

2025 Photography Applicant Guide

How to apply:

To apply to the photography program, applicants must submit a portfolio of representative work including **one portrait and up to six (6) other images**. The portrait work must include the face of the person being photographed, and the subject must know they are being photographed.

Evaluators will be looking for applicants who have a good understanding of photographic technique (e.g., composition, use of light, contrast) and whose images tell their artistic point of view. Images may be conventional and/or digital photographs, but all photos will be submitted digitally in JPEG format. Images may be taken on any type of camera, including smartphones or tablets.

Portfolio Guidelines:

- The photos must have been taken AFTER March 1 of the prior year, and former OSAI students may not submit work produced at OSAI.
- While “portrait” may be defined in different ways, for the purposes of this audition, your portrait photograph must include the face of the person being photographed, and the subject you are photographing must know they are being photographed. The purpose of portrait photography is to give insight into the person’s character or story
- If you are submitting darkroom work, we recommend that you scan the images at the highest optical resolution provided by your scanner, THEN scale the resulting file to 1200 pixels on the longest side.
- Once you are ready to submit your portfolio, save your files in JPEG format, and scale your work to 1200 pixels in the longest dimension. (This is the equivalent of 300 dpi when the longest dimension is 4 inches.)
- Ensure your name or other identifying information does NOT appear anywhere in your portfolio images or their metadata.

Portfolio Tips:

DO include images that show a range of interests and photographic abilities.

DO display your understanding of photographic technique. Pay attention to composition, use of light, and contrast.

DO think about the images you’ve selected for submission and what they say about your point of view as an artist.



DON'T rely on special effects and other image editing tricks.

DON'T submit clichés. While your family pet or younger sibling may be cute, most photographs of such subject matter are considered snapshots rather than art.

Evaluation Criteria:

Composition – 30%

Does the applicant understand how to place objects within the frame and work with geometry and light to achieve a compelling image, including consideration of color, line, shape, scale, texture and value?

Creativity and originality – 30%

What is the applicant doing beyond technique? Is there a unique vision, personal style, or original idea expressed through the work? Is there something unusual or especially insightful in the approach to the subject matter?

Technique – 20%

Do the composition, lighting, camera settings, use of editing contribute or detract from the overall image?

Potential – 20%

To what extent does the applicant display insight or ideas that could be strengthened with training?

[Read general information about our evaluation procedures here.](#)