

# Oldham PS Competition Rules

## General Rules for All Competitions

1. A minimum of two entrants is required for a competition to proceed.
2. If there is any doubt about compliance with the rules, the Council's decision will be final.
3. Original image(s) must be created photographically by the entrant.
4. All editing must be carried out by the entrant.
5. The Council reserves the right to refuse entries deemed inappropriate.
6. In all categories except where specifically excluded, any process may be used to produce the final image. However, the finished work must not include images or elements created by others, except where incidental (e.g., posters in a street scene). See Rule 12 and AI Guidelines.
7. For images selected to represent OPS in external competitions (e.g., FIAP, PAGB, L&CPU), organisers may request original exposures. Entrants must provide these when requested.
8. An image, or a substantially similar version (including re-edits or colour/monochrome variants), **may not be reused** in the same OPS competition.
9. An image, or a substantially similar version (including re-edits or colour/monochrome variants), **may be used** in a different competition in the same season and may be used in a different medium in a later season. The competition season runs from the end of September each year.
10. Titles and authors' names must not be displayed.
11. Entries must be uploaded to the OPS portal by the closing date. While late submissions may be considered in exceptional circumstances, acceptance is at the sole discretion of the Competition Secretary.
12. Generative AI may be used only if it does not introduce significant new pictorial elements. Entrants must declare any use of generative AI by ticking the declaration box on the portal. See AI Guidelines.

## Additional Rules for Projected Image Competitions

1. Each projected image must fit within **1600 pixels wide by 1200 pixels high** (or as stated in the competition rules). Do not fill unused space if your image is a different shape.
2. Files must be **JPEG** format, converted to **sRGB colour space**, with the profile embedded.
3. All entries must be submitted via the Photoentry Portal: <https://compent.photoentry.uk/compent/>

## Additional Rules for Print Competitions

1. Prints must be surface or window mounted on card, not framed. Mount size must be 50cm x 40cm unless otherwise stated. Window mounted prints must be backed with 50x40cm card OR the print must be taped to the back of the window with framer's tape. Maximum mount thickness is 4mm. Alternative mounting materials require prior approval from the Competition Secretary.
2. The author's name and image title must be written on the back of the mount.
3. All prints must be entered via the Photoentry Portal with a matching electronic version uploaded.

## AI Guidelines

Modern cameras, editing software, and plug-ins now offer a wide range of image-processing methods. Many of these tools have been refined or trained by developers using large collections of images. Examples include face-detection focusing, noise reduction, sharpening, image enlargement etc.

We recognise that photographers may not always know the precise way these functions operate, whether applied in-camera or post-processing. However, Oldham PS expects members to refrain from adding any significant element with AI that was not part of the photographer's original work.

The following guidelines aim to address this issue.

**AI tools are permitted for certain adjustments but must not introduce significant new pictorial elements (noticeable new content). Generative AI use must be declared on the portal, at entry. Original files may be requested for verification.**

Note: Images using generative AI may not qualify for some external competitions.

### Permitted:

- AI-assisted processing (e.g., select and mask, tonal adjustments, depth maps).
- Global changes (e.g., noise reduction, upscaling, sharpening) **that do not noticeably alter original content.**
- Generative remove/fill for minor distractions, provided no significant new pictorial elements are introduced.

### Not Permitted:

- Generative AI that adds significant new pictorial elements.

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## Quarterly Competitions

1. Judged in two media: Projected Images and Prints.
2. Maximum number of entries per member will be announced each season.
3. If entries exceed capacity, later submissions will be removed first. Members can adjust the image order in Photoentry.
4. Highest mark per medium per quarterly counts towards annual score. In the event of a tie in any medium the second and subsequent highest marks will also be considered. Trophies are awarded annually.
5. All images are "Open"; strict Nature or Documentary definitions do not apply.
6. To facilitate selection for external competitions, nature images complying with LCPU/PAGB rules must be declared at entry.

# Triptych Competitions

## Overview

A triptych is a creative composition made up of three separate but related images that work together as a single piece. Each image should be strong enough to stand alone, yet when viewed together, they form a cohesive narrative or concept and this will be considered in judging.

The purpose of a triptych is to create unity while exploring variety—often used for storytelling, illustrating the passage of time, or presenting different perspectives of the same subject.

Originating from classical art, triptychs were hinged panels in religious works; this format in photography has evolved into a technique for adding depth, context, and visual interest beyond a single frame.

## Rules

1. A PRINT triptych entry comprises three mounted prints or three images on one mount.
2. A PROJECTED triptych entry consists of three separate images arranged on one projection frame. Entrants may use the full projection size of 1920x1200 px.
3. The images must remain distinctly separate without overlapping.
4. No additional images may be used for backgrounds or decoration.
5. The Award will be given to the best triptych in each medium.
6. Each member may enter a number of triptychs, to be determined each season.

## Annual Competitions

1. There are two media: Prints and Projected Images.
2. There are three Sections: Colour, Monochrome, Nature.
3. Maximum entries are announced annually; Images should be entered in order of priority; the later entries may be culled if numbers are too great.
4. Nature entries must comply with LCPU/PAGB rules.
5. In Colour and Monochrome Sections (in both Print and PDI Media), any genre except nature may be entered.
6. Colour/Mono entries may be flagged for Special Categories: Documentary, Sport, Portrait, Landscape - at the time of entry. These Category definitions will then guide the judge/s in selecting a “Best Image in each Category” in both Media.
7. There will also be a Best Colour, Mono and Nature image selected in each Medium.
8. Winning a Best in a Special Category will not disqualify an image from winning a Best in a Section and vice versa.
9. Each piece of work may be marked out of twenty and the judge/s may additionally award Commended, Highly Commended and Very Highly Commended certificates, at their discretion, in addition to the trophies.

# Special Category Definitions

## Documentary

An image of which the primary purpose is to convey factual information. The documentary category therefore includes, but is not restricted to, record photography (e.g. architecture, astronomy) and photojournalism.

## Sport

The Council of Europe charter on sport uses the following definition: “*Sport means all forms of physical activity, which through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.*” The focus should be on conveying movement, intensity, and the atmosphere of the sport, rather than posed or static scenes.

## Portrait

An image of one or more human beings or other animals which conveys something about the subject’s identity, character, personality, or story.

## Landscape

Landscape photography is the art of capturing images of significant areas of the Earth’s surface, encompassing natural and human-altered outdoor spaces. It includes vast natural vistas, seascapes, rural and industrial settings, and urban scenes such as cityscapes. The aim is to convey the sense of being present in a place and evoke an emotional response through elements like light, composition, and depth.

## LCPU/PAGB Nature Rules

Nature means Images where living organisms are the primary subject matter. The story telling value of an Image will normally be weighed more than the pictorial quality.

Nature includes:

- Images taken with subjects in controlled conditions such as zoos, game parks, botanic gardens, aquariums and enclosures where the subjects are dependent on man for food. Scientific bands, tags or collars are permissible.

Nature excludes:

- Images where the subjects are obviously domestic animals or plants.
- Images where an obviously artistic treatment has been applied.

Processing of the captured image, by cropping, exposure adjustment, colour correction, noise minimisation, dodging/burning, HDR, focus stacking and sharpening, is permitted, as is cloning of image defects and minor distractions including overlapping elements. An Image appearing to meet these criteria will be accepted as Nature. Access to some biological subjects may be restricted. Where that is relevant, then Photographers warrant that they have followed relevant codes of practices and hold any necessary licenses.

# John Widdall Challenge Trophy

## Overview

The award is made for **one set of four Projected Images** chosen from four categories (see below).

While this is primarily a technical challenge, the pictorial and technical aspects must support each other in the final image. Both will be considered in judging.

## Rules

**One entry consists of a set of four images.** The set must include at least two different categories from those listed here but may consist of images from three or all four categories:

- a) Stitched Panorama
- b) Close up and Tabletop
- c) Architectural Record
- d) Montage

1. Images are judged individually and are marked out of 20.
2. Individual marks will be aggregated and the set with the highest score will be the winner.
3. Each entrant may enter a maximum of three sets.
4. The images are entered on the portal in their respective categories. The first set images are each given a reference letter A. The second set is referenced B and the third set is referenced C. This allows the images to be judged in their categories. The sets are rebuilt by the competition secretary for aggregating.
5. Images must be converted to **sRGB** and uploaded to the portal as a **JPEG to fit within 1920x1200 pixels (except panoramas)**.
6. Panoramas must be uploaded with **a minimum short edge of 1200 pixels and a maximum width of 8000 pixels. The file size maximum is 10 Mb.**

## Description of Sections

### Stitched Panoramas

**Each panorama must be stitched from two or more individual exposures. It is not a crop from a single image.**

The entrant should pay attention to ensuring that there are no mismatches between frames, that lighting and colours are consistent across the finished image and that parallax error is eliminated.

### Close Up and Tabletop

Close up and tabletop entries can include manufactured or geological objects, flora and fauna, either singly or in groups. Close up includes macro subjects and tabletop includes still life photography.

## Architectural Record

This section requires photography of the whole or part of an architectural subject, e.g., building, carving, statue etc. **The inclusion of people and animals is not allowed.**

The purpose of architectural record photography is the faithful recording of detail of the subject, in such a way that it is accurate enough to use as a reference in re-building the structure, if it is destroyed or damaged. **Loss of detail in highlights and shadows is not acceptable.**

Perspective must be corrected in the taking or post processing of the image. Re-touching must not change the truth of the photographic statement i.e. cloning must be limited to removal of artefacts and minor flaws in the image, such as dust spots. However, the blending of several images is acceptable to remove moving people, maintain highlights and shadows etc. Any post-processing must look natural.

## Montage

Montage is a combination of two or more images to construct a different final image. We would expect that the author will succeed in the following areas:

- Extraction or separation of parts of images should be seamless
- Matching of colour, light direction and quality
- Correct or believable perspective
- Colour harmony or discord
- Composition

## Guidelines for Entrants and Judge

The judge will be asked to consider the following:

- Quality, direction and colour of light
  - Depth of field, plane of focus and degree of sharpness
  - Perspective
  - Content and Composition
  - Processing skills including sharpening and the handling of artefacts, noise and tonal range
  - The overall quality and feel of the finished image
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**Adopted Dec 2025**

**Revised April 2026 (Print mounting rules clarified)**

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