Topic / Domain	Teaching, Learning and Activities	Indicative time allocation
1	LO1	Getting Started	Learners are expected to: . Log in to Moodle and explore the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) . Test their device against Adobe Photoshop system requirements . Request and install Adobe Creative Cloud licences. . Complete the introductory Getting Started orientation activities	10 hours
2	LO1 LO2	Introduction Live class – Synchronous	Learners are expected to: . Attend the live introductory class or watch the recording . Review course materials and assessment requirements . Read the portfolio brief, PBL Part I: Project Management and reflect on prior knowledge and personal experience	12 hours
3	LO3 LO24	Working in the Design Industry Copyright, Licensing & Permissions	Learners are expected to: . Engage with activities in Domain 1 . Study copyright, licensing and key terms materials . Explore free stock asset repositories . Practice exploring, crediting and attribution for different kinds of digital assets	11 hours
4	LO2 LO23 LO25	Working in the Design Industry Design Process	Learners are expected to: . Participate in collaborative role-play activities simulating client–designer communication . Reflect on professional communication practices	11 hours
5	LO4 LO5	Working in the Design Industry Design Principles and Colour Mods Asynchronous class	Learners are expected to: . Watch recorded lectures on design principles and colour theory . Apply design principles to their PBL Part I	11 hours
6	LO1 LO2 LO3 LO4 LO5 LO23 LO26	Feedback Q&A Live class – Synchronous PBL I Submission	Learners are expected to: . Attend the live feedback and Q&A session . Complete PBL Part I: Project Management . Post their work on Moodle forums for peer and tutor feedback . Submit PBL Part I	12 hours
7	LO6 LO7 LO8 LO25 LO26	Project setup and interface	Learners are expected to: . Read Portfolio Brief II: Project Design . Engage with activities in Domain 2. . Follow tutorials on the Photoshop interface and workspace configuration . Set up a project and confidentially navigate the Photoshop interface. . Import and manage reusable digital assets . Apply setup skills to PBL Part II	11 hours

			. Post their work on Moodle forums for peer and tutor feedback	
8	LO9 LO10 LO11 LO12 LO13 LO26	Layers, Masks and Adjustments	Learners are expected to: . Engage with activities in Domain 3. . Complete guided exercises on layers, masks, and non-destructive editing . Adjust document structure and control content visibility. . Apply layers, masks and non-destructive techniques to their PBL Part II . Post their work on Moodle forums for peer and tutor feedback	11 hours
9	LO14 LO15 LO16 LO17 LO18 LO19 LO26	Adding content to a document PBL Orientation <i>Asynchronous class</i>	Learners are expected to: . Engage with activities in Domain 4. . Create and integrate images and text using Photoshop tools . Apply content creation techniques to PBL Part II . Post their work on Moodle forums for peer and tutor feedback	11 hours
10	LO20 LO26	Modifying Visual elements PBL II Submission	Learners are expected to: . Engage with activities in Domain 5. . Enhance and transform visual elements using filters, styles, and tools . Apply content creation techniques to PBL Part II . Post their work on Moodle forums for peer and tutor feedback . Finalise and Submit PBL, Part II	12 hours
11	LO21 LO22	Publishing Digital Media	Learners are expected to: . Read Brief III, PBL, Part III: Project Delivery . Engage with activities in Domain 6 . Learn export workflows and file formats . Prepare assets for print, share and digital output . Apply export techniques to PBL Part III	11 hours
12	LO21 LO22 LO23	Exam Preparation and Orientation <i>Live class – Synchronous</i> PBL III Submission	Learners are expected to: . Attend a live exam orientation session . Review exam procedures and documentation . Finalise and submit PBL Part III: Portfolio Delivery	12 hours
13	LO23	GMetrix exam preparation	Learners are expected to: . Request the GMetrix redeem code . Complete simulated ACP exams using GMetrix . Review incorrect answers and weak areas	11 hours
14	LO23	GMetrix exam preparation	Learners are expected to: . Request the GMetrix redeem code . Complete simulated ACP exams using GMetrix . Revise technical skills and exam strategies . Submit GMetrix results in testing mode	11 hours
15	LO23	Exam Week	Learners are expected to:	

			. Request access to the calendar and book their exam . Revise independently . Sit the Adobe Certified Professional exam	12 hours
16	LO23	Repeat Exam week	Learners are expected to: . If required, request access to the calendar and book their exam . Request any 1-2-1 Q&A session . Revise independently . Sit the repeat certification exam	12 hours

Rationale for Teaching and Learning Approach

This module will be delivered using a blended learning model that integrates synchronous and asynchronous teaching methods to support diverse learner needs and reflect contemporary professional digital environments. The blended approach ensures flexibility, accessibility, and alignment with industry-standard practices in digital design and media production.

Synchronous live class sessions will be scheduled at key points throughout the module to introduce core concepts, demonstrate technical workflows, provide guided practice, and facilitate learner interaction. These sessions will support learner engagement, enable real-time feedback and clarification, and ensure a consistent baseline of technical competency across the cohort. Live sessions will also be used for orientation, formative feedback, project guidance, troubleshooting, and exam preparation to support learner progression and confidence.

Asynchronous learning activities will be delivered through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and will include pre-recorded tutorials, guided exercises, readings, quizzes, and project-based tasks. Asynchronous content will enable learners to engage with material at their own pace, support independent learning, and provide opportunities for repeated practice of technical skills. This approach reflects industry practice, where designers often engage in self-directed learning and remote collaboration.

The module adopts a **Project-Based Learning (PBL)** approach, where learners develop a professional portfolio project aligned with industry workflows. PBL will support the development of practical skills, problem-solving abilities, creativity, and professional design practice. Learners will engage in structured milestones, feedback sessions, and reflective activities to promote continuous improvement and self-directed learning.

Formative assessment and feedback will be embedded throughout the module through support sessions, forums, peer discussion, and instructor feedback. This continuous assessment model supports learners for the Adobe Certified Professional examination.

Exam preparation activities, including GMetrix practice exams and guided exam orientation sessions, will ensure learners are familiar with certification requirements, exam procedures, and performance expectations. These activities support confidence-building and enhance certification success rates.

The teaching approach emphasises **inclusive and accessible learning**, recognising that learners may enter the programme with varying levels of digital literacy and prior experiences. Scaffolded instruction, guided demonstrations, and structured learning pathways will be used to support skill development and progression.

By the end of the module, learners will be able to produce a coherent body of work that demonstrates both technical competence and creative intent.

Overall, this teaching methodology supports the development of technical competence, professional practice, independent learning skills and industry readiness, aligning with the principles of the QQI National Framework of Qualifications and Adobe's educational philosophy.

Assessment

Assessment techniques

Passing Criteria

Project-Based learning (PBL):

Minimum 50

GMetrix simulation exam (testing Mode):

Minimum 90

#	Learning Outcome	Assessment technique	Maximum Grading	Learner Marks
1.	Understanding key Moodle features and structure.	PBL	1	
2.	Identifying and interpreting terminology and communication relating to design purpose, target audience, and audience needs.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
3.	Determining the appropriate copyright, permissions, or licensing required for the use of specific content.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
4.	Defining key terminology related to digital images, including resolution, colour modes, and file formats.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
5.	Evaluating the application of photographic and design principles with digital visual content.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
6.	Creating or modifying a document using appropriate settings for the intended output	PBL GMetrix	2 2	

7.	Navigating and customising the Photoshop workspace and use design aids to improve workflow effectively.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
8.	Importing and managing digital assets within a project.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
9.	Managing colours, swatches, and gradients to support consistent visual design.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
10.	Working with brushes, styles and patterns to enhance creative output.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
11.	Using layers to organise and managing design elements effectively.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
12.	Modifying layer visibility using masks to support non-destructive editing.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
13.	Applying adjustments to elements and adjustment layers to modify image appearance.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
14.	Creating and editing using raster drawing tools and features.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
15.	Creating and editing vector-based shapes and paths using Photoshop vector tools.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
16.	Adding, formatting and modifying text within design documents.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
17.	Making, managing and manipulating selections accurately.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
18.	Manipulating images using retouching and repair tools.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
19.	Transforming digital graphics using scaling, rotation, distortion, and alignment tools.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
20.	Modifying the appearance of design elements by using filters, styles and materials.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
21.	Exporting documents and assets using appropriate formats and settings for different output needs.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
22.	Saving documents and assets using correct file management and versioning practices.	PBL GMetrix	2 2	
23.	Demonstrating responsibility for their own learning through independent practice, reflection, and skill development	PBL	3	
24.	Applying ethical and professional judgement when selecting and using digital content.	PBL	4	
25.	Demonstrating confidence and professionalism when discussing design choices and workflows with peers or clients	PBL	4	

26	Engaging positively with feedback, using it to refine work and improving performance.	PBL	4	
	Total		100	

On successful completion of this course, learners will be awarded a certificate from eCollege/Cenit College, recognising their achievement in Visual Design using Adobe Photoshop. They will also be eligible to undertake the Adobe Certified Professional (ACP) Examination in Visual Design using Adobe Photoshop, enhancing their professional credentials and career prospects in the creative industry.

Adobe Certified Professional using Adobe Photoshop Exam

Award: Adobe Certified Professional (ACP) in Visual Design using Adobe Photoshop

Exam Version: 2025 (v 26.x)

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 is 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 and routine tasks associated with their job role, with limited assistance from peers, documentation, or support services. Graduates can work independently or collaboratively with colleagues under minimal supervision and can respond to routine conceptual and applied questions regarding the use of Photoshop without frequent referral to others. They are able to communicate credibly with users or clients about the capabilities of Photoshop and its effective application within design workflows (Certiport).

AI and assets use policy

Learners may use AI tools embedded within the Adobe Photoshop application. AI-generated images, legally sourced, pre-generated or stock assets are permitted if properly credited. All layout design, and overall design work must be created by the learner using Adobe Photoshop.

Model releases are required for images featuring identifiable individuals, and location releases are required for photography taken on private property.

This policy supports academic integrity, ensures authenticity of student work, and reflects industry-standard practice for developing original design skills.

Academic Integrity Statement

Learners are expected to act with honesty, responsibility, and professionalism throughout the programme. All submitted work must be original. Misuse of AI tools, unauthorised licensed assets, plagiarism, or misrepresentation of work is considered a breach of academic integrity and may result in disciplinary action in line with institutional policies.

Learners are also expected to engage respectfully with peers, instructors, coordinators and administrators, reflecting the ethical standards of professional practice within the digital industry.