



THE PHOTOGRAPHY FOUNDATION TRAINING PROGRAMME

GENERAL FAQS

The Programme

How is the programme structured?

The programme lasts six months. You are required to attend TPF studio in North Greenwich once a week from 9 am-5 pm on a Wednesday (TBC), and work on your assignments and commercial project in your own time. You have access to our studio and resources 5 days a week (Mon – Fri) when a member of staff is present.

There is a week-long break midway through the programme.

How often does the programme take place and when does the next programme start?

We recruit twice a year, and our next programme starts in January 2024. Occasionally, we have to amend the dates depending on recruitment and staff availability.

What is included in the programme?

- Access to a co-working space & mac computer in Greenwich.
- Camera kit & editing software for the length of the programme.
- Access to bookable studio & kit in Greenwich.
- Subscription to an online educational platform for self-led learning.
- Professional & skills-based workshops covering studio photography, editing, assisting, commercial photography pathways, business skills, website design, and more.
- Goal-oriented, personalised support to help you develop at your own pace and in the areas that are most important to you.
- Portfolio development to give you the best chance of securing commercially focused work in the future.

- Network development throughout your time on the programme. You will have the opportunity to meet a wide range of professionals from the industry and to build a community of like-minded creatives.
- Mentorship with an industry professional who will meet with you on a monthly basis throughout the duration of the programme.
- Employability support & coaching through a range of professional talks that demystify the industry, one-to-one public speaking and other professional skills coaching, help with CVs & cover letters and more.
- Work experience through the development of a self-led commercial project and volunteering opportunities at our events.
- Long-term alumni development support, including free access to workshops and talks after finishing the programme.

Is the programme an art course?

The programme is focused on commercial photography and professional development. If being an artist is your ambition, this may not be the right course for you.

Commercial photography is highly creative, so many of the skills you will use have a relationship to art.

You will need to balance your own vision with how the brand, business, or charity wants you to represent their product or service.

You can read more about what commercial photography is [here](#).

What's special about the programme?

This programme is unique because it takes place in a professional setting and centres your goals and ambitions as central to the learning process.

Trainees have desks and computers set up alongside TPF staff – the studio is a coworking space where you will be exposed to the everyday operational running of an arts & education organisation. You will also have access to a fully kitted out photography studio during your time on the programme.

We place emphasis on the development of hard and soft skill training, which are transferable across the creative industries. We centralise practical experience, coaching, industry mentoring, work experience and networking as key to developing how employable you are, or in preparing you for the freelance world.

Personal and professional development are key to how we structure the programme. We create an intergenerational space where we can all learn from each other, and where the trainees share and develop knowledge collaboratively.

By involving you in all our events and by working on a self-led commercial project, you will put all the skills you are developing on the programme into practice in a real-life context. By the end of the programme, you will have a portfolio of commercial photography work to show, and a stronger CV.

What is a self-led commercial project?

The self-led commercial project is an opportunity for you to put everything you've learned into practice during the second half of the programme.

You will work on a project with a brand, business or charity which aligns with your career goals and develop a host of skills from pitch to delivery.

You will develop your own brief in line with the values and image of your commercial partner, create project plans and treatments, put your team together and deliver the final images to your client.

Is the Programme accredited?

No, the programme is not accredited. When you complete the programme, you will receive a certificate issued by TPF.

Who will teach the trainees?

TPF staff will facilitate core personal & professional development sessions, as well as coaching and mentoring in relation to the commercial brief.

Commercial photography skills workshops will be facilitated by industry experts with successful careers in the industry.

This is supplemented by an extensive series of events, including talks led by photographers and industry experts including commissioners, editors, and other people who work in the wider commercial photography industry.

Do trainees get a mentor?

Each trainee is matched up with a professional mentor who works in the photography or wider creative industries.

Your mentor will work with you on a monthly basis while you are on the programme, supporting you to realise your goals in preparation for entering the professional world when the programme finishes.

Does TPF support trainees after they leave the programme?

TPF works hard to support our alumni on an ongoing basis after the programme.

Amongst other things, we share handpicked opportunities through our alumni newsletter, have an alumni steering committee to ensure we are reflecting the values of our community through our activities, provide 121 support and coaching, and ensure alumni are involved in our events, as well as supporting alumni-led events.

Will the programme be delivered in person or virtually?

The programme is delivered in person at our studio in North Greenwich, close to the O2.

What will a typical week look like?

Trainees spend a day a week (Wednesday, 9 am-5 pm) at our studio in North Greenwich where they participate in workshops led by TPF staff and external facilitators who work in the industry.

As the programme progresses, self-led days are allocated for trainees to work on their commercial brief project, receive 1-2-1 feedback from TPF staff, and practice their technical skills in the studio or using the editing software provided.

When they are working on self-led projects, they make use of their Mac desktops & software, or collaborate on test shoots in our dedicated studio.

There's always time in the morning to catch up over some coffee and snacks before workshops begin, and the trainees often head out to one of the restaurants or cafes in the North Greenwich District to have lunch together or stick around in the studio to enjoy some of the books and magazines we have in the studio.

Trainees are welcome to work on their projects and assignments in the studio on non-programme days (Mon-Fri) when a member of staff is present.

What are TPF events and if I volunteer at an event while on the programme, do I get paid?

TPF events are a public programme of events that includes talks by photographers and other experts from the industry. Events take place at our studio and other locations in North Greenwich and beyond. You can read more about our events [here](#).

All trainees receive a £15 expenses budget when they volunteer at one of our events.

Is there an assessment?

There is no formal assessment as part of the programme, but trainees are required to complete mini briefs that relate to skills-based workshops and submit these for feedback. Trainees are expected to give oral presentations, complete practical assignments, and work on group projects.

Trainees are supported to set their own goals and meet intermittently with TPF staff to ensure they are on track and updating and adapting these as they progress.

Throughout the commercial brief project, trainees must meet various deadlines. They are accountable to their commercial partners & TPF and must deliver the final set of images and any other outcomes related to the brief.

Can I apply for financial support through TPF whilst I am on the programme?

TPF does not provide grants or loans for trainees. If you are selected for a full-bursary (free) place, we cover expenses on programme days when you are required to attend the studio. Expenses are paid at a flat rate of £15.

If you have childcare or other costs and this rate will not cover your expenses, please get in touch with us.

I have a disability, can you make adjustments to support my learning while I am on the programme?

At TPF, we do our best to make the programme accessible to everyone. If you would like to discuss your personal circumstance, please contact etienne@thephotographyfoundation.org.

The Application Process

What are the basic application criteria?

All applicants (free + paid places) must meet the following criteria to be considered for the programme:

- Aged 18-25 when the programme starts
- Live in London for the duration of the programme
- Identify with being from a less advantaged socio-economic background
- Able to commit to one full day (9am – 5pm) in our studio in North Greenwich
- Able to spend time working on projects outside of scheduled programme time

If you are not sure if you meet all of these criteria, please get in touch with us to check your eligibility before applying.

What do you mean by less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds?

We mean people who grew up in less advantaged social or economic circumstances and who consider themselves to have faced challenges because of this. The questions we ask in the application form are designed to evaluate applications holistically, and on a case-by-case basis.

How do you evaluate applicants' socio-economic background?

The questions in the application form are informed by the Social Mobility Commission's Toolkit for measuring socio-economic diversity in the creative industries, as well as the Minimum Income Standard's Calculator, which evaluates the level of disposable income households need in order to achieve an adequate standard of living.

There is an option to add more details about your circumstances if you feel the questions do not reflect your circumstances.

Why do some people have to pay?

We understand that barriers to entering the creative industries are not only determined by someone's income but are much more complex and far-reaching.

We want to make the programme accessible for people who can afford to contribute to the total cost of the programme but who have come from a less favourable socio-economic background or who have faced other personal barriers to building a career in this sector.

We heavily discount the cost of the programme for paid places, but as a charitable non-profit organisation the contribution of £950 helps support our operational costs and supports us to continue the charitable work we do.

The combination of questions regarding background and income in the application form allows us to prioritise applicants who have faced barriers to entering the creative industries for all places on the programme, and those who cannot afford the discounted rate for full bursary (free) places.

What technical skills do I need to apply?

Our trainees all begin the programme with different strengths and areas for development. Some people start the programme feeling confident about using manual settings on a digital camera, while others have never tried to use manual settings!

All that we ask is that you show a commitment to developing a career in this area by sharing a portfolio of photographs or other similar creative work. This doesn't need to be made using expensive software or equipment.

What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a document or website that shows the creative work you are most proud of. You could create a presentation and submit it as a PDF via a WeTransfer link, a Google doc, a website, or an online portfolio.

To apply to the programme, we ask that you submit a portfolio showing a minimum of 8 photos. If you are a filmmaker that is interested in developing your photography skills, you could submit a short film you have produced. If you love making collages, submit a document showing us some of your artwork.

We are flexible about what you choose to submit, but we need to see you have an interest in working in the creative industries through some personal or professional work you have made.

Photography is central to the programme, so even if your portfolio showcases other media, please make sure you include some lens-based work in your application and explain why you are interested in developing your photography in your application.

You can read more about what a portfolio is [here](#).*

* At this stage, you only need to include 8 images or other similar creative work as indicated on the application form.

Can I submit a link to my social media page as a portfolio?

You can submit a link to your social media page via the application form, but this should be in addition to a small portfolio of selected images.

Do you select the people with the best portfolios for the programme?

We're interested in working with people who are enthusiastic, have a desire to develop, and that have thought about how the programme will support them to reach their goals and boost their career.

Because of this, the answers you give in the application are more important than having the most 'professional' looking photos, although you do need to demonstrate that you have some photography experience so that you are able to keep pace with the programme content.

I have applied, what happens next?

If your application is successful, you will be invited to our studio for an initial group interview, where we will set you a practical task. At this stage, we are evaluating a variety of skills, including teamwork, listening skills and working to a brief.

If we feel you would benefit from the programme, we will invite you to a second 121 interview. For this, you will be asked to prepare a short presentation to help us understand your ideas and interests.

If we are confident that you are a good fit for the programme after the second interview, we will offer you a place on the programme.

What does a successful candidate look like?

The programme is designed to support you to develop your technical and professional skills, so we don't expect you to know it all when you start the programme.

Because the programme is intensive, we do expect successful candidates to have basic technical skills, but strengths and areas for development vary from trainee to trainee.

The main thing that we look for is that you are enthusiastic and keen to learn and develop. We don't always select candidates who are far along in their photography journey to join the programme. It is a fine balance between us feeling you are ready for the programme content, and that you will benefit most from the opportunities on offer to you.