The Imperial College London
Photography Guidelines

Photography has a central role in the College’s communication with its audiences. In all our photography, we aim to show the energy, vibrancy and excitement of life at Imperial. We want those that see our photographs to feel connected with the subject, and with the College more generally. Our photographs are used across the College’s website, on its social media channels, throughout its printed publications and marketing material, and in the national and international media.

Don’t forget

• Shoot horizontally and vertically.
• Aim to provide a selection of close-up, medium and long shots.
• For close-up shots, detail is important, so avoid a very shallow depth of field.
• Show faces: faces, and especially eyes, help the viewer to feel connected with the image.
• Show emotion: people enjoying, concentrating, listening and talking convey energy in an image.
• Think about safety: see below for more guidance on PPE in photography.
• Move the camera around and shoot people from the right and the left, so that they are captured looking in both directions.
• Show our name: if anyone has the College name on their clothing, then make the most of this in the photography. Conversely, if anyone has the name of another university or organisation on their clothing, please ask them to hide this (for example, by removing the item of clothing or turning it inside out for the shoot).
• Take notes: please write down who you are photographing where possible, where the shoot is taking place, and what you are capturing. If you are photographing an event, this is unlikely to be feasible. If you are photographing a class, then please note the instructor’s name.
• Thank you! Remember to thank everyone who has helped or appeared in a shoot.
Health and Safety

Before beginning a shoot in a laboratory or workshop environment, check the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements for the space, by reviewing the sign on the door and by talking to the researchers and staff in the space. All individuals photographed engaging in research should be wearing the PPE required for the space.

For portrait photography away from the workbench, or laboratories that do not have specific PPE requirements, all photography subjects should still follow general guidelines for safe attire: long hair tied back, lanyards tucked into clothing, lab coats buttoned up and sleeves rolled down, and closed-toe shoes.

For more information on PPE in photography see our policy here:

http://www.imperial.ac.uk/communications/web/photography/personal-protective-equipment/
Framing

Homepage format
Think about our homepage: our homepage requires a super-wide horizontal shot. Action should take place in a middle row, aligned left or right to allow for a text box.

Try to use the lines of the environment to draw the eye to the image's 'hero'. The homepage needs to tell a story in a single image, so context and impact are particularly important. Where possible, please provide a small selection of photos in this format for use on the homepage.
Framing

Publications
Think about our publications: we often use research or education images for wrap around covers on our publications or for double page spreads. A wraparound cover requires a horizontal shot with the action in the lower right corner. Remember to avoid the spine when framing the key elements of the photograph, or the gutter if an image has the potential to be used across a double page spread.
Portraits

Please provide a selection of happy and more serious shots so that portraits can be used in a variety of situations. We generally use portraits of chest and above, but if you wish to showcase surroundings in the portrait (for example, if the person is in a lab or the environment relates to the story), then a more pulled-back shot is very useful to have.

Try to be careful to avoid distortion on the faces of subjects in portraits. Do not use too wide a lens too close to the subject. For example, if you cannot get back far enough to use anything longer than a 50mm at minimum for a headshot, then perhaps choose a different location.

Also try to use a location that doesn’t suffer too much from mixed lighting, if this is unavoidable try to minimise this, for example, by turning off the lights and opening the blinds or vice versa, or overpowering the environmental light by using your own, to avoid colour casts.
Research in action

Aim to provide photographs that are ‘fly-on-the-wall’ (i.e., the subject is working, without interacting with the camera) and photographs in which the researcher is looking at the camera. Flip the focus between the researcher and the research itself.

If the setting is relevant or interesting visually (for example, a laboratory or a hospital), ensure that some photos showcase the surroundings.

Be very careful in these situations to observe the health and safety requirements of the location yourself, check it is permitted before using a surface for your equipment, and be very careful not to bump or move anything.

Be aware that some people in the environment may not be involved in the shoot, be sure not to interrupt them in any way, and check that they are happy to appear in the background of any shots.

Ensure that if there is more than one subject in shot that all their personal protective equipment is the same.
Classes and Objects

Academic classes
In a class setting, ask the instructor to let the group know that you are taking photos, and that the photographs may be used in the College’s publications or on its website. In an education environment, aim to capture scenes of 'typical' academic/student interaction (i.e., the academic talking to a group of students) and more one-to-one interaction (with academic and student discussing or looking at something together).

Research objects
If the research subject is an object, then shoot the person examining or using the object, and shoot the person holding the object, but looking at the camera. Also be sure to photograph the object by itself, supported by the researcher’s hand if necessary, or to draw the eye to the key part of the object. If a researcher is working alongside colleagues or PhD students, invite them to be in the shoot: interaction (discussing what’s on a screen, examining an object) conveys energy in a research-oriented image.
Talk to the researcher to see if there are other visually interesting opportunities that you can take advantage of, though do not pressure for this.
Event Shots

Aim to capture engagement, energy and colour, and capture faces where possible to convey emotion and excitement. Avoid using the flash if possible. Identify priorities and stick to them: if there is a key moment (for example, a handshake or a visit of a particular individual), then this must take precedence. Aim to be polite, appreciative and unobtrusive, to avoid imposing on the event.

For internal events it’s worth arriving a little early to see if you can collaborate to improve the lighting conditions before the event begins.

Always check the dress code before attendance, and for any particular protocol on formal events. Be prepared to be agile, flexible and able to adapt quickly to changes in plan.

If you are asked, for example, to do something, or take a group shot of important people with no prior warning on the spot, try to be courteous and accommodate the request to the best of your ability wherever possible.

Events are a great chance to have a little fun with creativity, if you see somewhere that might make a great angle, ask your contact if they can let you get there to take a few shots.
Event Shots

Action shots
Be sure to include the subject and the object they are interacting with (i.e., always include the ball!).

Facial expressions convey tension, but the crowd can also convey energy and atmosphere. Explore inventive framing for action shots.

Identify any key figures by speaking with your contact, and ensure that you prioritise them in your photography.

Wide Shots
For wide shots, a wide angle is not always necessary: if you have space, get back as far as possible so that the elements in your shot are closer together. Consider a point of elevation, and look for a bold foreground subject to wrap your story around.
Generic Campus Portrait Locations

These locations are all within 5 minutes walk of the main entrance (36 on the map), they are available at almost all times, and require no permissions.

These are just suggestions, you are actively encouraged to try new places.