FAQ’s about Scientific Photography at RMIT University

OPEN DAY AND INFORMATION DAY

Should I attend Open Day in August?
Open Day is a time when prospective students can see work done by students in the program and talk to students, lecturers and industry representatives. Many questions can be answered about educational, vocational and financial concerns. Attendance at Open Day is highly recommended.

How important is it to attend the Information Day session in November/December?
Attendance at Information Day is very important. The purpose of Information Day is to inform the prospective student of the details of the program and clearly explain the differences between Scientific Photography at RMIT and other programs in photography offered by other institutions. Since selection into the program weighs heavily on an understanding of the educational and vocational differences between these programs as well as matching your future goals with the goals of the Scientific Photography program, information presented at Information Day will be very important in your interview.

What if I can’t attend the Information Day?
Interstate and international applicants are not required to attend Information Day. However, not attending the Information Day session may be a disadvantage. The interview discussion revolves around the prospective students goals based on the their knowledge and expectations of the scientific photography program. This usually comes from information given in the presentation. It is important that the prospective student demonstrate to the interview panel that their goals and those of the program are compatible.

What if I’m overseas and can’t come to Information Day or the interview?
International students applying for a full fee place are not required to come for the interview. However, they must respond in detail to the questions outlined in the Interview Guide found under How to Apply in the Scientific Photography web site www.rmit.edu.au/sciphot. The responses to these questions are the basis for selection.

Residents of Australia living or travelling overseas are allowed to follow this procedure, however, they only are considered after selection has been made from those who attended the Information Day session and had a subsequent interview.

APPLYING FOR THE PROGRAM

What’s the interview about?
By downloading the Interview Guide under How to Apply at www.rmit.edu.au/sciphot, you will see the points of discussion that are asked in the 15 minute interview. The interview is simply attempting to match the program in Scientific Photography with the expectations and desires of the applicant.
Do I need a folio for the interview?
Previous experience in photography or a portfolio of images is not required for entry into the program. If you wish to show a portfolio, please edit to no more than 10 pieces. The work does not have to demonstrate scientific photography.

FINANCES

Will I be able to work while I’m attending university?
Most students have casual employment while at university. Remember, as a full-time student you will be expected to put in about 48 hours per week on your studies. Classes usually run to a weekly schedule, but other opportunities may come up throughout the semester on evenings and weekends that the student may want to attend. The student should carefully balance their academic and work commitments.

What are the costs of the program in Scientific Photography?
There are the standard HECS fees paid by all Australian students attending any university program. There is also a materials fee that covers the operation of the Photography Loan Store. The yearly fee is estimated at $66.00 for first year students and $132.00 for upper level students.

Photography is expensive whether you are studying at university or pursuing it as a hobby or profession. Although the RMIT Scientific Photography program supplies most of the specialised equipment, the student must personally own a quantity and variety of equipment and materials. It is estimated that additional costs incurred by each student per year is about $6500.00. You will find this expense much the same in any professional photography program.

What equipment will I need to own?
A good quality 35-mm single lens reflex with the ability to manually set the aperture and shutter speeds is mandatory. A single lens reflex digital camera with manual settings will be required in the future, but is not mandatory at this time. While a ‘normal’ lens, i.e., 50-mm, will suffice in first year, you will find that a range of lenses to suit the type of photography you like to do will be an advantage. Many students find that a ‘macro’ lens is desirable. The program does not recommend a zoom lens for much of the work.

While the program does not promote a specific brand, there are some Nikon and Canon accessories that are available through the RMIT loan store. These will only fit Nikon and Canon cameras.

Another required item is a hand-held light meter that can read ambient and electronic flash, reflected and incident light. The cost is about $500.00 for a good model.

Students will find that a good computer will be extremely helpful to supplement the computer labs available at RMIT. The program supports and recommends Macintosh.
Since photography is memory-intensive, plenty of RAM will be required. The most current version of Photoshop is used extensively.

Many other items are required and will be discussed in detail during the first few weeks of first year. All these items make up a part of the suggested $6500.00 per year students will need to be prepared for assignment work in the program.

**PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM**

I have already completed university courses. Can I get credit for previous study? By presenting a copy of your university transcript, you may be offered exemptions for core or elective courses in the program.

I have completed a TAFE program in photography. Can I get exemptions or advanced entry into the program? We offer advanced entry into second year through an articulation agreement. Your school many have an agreement with RMIT Scientific Photography or you may wish to apply individually. See the Program Map for Articulation to see if may be applicable to your circumstances.

Is the program in Scientific Photography offered part-time? Under special circumstances it may be taken part time (primarily in second and third year). It is recommended as a three-year, full-time program.

How many students are taken into the program each year? We take approximately 20 students per year. Our entire program has about 60 students. This means each student has ample opportunity to access lecturing staff.

What science courses will I be taking during the program? Physics and mathematics are core courses in the first year of Scientific Photography. Chemistry and biology may be taken as electives. In addition, the student must choose additional electives from any courses at RMIT including additional science and photography courses. Other science courses are available and should be discussed with the Program Leader.

Does Scientific Photography teach traditional film techniques as well as digital technology? The program in Scientific Photography sees all technology and materials as ‘tools for the job’. Each imaging solution will suggest or require a particular set to tools. All appropriate imaging tools and techniques are taught in the program. Digital and analogue materials and technologies are integrated in both theory and practical work.

**CAREERS**
Where can I work after my graduation?

The program in Scientific Photography embraces a wide professional area of imaging and communication. Because of the moderate student numbers, the program supports individual needs within the scope of the curriculum. We currently have graduates working in areas of medical/forensic/police photography, digital production houses for Hollywood motion picture productions, commercial illustration and advertising and defence departments.

We have graduates employed in education as teachers and trainers, archiving, maintaining and developing slide libraries, as well as working with art and historical documents in museums and libraries. Others are working in wildlife and natural history and publishing books, magazines and journals.