



UNIVERSITY OF  
**OXFORD**

# Best Practice

A guide to using, licensing and commissioning images

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Oxford University Images/Rob Judges



Photography is an important aspect of the University's identity and reputation. Using photographs in promotional materials and other works requires the highest standards to ensure that the University's reputation is protected.

Today, with the rise of digital and social media, the power of images is stronger than ever. Colour visuals are said to increase people's willingness to read by up to 80%.

However, choosing which image to use, deciding how to source the best image and ensuring that the image you choose has the necessary data protection and copyright agreements in place can sometimes be both daunting and time consuming.

The following best practice guide is intended to assist you to choose the best images for your particular needs and to ensure you have the necessary permissions.

## Selecting images

### Oxford University Images

The University's online image library, [Oxford University Images](#), contains more than 12,000 images as well as a small selection of video footage. From students to science, scenic to sport and much more, the images cover a range of different subjects relating to the collegiate University and the city.

A small charge is made for use of these images as royalties need to be paid to the photographers each time an image is used. The library also includes a

selection of royalty-free images that are available for University users at no cost.

To access these you will need to log on to the website: [www.oxforduniversityimages.com](http://www.oxforduniversityimages.com)

Oxford University Images includes photographs from the University's museums and collections. In addition, many of the museums and collections have their own image service. You should refer to the individual museums to access these.



Oxford University Images / Silvia Munuera Moreno



Oxford University Images / Rob Judges



## External image libraries

There are hundreds of commercial image libraries covering almost every subject you can think of. Most, if not all, can be browsed online.

All will charge a licence fee for the use of their images, but if you have the budget for a special publication they can be a great source of good-quality images that you won't necessarily find on free image sites.

Images from picture libraries are usually purchased by subscription. Normally you join the library and purchase credits in advance.

BAPLA (the British Association of Picture Libraries and Agencies) is the trade association for UK picture libraries and is a good starting place, with members ranging from large image libraries to small specialist collections.

For more information visit [www.bapla.org.uk](http://www.bapla.org.uk)

## RIGHTS MANAGED

**Some picture libraries specialise in Rights Managed** (see [page 8](#)) **images:**

The **advantage** of using these libraries is the in-depth specialist collections they offer.

The **disadvantage** is that they can be expensive, and their licensing method is more restrictive.

Some useful sites, specialising in Rights Managed images include:

[www.bridgemanimages.com](http://www.bridgemanimages.com) includes more than a million images relating to art collections and artists

[www.gettyimages.co.uk](http://www.gettyimages.co.uk) a good general image library with a huge number of images to choose from

[www.maryevans.com](http://www.maryevans.com) a large collection of historical images

[www.sciencephoto.com](http://www.sciencephoto.com) a specialist science library ranging from astronomy and nature to medicine and technology

## ROYALTY-FREE

**Others picture libraries specialise in royalty-free** (see [page 8](#)) **images:**

The **advantage** of using these libraries is that the cost of licensing an image is relatively cheap, plus you can use the images as often as you like at no extra cost.

The **disadvantage** is that they tend to offer more generic images rather than specialist ones.

Sites specialising in royalty-free stock photos include:

[www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com)  
[www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com)

## Creative Commons

There are a number of sites that offer photographs, icons and graphics that are licensed under Creative Commons (see [page 8](#)).

Useful sites include:  
[www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)  
[commons.wikimedia.org](http://commons.wikimedia.org)  
[www.publicdomainpictures.net](http://www.publicdomainpictures.net)

## Commissioning photography

Commissioning your own photography is probably the best way of ensuring that you get the photography that you want, with the knowledge that you will not see the images in other publicity material. A clear brief for the photographer is essential for the success of the shoot. A photography brief form can be found on the last page of this guide.

When deciding if you want to commission photography rather than source stock images there are a number of points to consider.

- Do you want a large number of images and is it therefore more economical to hire a photographer than pay numerous individual reproduction fees?
- Do you want consistency of style in the images you use – for example, for a book?
- Is there a specific event taking place – special lecture, honorary degree ceremony?
- Do you have special access to a person, an interview or object/s, eg in a museum?
- Do you want or need to have the copyright assigned to your department or college? This is especially useful if you wish to reuse the image or allow other people to use the image (see [page 7](#)).



**POINTS TO NOTE WHEN SELECTING OR COMMISSIONING IMAGES**

- Keep clothing simple – use strong block colours rather than busy patterns.
- Think about different angles to create interest and variety: from below or above, framing in a doorway or bough of tree, etc.
- Be aware that the image may be used as a cut-out and a simple background is most helpful in this scenario.
- Think about space for text.
- Ask your photographer to take both landscape (wider than it is tall) and portrait (taller than it is wide) shots so they can be used in a variety of formats.

**SELECTING OR COMMISSIONING PHOTOGRAPHS OF PEOPLE**

When selecting, look for:

- strong and dynamic images
- person or people looking engaged or enthusiastic
- contextualisation with the person’s work or interest
- diversity of gender, age, ethnicity
- strong, meaningful graphics on the screens when there are computer screens or whiteboards.

If you are thinking about commissioning photographs, especially relating to students or research, the Public Affairs Directorate might be interested in a collaborative shoot. This would save you both time and resources.

For further information contact the Design and Publications Office at [publications@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:publications@admin.ox.ac.uk).

**Image resolution and file size**

The size of images you need will depend on how you want to use them.

**There are two measurements that tell you about an image’s size and resolution.**

One is the pixel dimension (px), the other is defined as ‘dots per inch’ (dpi).

For print the image needs to be 300 dpi at the size you wish to reproduce it.

For web use image resolution should be 72 dpi.

If the image you want to use is small, that is fine if you use it at its current size, or even make it smaller. But if you want to display it at a larger size, don’t use it.

If you take an image that is too small and enlarge it, the image quality will be affected (more pixelation) and it will start to look fuzzy.

The more you enlarge the image the fuzzier (pixelated) it will get. In an ideal world, start off with as big an image as possible. This applies for use online as well as for print.

If you have a high-quality image you can always reduce the file size and dimensions – but you can never enlarge an image without losing quality.

A large 300dpi image will reproduce very well in print, but can also be cropped and resized for smaller, digital use.



If you use a small 72dpi image and enlarge it, it will pixelate and not reproduce well.

Many images sourced from the internet will be small images such as this.



Oxford University Images/Guminder Punn



## Dated photographs

Beware of dated photographs that can look awkward or out of place. Look out for the following:

- Check the date when the image was taken if you can. Skylines and cityscapes may have changed over the years, with new buildings or constructions underway. University buildings may have been altered, and technology developed, so be sure that the image is appropriate.
- Fashions change, making an image outdated.
- Seasons may also be relevant to the use of the image. Check that the photograph looks spring-like if that is the season you need to show.

When commissioning work, think about other ways the images could be used that may depend on how people are dressed. For example, sleeveless tops and shorts will rarely be worn except in high summer, but if sleeves and jeans are worn the images could have wider use.

## Special effects

It is best to avoid using fish-eye lenses, tinted gels etc. They generally detract from the focus of the image, unless you need it for a particular artistic purpose.



Dated photographs: St Paul's Church, Walton Street in 1900.... ▶

...and today, Freud Café Oxford with the new Blavatnik School of Government at its side. ▶





When you are sourcing images it is **your responsibility** to ensure that you have the appropriate permissions and copyright to use an image prior to publication (in whatever format). Outlined below are key points to assist you in this.

## Copyright

### What is copyright?

Copyright is a form of intellectual property protecting creative works, including images. In the UK copyright arises automatically; it is not necessary to register.

### WHO OWNS COPYRIGHT?

As the author of a photograph the photographer owns the copyright – this applies equally to commissioned and non-commissioned photographs. However, if the photographer is an employee of the company the photos are taken for, or is an employee of a company instructed to take the photos, the photographer will be acting on behalf of his/her employer, and the company the photographer works for will own the copyright.

The photographer has the right to license the work for specific usage to a third party, either directly or via an agent/distributor – eg through an image library – who has

been given the appropriate permission to distribute material on behalf of the rights-holder. A copyright owner can also transfer copyright completely to another person or organisation.

### ASSIGNING COPYRIGHT

It is a common misconception that your department/college owns the copyright when you commission photographs. However, if you know at the time of commissioning a photographer that you will want to make the resulting images available to other departments etc, or use them for multiple purposes, make sure you specify this in your commissioning agreement with the photographer. The photographer can then agree to assign copyright to your department/college or broaden the terms for which you can use them. This will often incur an additional charge, but is certainly useful for images that you wish to make available to other people or use in different contexts.

### Licence/reproduction fees

**It is essential to clear rights before an image is used.**

To use a copyrighted image requires permission from the owner in the form of a written licence. If, however, you are using a photograph taken by a colleague a short email will suffice.

The amount payable to the photographer – or image library assigned to sell the rights or licence to use a particular image – depends on how you wish to use the image.

Licensing an image online is quick and usually simple, but you may get a better price if you discuss fees with the photographer or their agency.

Below are some points to assist with your negotiations. You will often need to supply all or some of the following details:

- Placement: home page/front cover/inside
- Reproduction size: full page/half page/ double-page spread
- Duration: 1 year/5 years/in perpetuity
- Print run: 2,000/10,000/100,000 (in print only)
- Electronic rights: web/email /social media
- Language: English/French
- Territory: world/Europe/EU only
- Editorial: retail/textbook/academic/ magazine/newspaper
- Advertising: brochure/flyer/direct marketing/annual report/advertisement
- Merchandise: calendar/greetings card/ retail product
- It is less expensive to acquire the licence for the same images for several different uses at the same time, eg electronic and



print licences; poster, brochure and online banner, rather than separately.

- You can negotiate further discounts for bulk licensing – more than one image; usually the fee will be based on a sliding scale.

## Researching a copyright holder

Finding the copyright holder of an image is often straightforward and simply entails contacting the creator directly or via their distribution agency.

But sometimes it is not that simple. The creator may not be in the phone directory, not be traceable online, or may have died so their estate now holds the copyright. It may not even be clear who took the image to begin with.

New laws regarding copyright and what are termed 'orphan works' came into force in the UK in October 2014. The law requires that users perform a 'diligent search' to find the copyright holder, and that acknowledgement of the creator should be given. There is no clear definition of what a diligent search is, but all searches should be recorded. Government guidance can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/oyucsmh> (pdf) and <http://tinyurl.com/koyu79v>.

## CARRYING OUT DUE DILIGENCE

When carrying out a search to trace rights holders it is important to keep careful written records of all efforts made. If no copyright owner can be traced and the images are used you must add a statement to show a diligent search has been made. For example:

'Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders and obtain permission to reproduce this material. Please do get in touch with any enquiries or any information relating to this image or the rights holder.'

## Types of licences

### RIGHTS MANAGED (RM)

Refers to a copyright licence which, if purchased by a user, allows the one-time use of the photo as specified by a licence. The licence is usually priced based on how the image will be used: size, length of time, regions, etc.

### ROYALTY-FREE (RF)

Refers to a licensing method under which image rights are sold at a flat rate for almost all purposes. The 'free' in royalty-free does not mean there is no cost for the licence, but instead refers to being able to freely use the image without paying additional royalties.

## CREATIVE COMMONS

All Creative Commons licensors retain the copyright in their own work while allowing others to utilise the work free of charge under certain conditions. This is especially useful when you have a tight budget. However, do read the terms and conditions to make sure that you have the permission to use these images in the way that you wish. You may not always find the exact image you want and it is often the case that an image library becomes a more useful resource.

For more information on Creative Commons licences and to review the different licences visit: [creativecommons.org/licenses](http://creativecommons.org/licenses).

### COPYRIGHT-FREE IMAGES

All images in the 'public domain' are free from copyright and can be used free of charge. A work is considered to be in the public domain when there is no copyright attached to it. In the UK copyright generally expires 70 years after the artist's death, or, in the case of several copyright holders, 70 years after the death of the last creator. 'Public domain' does not mean that the image is available to the public, eg on a website.

**Do not just take images from the web.** Even if you add a credit this is not getting permission. The publication of an image on Google or any other website is not an indication that it is freely available for others to use it. Most images appearing online will have a copyright attached and the rights holder should be researched and permission for use requested.

## Acknowledgement/credit

**Acknowledging the creator is a requirement of any licensing agreement.**

This is usually done using the copyright symbol – © – followed by the creator's name and the year in which the work was published, eg © John Doe 2015.

Image libraries require a credit as part of a licence agreement and it is generally required for Creative Commons licences.

**If you do not include the specified credit you are contravening agreement and could be liable for a fine.**

Sometimes the credit is all that is required by a copyright holder; it is their main opportunity to promote themselves and their work. Even where it is not specifically required, it is best practice to include an acknowledgement.





# Consent

## People

Photographs of people are considered to be personal data and can come under the Data Protection Act (DPA, 1998). ‘Personal data’ covers any data that can be used to identify a living individual. ‘Sensitive personal data’ concerns the subject’s race, ethnicity, politics, religion, trade union status, health, sex life or criminal record. Some of these may be relevant when viewing an image of an individual. So it is important to keep a written record of consents taken when commissioning images.

When using images of people, where any individuals feature prominently and are clearly identifiable, a consent form must be signed by those individuals giving their permission for any images in which they appear. Images of children require the consent of a parent or guardian and special care should be taken to ensure that the consent form is fully understood.

The consent form must state clearly what the use of the image(s) will be. In some instances it may be advisable to give options for the individual to select from.

Possible options might be:

- only within the University
- the University’s marketing and promotional materials to external bodies.

Generally it is best to have as wide a use available as possible.

### WHEN IS A CONSENT FORM NECESSARY?

- When an individual’s face is clearly recognisable.

## Consent form

Download an [interactive pdf](#) of the Model Consent Form by clicking this link. Print it out to for signing by the models.

### WHEN IS A CONSENT FORM NOT NECESSARY?

- When there is a large group of individuals, eg at a conference or an event, it is usually sufficient to notify them either verbally or with a notice clearly visible, and those who do not wish to be in the photograph can opt out.

- Where there is a large group of people with no one standing out in a place where photography is expected, eg spectators at a football match.
- Where there is a large group of people who could not be clearly identified.
- Animals – domestic pets do not need a release, only those animals specifically related to a TV programme or film would require a release.

### OTHER THINGS TO NOTE

Where only parts of the body appear in the image, eg leg or hand, no consent is required unless there are well-known identifying marks such as a tattoo or a famous ring.

Usually no release is necessary for a silhouette unless the shape or posture is particular, eg Charlie Chaplin.

## Property

If you are inside a building or private grounds you must obtain written permission of the owner of the property before taking photographs. Within the University this might be a departmental administrator or college bursar.

**Model Consent Form**

A copy of this form should be retained by the model, the photographer and the commissioning department/college.

The photographer (details below), has been commissioned by (details below) to take photographs of the model. The photographs will be used for the promotion of its activities, but may also be used by the photographer.

I, the model (details below), grant the photographer and the commissioning department/college permission to take the photographs and to use them throughout the world in all and any media, including, without limitation, in printed publications, presentations, promotional material or online, in their original format or edited or altered in any way.

Please tick this box if you do not want the department/college to use any of the resulting images commercially.

Photographer's details	Department/college's details
Name	Name
Company	Dept/Coll
Phone	Phone
Email	Email
Address	Address

I agree that my name may appear in a caption in proximity to the photograph, used in accordance with the above terms, or in the editorial text accompanying it, but I also agree that the photograph may be used without any reference to my name. For the purposes of the UK Data Protection Act 1998, both the photographer and the department/college are data controllers. I consent to the photographer and the department/college (a) storing and using copies of the photographs for the purposes described above, (b) storing my contact details in their databases in case they need to contact me, or (c) transferring the photographs outside the European Economic Area (EEA) for the purposes described above. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time by contacting the photographer and the department/college, in which case they will cease to use the photographs, but I accept that those copies of the photographs which have already been used or provided to third parties cannot be withdrawn from circulation. I release and discharge the photographer and the department/college (and, where applicable, their respective licensees) from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of the photographs, including, without limitation, any and all claims for invasion of privacy, right of publicity and defamation. I have read this model consent form carefully and fully understand its meanings and implications.

If the person photographed is under 18 I am the parent/legal guardian of the person photographed, and I have read this consent form and approve of its terms and sign in place of the person photographed.

Model's details	Description of photo shoot
Name	Date
Dept/Coll	Details
Phone	
Email	
Address	

**Click to download**

▲ Download an interactive pdf of the **Model Release Form** or print out a hard copy at [www.ox.ac.uk/mcf](http://www.ox.ac.uk/mcf)



# Checklist

## SELECTING IMAGES

- What is my intended use?
- What size file do I need?
- What rights do I need?
- Do I need to pay?
- Can I negotiate the fee – number of images, low print run?

## LICENSING IMAGES

- Allow enough time to clear rights before using images.
- Do I know who the copyright holder is?
- Can't find a copyright holder – have I done a diligent search?
- Is this use electronic and/or print?
- What rights do I want?
- Do I already have a subscription or scale of fees?

## COMMISSIONING IMAGES

- Has the photographer received a clear brief?
- What rights of use have you agreed with the photographer?
- What is the intended use of the images – a particular project and/or stock use?
- What format (landscape/portrait) is needed?
- Have the models been booked for the shoot?
- Have the models been informed clearly what to wear and what is expected?
- Have the models understood the consent forms?
- Have the consent forms been signed?
- Can the models be easily identified and linked to the consent forms?
- Has permission to shoot in the chosen location been granted?

**Photography Briefing Form**

A copy of this form should be retained by the photographer and the commissioning department/college.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Photo shoot title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Outline cost: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Model release form:  Yes  Not needed (If unsure, please refer to University Photography Guidelines)  
 Outline brief: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Brief in detail: \_\_\_\_\_

Photographer's details: Name \_\_\_\_\_, Company \_\_\_\_\_, Phone \_\_\_\_\_, Email \_\_\_\_\_, Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department/college: Name \_\_\_\_\_, Dept/Coll \_\_\_\_\_, Phone \_\_\_\_\_, Email \_\_\_\_\_, Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Click to download**

▲ Download an interactive pdf of the **Photographer Briefing Form** or print out a hard copy at [www.ox.ac.uk/pbf](http://www.ox.ac.uk/pbf)



# Resources and contacts

## UNIVERSITY IMAGE LIBRARY

[www.oxforduniversityimages.com](http://www.oxforduniversityimages.com)

Contact: Janet Avison, Design and Publications Administrator

Email: [janet.avison@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:janet.avison@admin.ox.ac.uk)

## DESIGN AND PUBLICATIONS OFFICE

Email: [publications@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:publications@admin.ox.ac.uk)

Tel: 01865 280545

## BRAND GUIDELINES

[www.ox.ac.uk/brandingtoolkit](http://www.ox.ac.uk/brandingtoolkit)

## STYLE GUIDE

[www.ox.ac.uk/styleguide](http://www.ox.ac.uk/styleguide)

### Model Consent Form



A copy of this form should be retained by the model, the photographer and the commissioning department/college

The photographer (details below), has been commissioned by (details below) to take photographs of the model. The photographs will be used for the promotion of its activities, but may also be used by the photographer.

I, the model (details below), grant the photographer and the commissioning department/college permission to take the photographs and to use them throughout the world in all and any media, including, without limitation, in printed publications, presentations, promotional material or online, in their original format or edited or altered in any way.

Please tick this box if you do not want the department/college to use any of the resulting images commercially.

#### Photographer's details

Name	
Company	
Phone	
Email	
Address	

#### Department/college's details

Name	
Dept/Coll	
Phone	
Email	
Address	

I agree that my name may appear in a caption in proximity to the photograph, used in accordance with the above terms, or in the editorial text accompanying it, but I also agree that the photograph may be used without any reference to my name. For the purposes of the UK Data Protection Act 1998, both the photographer and the department/college are data controllers. I consent to the photographer and the department/college (a) storing and using copies of the photographs for the purposes described above, (b) storing my contact details in their databases in case they need to contact me, or (c) transferring the photographs outside the European Economic Area (EEA) for the purposes described above. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time by contacting the photographer and the department/college, in which case they will cease to use the photographs, but I accept that those copies of the photographs which have already been used or provided to third parties cannot be withdrawn from circulation. I release and discharge the photographer and the department/college (and, where applicable, their respective licensees) from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of the photographs, including, without limitation, any and all claims for invasion of privacy, right of publicity and defamation. I have read this model consent form carefully and fully understand its meanings and implications.

If the person photographed is under 18 I am the parent/legal guardian of the person photographed, and I have read this consent form and approve of its terms and sign in place of the person photographed.

#### Model's details

Name	
Dept/Coll	
Phone	
Email	
Address	

#### Description of photo shoot

Date	
Details	

Click to download

- Download an interactive pdf of the Model Release Form or print out a hard copy at [www.ox.ac.uk/mcf](http://www.ox.ac.uk/mcf)

### Photography Briefing Form



A copy of this form should be retained by the photographer and the commissioning department/college.

Photo shoot title	
Location	
Date	
Time	
Outline cost	
Model release form	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not needed (If unsure, please refer to University Photography Guidelines)
Outline brief	
Brief in detail	

#### Photographer's details

Name	
Company	
Phone	
Email	
Address	

#### Department/college's details

Name	
Dept/Coll	
Phone	
Email	
Address	

Click to download

- Download an interactive pdf of the Photographer Briefing Form or print out a hard copy at [www.ox.ac.uk/pbf](http://www.ox.ac.uk/pbf)

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