



# JOB of the Week



**Job name: Photographer**

**Job description:** Photographers create visual images for an exceptional range of creative, technical and documentary purposes. As a professional photographer, you'll usually work to a brief set by the client or employer. Examples of content you could work on include wedding, family and baby, fashion, food, architecture and landscape photography. A large proportion of professional photographers are self-employed. You could also find work with a variety of employers, including creative businesses, publishers and photographic agencies, or in the education and public sectors.

**Tasks you will undertake in the job:** Exact tasks vary according to the specialism you choose, but generally you'll:

- Work with clients to discuss the images they require and how they want to use them
- Seek out appropriate photographic subjects and opportunities
- Carry out research and preparation for a shoot
- Work in different locations and circumstances to get the right image
- Use an extensive range of technical equipment, including cameras, lenses, lighting and specialist software
- Communicate with photographic subjects to put them at ease, encourage them and direct them
- Arrange still life objects, products, scenes, props and backgrounds
- Liaise with other professionals, including graphic designers, writers, gallery managers, picture researchers, commissioning editors and art directors
- Manage the processing and use of images, discuss technical problems, check for quality and deal with clients' concerns
- Prepare proofs for approval
- Compile finished products for sale, such as albums and framed prints
- Understand traditional film and digital photography and keep up to date with industry trends, developments and new techniques
- Develop software expertise to digitally enhance images by, for example, changing emphasis, cropping pictures, correcting minor faults or moving objects around
- Manage the business aspects of the work, including administration, marketing, scheduling work, invoicing, basic accounting and website maintenance
- Develop a good portfolio, build a network of contacts and achieve a reputation for quality and reliability in order to secure future assignments.

**Skills required for this job (core competencies):**

Communication	Resilience	Organisation	Teamwork
Problem Solving	Initiative	Creativity	Digital literacy

**Sectors in which Photographers would normally work:** You'll usually specialise in one area of photography, such as: Advertising; Corporate; Editorial; Fashion and Fine art  
Social photography - also known as general practice includes weddings, commercial and portraiture photography. Photographers can also work in more specialist sectors such as a press photographer or medical illustrator (<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/press-photographer> and <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/medical-illustrator>)

**Skills:** You'll need to show: excellent technical skills, using digital and non-digital cameras and industry-standard software such as Photoshop; creativity and an eye for a picture; personality, perseverance, patience and dedication when working on projects and briefs; strength in working under pressure, juggling workloads and meeting deadlines; the ability to work both independently and in teams, building rapport with clients, colleagues and other businesses.

**Work experience** is essential: When applying for photography work, you'll need a professional and impressive portfolio, which could be online, a traditional 'book' or on a CD or memory stick.



**Salary:** Many entrants to the profession start as assistants, where salaries can be set at the national minimum wage. In full-time employment, early career salaries are typically between £16,000 and £22,000. Salaries can increase to anywhere from £25,000 to £65,000. The top end of the scale is typically for those who have a strong reputation and are highly sought-after, which takes years of experience.



**Working hours:** Hours can be long and unpredictable and may be led by demand. For example, wedding photography will be at its busiest in the peak spring/summer wedding season and sports photography will require you to work weekends and evenings to cover fixtures and events. Freelance photographers may have periods of working at maximum capacity followed by times when there is little or no work.

## Qualifications needed to be a Photographer:

- You can become a photographer without a degree, but in many instances having a degree or equivalent professional qualification is an advantage.
- You could study for a degree in the following relevant subjects:
- Art and design; Digital imaging; Fine art; Graphics; Media studies; Photography.
- The content of photography courses varies considerably. Some have a strong emphasis on fine art and the study of photography as an artistic endeavour, whereas others have a more commercial focus and cover managing a business, professional ethics and marketing.
- Digital imaging and other technological developments now form a significant part of many courses. Those that offer work placements and promote contact with industry can be particularly useful in helping you to secure future job prospects.
- A postgraduate qualification is not necessary, although entry to the more competitive specialist areas, such as fashion, advertising and photojournalism, can be more challenging so a higher degree may be helpful.

**This job in the future:** The workforce is projected to grow by 1.9%, creating 1 900 jobs; in the same period, 58.5% of the workforce is likely to retire, creating 59 800 job opportunities.

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[www.successatschool.org](http://www.successatschool.org)

[www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk](http://www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk)

[www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors)

[www.ucas.com/careers-advice](http://www.ucas.com/careers-advice)

[www.kudos/cascaid.co.uk/#/](http://www.kudos/cascaid.co.uk/#/) (you all have a log on for this service)

[www.careersbox.co.uk](http://www.careersbox.co.uk) (careers videos)

Helpful sites for careers information  
GAT careers links

<http://airhead.io/public/launchpads/XqbuOMJgb00fqvMPCykcZA>

