The Imperial College London Photography Guidelines

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

Don’t forget:

• **Think about safety**: see the following page for more guidance on health and safety.
• **Selection**: provide horizontal, vertical, close, medium and long shots.
• **Show emotion and faces**: people smiling, laughing, concentrating, listening and talking convey energy in an image. Faces, and especially eyes, help the viewer to feel connected with the image.
• **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 or remove it.
• **Take notes**: photograph the College ID card and write down the name of the person you are photographing, 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, note the instructor’s name.
• **Thank you!** remember to thank everyone who has helped or appeared in a shoot.
• **Colour space**: process and supply images in sRGB colour space.
• **File names**: use the following filename convention: year/month/day/name/description/number eg, 171123_smith_john_biology_001.jpg
• **Delivery**: files can be delivered via our file exchange at [https://icseclzt.cc.ic.ac.uk/](https://icseclzt.cc.ic.ac.uk/) or with your own preferred digital file delivery platform.
Health and Safety in photography

Before beginning a shoot in a laboratory or workshop environment, check the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements for the space by reviewing (and photographing) the PPE 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 correct PPE required for the space they are in.

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, protective eyewear, lanyards tucked into clothing, lab coats buttoned up, sleeves rolled down, and closed-toe shoes.

Take a photograph of the College ID Card of each person featured in the photographs.

For more information on PPE in photography, read our policy here: www.imperial.ac.uk/communications/web/photography/personal-protective-equipment

Lab coats
If lab coats are worn, they must be fastened right up to the top button, even for portraits. If one person in shot is wearing a lab coat, then everyone must wear lab coat, even those in the background.

Howie lab coats
The types of lab coats that appear in shot should be consistent. Howie lab coats (with the high neck and closed collar) should not be mixed with non-Howie coats, and should be fastened up to the top button.

Protective eyewear
If there is any activity involving liquids, then protective eyewear must be worn in lab photography, even if the liquid is harmless. If one person is wearing protective eyewear in shot, then everyone must wear protective eyewear.

Long hair and jewellery
Long hair should be tied back and there should be no hanging earrings or jewellery.

Gloves
If gloves are necessary, then their use should be consistent in images, and everyone in the shot should be wearing them.

Portraits
For portraits the PPE rules can be relaxed. However, there must be no visible activity in the background, everything must be put away and the subject clearly away from the bench. However, lab coats, if worn, must still be fastened up to the top!
Lab Research

People in situ
Aim to provide photographs that are ‘fly-on-the-wall’, where the subject is not interacting with the camera. Be very careful in these situations to observe the health and safety requirements of the location yourself: ask permission 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, so be sure not to interrupt them and check that they are happy to appear in the background of any shots.

For editorial usage try to include some shots with a shallow depth of field and some breathing space for the type to sit on top. Examples of editorial usage are included on the final page.

Keep angles natural to the subject matter wherever possible. Avoid dramatic angles or diagonals unless absolutely unavoidable to bring a key item into frame.

Ensure that any personal or patient data on screens or labels is not visible or blurred out completely in post production.
Lab Research objects

**Hands only, no faces**
Be careful when holding an object toward the camera that it does not appear too forced. Avoid holding objects straight on to the camera. Ensure that the correct PPE procedure is followed. If the subject should be wearing a glove in a real situation, then this should be shown in the image.

**Objects only, no people**
These shots can be very useful editorially. Good use of shallow depth of field, angles and space, can allow great opportunities to lay copy on the images and crop to different spaces. However, be careful to allow enough depth of field to capture the key focus area of the object that you are featuring.

**Abstract/detail imagery (for designers only)**
These images need to be sourced directly from researchers. These images (right) could be converted to black and white and a colour overlay/duotone could be created. These abstract images are best used for covers of documents or event posters, and can be treated to enhance impact.
Learning and Teaching

**Academic classes**

In a class setting, ask the instructor to let the group know that you will be taking photographs and that they may be used in College publications and on our website. In an education environment, aim to capture scenes of ‘typical’ academic and student interaction (for example, the academic talking to a group of students) and more one-to-one interaction (such as an academic and student discussing or looking at something together).

Aim to provide photographs that are ‘fly-on-the-wall’ where the subject is not interacting with the camera.

Be aware that some people in the environment may not be involved in the shoot. Be sure not to interrupt them and check that they are happy to appear in the background of any shots. For editorial usage try to include some shots with a shallow depth of field and some breathing space for the type to sit on top. Examples of editorial usage are included on the final page.

Keep angles natural to the subject matter wherever possible. Avoid dramatic angles or diagonals unless absolutely unavoidable to bring a key item into frame.
Events

Informal events
A fly-on-the-wall approach should be taken with all event photography. Natural available light should be used wherever possible.

Aim to capture engagement, energy and colour, and capture faces where possible to convey emotion and excitement. Always be polite, appreciative and unobtrusive to avoid imposing on the event.

These general types of events are very different from more formal events and are a great chance to have a little fun and be creative. If you see somewhere not easily accessible that might make a great angle, ask your contact if they can give you access to take a few shots.

Try to include wider shots with more depth to show what is going on, as well as with shallower, closer shots to highlight specific activities, interactions and expressions in order to tell a complete story.
Events

Formal events
VIP visits
A fly-on-the-wall approach should be taken with all event photography. Natural available light should be used wherever possible. For VIP visits it’s also important to include context and have enough depth of field to see what the visitor is interacting with, as well as enough width to see where they are. Most importantly you should respect the situation and not get in the way.

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

Receptions
Identify any key figures by speaking with your contact and ensure that you prioritise them in your photography. Engaging shots are created when a shallow depth of field is used. Wherever possible, try to avoid people with food in their mouths, drinking, or holding a wine glass. Natural light is always preferable.

Lectures
Be sure to show the event as well as the speaker. Avoid angles and use available light where possible.
Events

Graduation
A fly-on-the-wall approach should be taken with all event photography. Natural available light should be used wherever possible.

Dress formally and work unobtrusively. Be polite and appreciative, and avoid imposing on the event.

Aim to capture engagement, energy and colour. Capture faces where possible to convey emotion and excitement.

Try to tell stories, reflect the family and the occasion, have a little fun and be creative. If you see somewhere not easily accessible that might make a great angle, ask your contact if they can give you access to take a few shots.
Architecture

**Exterior architecture**

Exterior architectural photography should celebrate the iconic buildings of Imperial.

For historic buildings, natural shots should be taken: eye level, straight on and avoiding odd angles where possible.

Details and crops of buildings are also useful, these shots can have angles.

For modern buildings, care should be taken to find interesting angles and areas of architecture. The crop is important and should be considered with care.

Consider breathing space in some images for editorial content.

Students and staff can appear in these images. It’s preferable to use a slightly longer exposure to capture movement wherever possible.
Architecture

**Interior architecture**
Interior architectural photography should capture the essence and grandeur of Imperial. Interior shots should be natural, i.e., taken at eye level and straight on, and avoiding odd angles.

Capturing detail shots is also important.

**Long exposure: exterior and interior**
Long exposure creates a sense of movement and life on campus. To create the best composition, there should be a mix of in people in and out of focus.

These images are more focused on the architecture and environment of Imperial.
Portraiture

All shots must be natural. This can be achieved by taking the portraits at eye level and straight on. Extreme low or high angles should never be used.

People engaging with the camera should be as natural as possible. They should be in their natural environment and their pose shouldn’t be distracting.

Avoid taking portraits with the subject mid-task, as it always appears forced.

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.
Framing & Usage

Consider breathing space in some images for editorial content, both landscape and portrait.

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.

About photography at Imperial
Imperial uses professional photography on its website, social media channels, print publications and in other marketing and communications material, such as press releases, posters and mailings to our alumni community.

Our photography is stored in the College’s Asset Library, a resource managed by Communications & Public Affairs. The Asset Library can be accessed by staff and students who can download images for use in promoting the College and its work.

If you would like to find out more about how we use photography, or if you have a concern about how your image will be used, please contact photography@imperial.ac.uk.