

UBC BRAND

# PHOTOGRAPHY BEST PRACTICES

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Dear Colleagues,

Communicators have important work to do on behalf of UBC. The speed at which communications now move means we must be highly effective at expressing the value we create in the world and delivering on that promise in all we communicate. The work of creating a world-renowned UBC brand depends upon a collective, tireless effort to communicate, engage and deliver exceptional experiences for all those we come into contact with each and every day.

Our goal is to ensure that UBC is well known, highly valued and deeply connected in British Columbia, Canada and around the world. Our identity is often the most immediate representation of our institution, people and brand to our many audiences. Having a strong brand guideline system allows us to tell our collective story with the power of one voice.

We appreciate your respect and collaboration in maintaining UBC's brand guidelines. We hope this site and guide are helpful for you. I thank all of you for your dedication to supporting UBC.

**Rick Hart**

Senior Director  
Brand and Marketing

# Photography Best Practices

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# Genuine. Open. Inspiring.

## 1.0

Photography has the power to move and inspire us. It creates an immediate connection between subject and viewer and can reveal a world within a single image. Our photographic story should capture the entrepreneurial spirit of UBC and its diverse community on two campuses connected by a global network of students, faculty, staff and alumni. We are a place where new knowledge is continually created—the feeling of discovery and exploration is core to our visual image.

For organizations like UBC, the images that we use to tell our stories or relay strategic messaging in our communications materials are key to conveying our brand convictions — in print, video, web and experiential marketing.

Successful print and digital communications rely on quality photography and we hope this guide will help you navigate creating your own photography or assist you in briefing and producing shoots with our UBC Photographer or other professional freelance photographers.

PHOTOGRAPHY BEST PRACTICES

# AN EDITORIAL PERSPECTIVE



# An editorial perspective

## 2.0

UBC has an established photographic style that has evolved over the years from a print-based execution to what is now arguably a 'transmedia' approach that must translate across multiple mediums, platforms and channels. In other words, photography is in high demand as an important digital content element in modern communications.

Whether you are planning to do your own photography, purchase stock photography, work with a freelancer or hire our UBC Photographer, there are some key editorial considerations to know before starting any project.

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### UBC PHOTOGRAPHY EDITORIAL CHECKLIST

#### **Unique Perspective**

Look for an unexpected angle or viewpoint.

#### **Energy**

Is there movement or drama?

#### **Place**

Can you tell where the photo was taken?

#### **Unique Event**

Capture activities that are unique to UBC.

#### **Tells a Story**

Inspires sharing, research or follow up.

#### **Inspiring**

Encourages the viewer to engage.

#### **Stolen Moment**

Never staged or posed.

## 2.0 AN EDITORIAL PERSPECTIVE

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### PEOPLE

Photography of people should catch genuine moments wrapped in natural light. Use a shallow depth of field to help draw focus to the subject. The environment should help demonstrate how the person belongs to the UBC community; they should not be overwhelmed or 'lost' in the setting. The tonality should feel modern, fresh and open.

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### CAMPUSES AND ENVIRONS

UBC campus environments are a point of pride for the university and offer students, faculty, staff, alumni and visitors a tremendous sense of place. They have emotional connections, stories and memories for every building, café or quiet study space. Additionally, our campuses are spectacularly emblematic of two beautiful cities, Vancouver and Kelowna, and are a powerful draw for prospective students, faculty, staff, alumni and partners.

For these reasons, projects should incorporate images of UBC's campuses and environs. Where possible, try to incorporate a fresh, modern colour palette that emphasizes blue and uses natural light. Don't be afraid to try unexpected framing. Use low angle building shots and feature wide, horizontal landscapes and plenty of big sky to suggest an inspiring place where open thinking can change the world.





### WORK AND STUDY

When photographing people working or studying, the focus should be on the actions of the subjects involved. The photographs should capture subjects doing what they do best within their work or study environments. It's okay for people to look immersed in their work. Ideally, they should look completely unaware of the camera. Tapping into the subject's dedication,

passion and expertise is key to finding the moment when they light up about their field of study or research at UBC. Photographs of people at UBC should communicate our inherent entrepreneurial spirit and showcase the change-makers, inventors, and creators helping to discover and share new knowledge in the world.





PHOTOGRAPHY BEST PRACTICES

# DIY: KEY CONSIDERATIONS



### 3.0

#### DIY

During times when it is challenging to hire a professional photographer because of budget restrictions or other constraints, UBC communicators may choose to shoot their own images. In these situations, communicators should still try to aspire to the UBC photography style. The following suggestions on equipment, software and photo shoot planning and producing will better prepare you for shooting 'on-brand' or in choosing stock images.

#### EQUIPMENT

There are no 'tricks' to shooting great photographs. Memorable photographs take talent and a great sense of timing. However, there are some critical types of equipment that help get the job done. The list below will assist you in choosing the best gear for your project.

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#### EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE

##### What kind of basic gear do I need to get started?

- Tripod for low light situations or time exposures
- Spare batteries and memory cards
- Equipment bag (helps to keep track of your gear!)

##### What kind of lighting equipment do I need?

- Available light is preferred or simulated natural light. This can be achieved by bouncing a flash off a wall or a ceiling, or use an existing light source like a desk lamp.
- Simple reflectors, like a piece of white card stock can be useful to bounce light onto a subject's face or highlight a detail.

##### What kind of camera and lens should I use?

- Professional DSLR camera with 70-200mm lens, wide aperture (f4.0 or lower)
- Optional lenses: 200-400mm for sports and 18-24mm for architecture and landscapes

##### What software and computer equipment will I need?

- Preferably, an up-to-date Mac computer with as large a monitor as possible. Dual monitor setups are also advantageous.
- Monitors should be colour calibrated regularly with a calibration tool
- Software: Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Lightroom, and Adobe Bridge (or equivalents)
- Memory card reader
- Backup hard drive and/or Cloud backup

#### ORGANIZING A PHOTO SHOOT

- Write a Creative Brief so everyone involved understands the story or why are you taking the photograph(s). If needed, you can find a Creative Brief template on the [UBC Brand Site](#).
- Determine what types of shots you need and prepare a specific shot list.
- Scout the location at the same time of day you will be shooting to determine lighting and how busy it could be. Look for any variables that could affect your shoot. Also check the UBC Events calendar to see if there are going to be any events occurring in the location you are shooting in.
- If you need special permissions or access to shoot on campus, please contact:  
Arlene Chan  
Events & Film Liaison, Community Development  
[arlene.chan@ubc.ca](mailto:arlene.chan@ubc.ca)  
604 822 6555
- Determine if you will need props of any kind. If needed, discuss with your photographer ahead of time to assess feasibility.
- If you need to secure models, try holding a casting call. You may want to put a call out to the public, or have a casting call with friends, family, or colleagues. If you want to have professional models or actors, work with a reputable agency.

#### ON-SET PREPARATIONS

- Always have [consent for use of image forms](#) for subjects to sign. As a public university, it is best practice to have permissions from our subjects before publishing. Please note that subjects under 18 years of age must have parental consent.
- Ensure the models/subjects know what kind of clothing to wear: casual or business; dark or light; no bold patterns etc. Please refer to the preparation tips for subjects section of this guide.
- Always have a 'Plan B' for weather or unforeseen events, such as construction, poor weather, or special events.
- Pre-order catering or have a fund for coffee or food for the models and photographer on the day of the shoot.
- Organize transportation for subjects, props and/or your equipment.

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*Photography is the critical to a healthy social media presence. Ensure you meet with your designer or social media strategist so you know the requirements of publishing before you shoot. Considerations such as specific types of cropping or ensuring there is 'blank space' to accommodate type or an extreme panoramic or vertical crop for banner ads.*

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#### ON THE DAY OF THE PHOTOSHOOT

- Look for unique angles/perspective, and capture the image from multiple viewpoints.
- Make yourself part of the scene. Try adding people or objects like chairs, doorframes or shelves between you and the subject. These items can be 'blurred' by using minimal depth of field settings on your camera.
- Try using a minimal depth of field, as it will 'isolate' the subject from the background.
- Look for available natural light so the setting feels 'real' and not staged.
- Unless the image is a portrait, subjects should not look directly at the camera.
- Situations with two or more subjects should be shot from multiple angles and viewpoints. Let people talk and engage in 'conversations' as you shoot. Please note that when people are talking, their mouths will do funny things, so you need to take many shots and choose the best one.
- Avoid photographing people while they are eating.
- Try and get people to do what they do naturally. If you have to stage them, give them time to feel comfortable.
- Use the "Rule of Thirds" — subjects should be off-center (especially if being used as a double-page spread in a print publication or if you need to make allowances for type).
- Try different lenses to see how that changes the feel of the image.
- Shoot variations of the set-up with the subject on the left and on the right. Also try horizontal and vertical options, as you never know when might need a tall or wide image.
- Keep in mind that group shots can be more interesting from an angle rather than straight on.
- If you're taking pictures of architecture, note that the quality of the resulting image will be dependent on light and the time of day. Don't shoot at mid-day; shadows and bright sunlight will create high-contrast images.

### 3.0 DIY: KEY CONSIDERATIONS

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#### CREATING A GOOD ON-SET ENVIRONMENT

For project managers, please ensure your subject(s) has a private space to either touch up or change their outfit. Also, there should be access to both men and women's washrooms.

Every effort should be made to create an environment where civility, diversity, opportunity and inclusion are valued. Please review [UBC's Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff](#).

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*We recommend using a professional photographer whenever possible. If you would like to book a photo shoot or discuss your project with our award-winning UBC Photographer, please email Paul Joseph at [paul.h.joseph@ubc.ca](mailto:paul.h.joseph@ubc.ca) or contact him at 604 822 4775.*

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#### USAGE RIGHTS AND FEES

One of the most important conversations you should have with your photographer is with regards to the usage rights and fees, which are always in addition to the shooting fees. Under Canadian copyright law, photographers retain ownership to the images they shoot for you, and they charge different fees for the usage of the images. These usage fees can vary depending on how you are using the photos. For example, the fee may be higher if you are running the image in a national newspaper or magazine ad as opposed to using it in a short-run brochure.

It should be noted that if you use the UBC Photographer, not only are the shooting fees very inexpensive compared to most freelancers, there are no additional usage fees for the images. You will be able to use them anywhere you want, from billboards to web ads. The UBC Photographer also does not charge for editing and retouching as those costs are included in the shooting fee.

For inquiries regarding UBC photography services and rates, please contact:

Paul Joseph  
604 822 4775  
[paul.h.joseph@ubc.ca](mailto:paul.h.joseph@ubc.ca)

PHOTOGRAPHY BEST PRACTICES

# TIPS FOR SUBJECTS: PREPARING FOR YOUR PHOTO SHOOT AT UBC



### 4.0

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SHOOT

Brand and Marketing would like to share some of our experience in prepping for photo shoots and help you better prepare so you can feel comfortable during your photography session. We hope it helps with questions and calms any butterflies some subjects might have beforehand.

Please note these are *suggestions only* — if you have concerns about dressing a certain way, be they ethical, religious or otherwise, please don't hesitate to convey this ahead of time to the project manager and/or photographer.

#### CLOTHING: PALETTE AND TEXTURES

- A somewhat neutral palette is encouraged for formal photographs: Navy, brown, charcoal, and other mid tone neutrals are safe choices.
- Avoid wearing all white or all black. Also small checks or fine pinstripes as they can cause issues at certain screen resolutions.
- Patterns can pose issues, particularly if they are 'loud'; avoid large chunky patterns as they could potentially pull focus and 'upstage' you and anyone else in the photo.


#### CLOTHING: WHAT TO AVOID

- For a formal photograph, avoid denim. However, if shooting a casual photograph, dark denim pants will work.
- Shorts or low-cut tops, unless specific to the style of shot (e.g. a beach shot)
- Flip-flops or other beach footwear
- Brand logos (e.g. branded sweatshirts)

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*Note: Photographic lighting can sometimes highlight oily skin that results in shine. If you do not have a makeup artist present at the shoot, you may want to consider bringing something to touch up your T-Zone (forehead, nose and chin) such as blotting papers.*

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PHOTOGRAPHY BEST PRACTICES

# RESOURCES

### 5.0

#### BRAND PHOTOGRAPHY LIBRARY

Brand and Marketing's Flickr photo library is an invaluable resource with hundreds of on-brand photographs available for non-commercial use on our Flickr site.

- [UBC Photography Library on Flickr](#)

#### CONSENT TO USE OF IMAGE FORM

This consent to use of image form needs to be completed by all involved before the image can be published.

- [Consent to Use Image Form](#)

#### CONTACT THE UBC PHOTOGRAPHER

Brand and Marketing offers the UBC community high quality photography at very reasonable rates, including the work of award-winning university photographer Paul Joseph.

For inquiries regarding photography services and rates, please contact:

**Paul Joseph**  
604 822 4775  
[paul.h.joseph@ubc.ca](mailto:paul.h.joseph@ubc.ca)



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