

ACTE: Individual Digital Photography Rubric

- DIRECTIONS**
- 1. This is an **individual project only**. Ask the student for the **printed portfolio**. Digital or electronic portfolios are not accepted. Allow no more than 5 minutes for setup and score the printed portfolio during setup.
 - 2. Confirm that the photographs, camera work, composition, editing, and production assets are created by the individual student. **AI-generated or AI-created photographic content and production assets are prohibited**. If suspected or disclosed, pause scoring and refer the entry to ACTE staff.
 - 3. Allow the student no more than 10 minutes for the individual project presentation. The student may choose which portion of a larger body of work to show.
 - 4. Judges may ask questions for no more than 5 minutes and are not limited to the topics listed in the rubric.
 - 5. Enter a score for every criterion. Add the /30 portfolio score and /70 project/presentation score for the /100 final score, then initial page 2.

PRINTED PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST			Points
Online Orientation Certificate	0 Certificate is missing.	10 Certificate is printed and placed as page 1 of the portfolio.	
Printed Portfolio	0 No printed portfolio is submitted, or only a digital/electronic portfolio is provided.	10 A complete printed portfolio is submitted at judging. Digital portfolios are not accepted.	
Required Portfolio Sections	0 Required printed portfolio sections are not provided.	10 - Printed portfolio includes these 9 sections: 1. Online Orientation Certificate (first page) 2. Project identification page: student name, school, category, level, and region 3. Table of contents 4. Project narrative: purpose, learning, and benefit 5. Software and hardware used 6. Photographer's statement, purpose, intended audience, subject/location plan, shot list, composition or lighting sketches, reference images, camera-setting plan, or other planning evidence 7. Contact sheets or selected original captures, image metadata/settings, editing screenshots, before-and-after comparisons, revisions, exported proofs, and final photograph evidence 8. Works cited/bibliography, model/property releases when applicable, and credits for permitted textures, fonts, or other sources 9. Signed statement that the photographs, edits, and included production assets are the individual student's original work and contain no AI-generated content or assets	
Judges Printed Portfolio Checklist Score			/30

This section is valued at 30 points total.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT & ORAL PRESENTATION RUBRIC

Select the score range that best matches the demonstrated level. Enter one numeric score from 0-10 for each criterion.

PROJECT					Points
Concept, Purpose & Visual Storytelling					
0 No identifiable concept, purpose, subject, message, or audience.	1-3 Purpose is unclear; the photograph communicates little meaning, story, or audience awareness.	4-6 A basic concept and purpose are evident, but storytelling, mood, symbolism, or audience focus is uneven.	7-9 Clear, engaging concept uses purposeful photographic choices to communicate effectively to the intended audience.	10 Compelling, original concept demonstrates exceptional storytelling, meaning, emotional impact, and audience awareness.	
PROJECT					Points
Composition, Perspective & Visual Design					
0 No intentional composition or perspective can be evaluated.	1-3 Framing, viewpoint, balance, emphasis, background, proportion, or visual flow frequently weaken the image.	4-6 Composition communicates the subject, but framing, perspective, hierarchy, balance, or background control is uneven.	7-9 Strong framing, perspective, balance, emphasis, and visual flow guide the viewer and strengthen the photograph.	10 Masterful composition demonstrates exceptional viewpoint, timing, balance, depth, hierarchy, unity, and visual impact.	
PROJECT					Points
Exposure, Focus, Lighting & Camera Technique					
0 Camera technique cannot be evaluated or no original photograph is provided.	1-3 Exposure, focus, depth of field, motion, white balance, lighting, or camera control interferes with the image.	4-6 Technical choices support the photograph, but exposure, focus, lighting, color balance, or camera control is inconsistent.	7-9 Skillful control of exposure, focus, depth of field, motion, lighting, and color balance supports the artistic intent.	10 Exceptional camera technique and lighting control create precise, expressive, technically outstanding photographic results.	
PROJECT					Points
Editing, Image Quality & Final Presentation					
0 Editing, image quality, or final output cannot be evaluated.	1-3 Edits, artifacts, noise, resolution, cropping, color, retouching, or file preparation distract from the photograph.	4-6 Editing supports the image, but consistency, restraint, resolution, color, retouching, or presentation is uneven.	7-9 Purposeful editing, accurate color, clean retouching, appropriate resolution, and polished presentation strengthen the image.	10 Publication-ready photograph demonstrates exceptional editing restraint, image integrity, resolution, color, detail, and finish.	
PROJECT					Points
Originality, Creative Voice & Individual Authorship					
0 Originality or individual student authorship cannot be established.	1-3 Work shows limited original decision-making; capture, edits, references, or process evidence are unclear.	4-6 The student's contribution and purpose are evident, though creative choices or process documentation are basic.	7-9 Original, purposeful photography shows a clear individual voice, appropriate source credits, and strong capture/editing evidence.	10 Distinctive photographic vision and convincing evidence establish exceptional creativity and independent individual authorship.	
PRESENTATION					Points
Explanation of Photographic Process & Professional Delivery					
0 Does not explain the photograph or production process.	1-3 Explanation is difficult to follow; limited preparation or understanding of photographic and editing choices.	4-6 Explains major steps and tools, but detail, organization, reflection, or delivery is inconsistent.	7-9 Clearly explains concept, planning, camera settings, lighting, composition, editing, revisions, and artistic choices professionally.	10 Confident, concise presentation demonstrates command of the complete individual photography workflow and creative decisions.	
QUESTIONS					Points
Knowledge, Reflection & Responses					
0 Does not answer judges' questions.	1-3 Answers are incomplete or show little understanding of camera controls, lighting, composition, editing, or sources.	4-6 Answers most questions and describes basic photographic challenges, techniques, or revisions.	7-9 Provides specific, accurate responses about concept, camera settings, lighting, composition, software, sources, feedback, and revisions.	10 Insightful responses demonstrate deep photographic and technical knowledge, thoughtful reflection, and clear individual ownership.	

AI-GENERATED PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTENT PROHIBITED: Entries may not contain generative-AI-created photographs, subjects, backgrounds, composites, fill, enhancements, or other production assets. This is an individual event only. Judges should not independently penalize suspected use; pause scoring and refer the entry to ACTE staff for review.

Judges Printed Portfolio Checklist Score	/30
Digital Photography Project & Oral Presentation Score	/70
Total Project Score	/100
Ranking (ACTE Staff Only)	

Judges Initials: _____