

Rocky Mountain School of Photography

Missoula, Montana

Professional Intensive Program Catalog 2024-2025

**Effective date:
October 10, 2023**

Professional Intensive Program Catalog

2024-2025

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Professional Intensive program at Rocky Mountain School of Photography (RMSP) is designed for people who wish to pursue a career as a professional photographer. Students learn technical, creative, and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, and they are introduced to a variety of genres and career paths. The program is an intensive combination of classes, shoots, assignments, and projects designed to prepare graduates to break into the photographic market.

Program Calendar

Professional Intensive (2024-2025) runs for 36 weeks from September 3, 2024 – May 9, 2025. The program is divided into two phases (or semesters): Phase I in the fall and Phase II in the winter and spring.

September 3, 2024	Program Start / First Day of Phase I
November 11, 2024	No Classes (Veterans' Day)
November 27 - December 1, 2024	No Classes (Thanksgiving Break)
December 15, 2024 - January 4, 2025	No Classes (Holiday Break)
January 20, 2025	No classes (MLK, Jr. Day)
January 24, 2025	Last Day of Phase I
January 27, 2025	First Day of Phase II
February 17, 2025	No Classes (Presidents' Day)
March 9-15, 2025	No Classes (Spring Break)
May 9, 2025	Last Day of Phase II / Program End

Program Schedule

Professional Intensive is further organized into units. Students receive a detailed daily schedule before the start of each unit. Required classes are scheduled Monday through Friday within the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The daily schedule of classes varies by unit.

Students can expect to be in class a minimum of 22 hours per week, excluding unit finals weeks and holiday and other breaks.

Program Outline

The Professional Intensive program consists of 800 required clock hours split between 7 units.

Unit 1: Photography Foundations (134 hours) // September 3 – October 4

All students, regardless of skill level coming into the program, go through the same foundational classes to ensure they have a solid foundation for future units. This unit covers camera functions, exposure, natural lighting, composition, editing, flash, and photo gear. Students also start to explore their own style, creativity and photographic genres.

Unit 2: Professional Foundations (182.25 hours) // October 7 – November 22

This unit covers an introduction to video, Adobe Photoshop, basic business and entrepreneurship topics, and the main photo industry paths.

Unit 3: Industry Expertise (122.75 hours) // November 25 – January 24

This unit covers Intermediate studio lighting, the basics of studio portraiture and product photography, Intermediate Adobe Photoshop, and varied business topics.

Unit 4: Entrepreneurial Preparation (77 hours) // January 27 – February 14

This unit covers logo design, website marketing techniques, additional video instruction, posing, intermediate software, and an introduction to business structures.

Unit 5: Professional Specialties (115 hours) // February 17 – March 21

Students will choose either a Retail or Commercial focus. The unit covers relevant topics in marketing, pricing, client relations, shoot planning, Image creation, and workflow.

Unit 6: Breakout Weeks (105 hours) // March 24– April 11

This unit covers In-depth Instruction on a variety of genres and paths from working photographers. Students choose three different topics that align with their interests.

Unit 7: Business Development & Program Finals (64 hours) // April 14 – May 9

This unit covers legal and financial topics to help students start their own businesses. Students finalize their business plan, pitch, website, marketing materials, and portfolio.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Entrance Requirements

No prior photographic experience is necessary for enrollment in Professional Intensive, however RMSP's selection process is designed to accept students who can meet the demands of this comprehensive and challenging education.

In order to enroll in Professional Intensive, RMSP requires that an applicant:

- Is a U.S. citizen
- Is a high school graduate or has a General Education Development (GED) certificate by the time the program starts
- Is fully comfortable with intermediate-level computer operating tasks
- Demonstrates a commitment to pursuing a full- or part-time career as a professional photographer
- Is able to demonstrate personal and professional qualities that include a willingness to learn, a strong work ethic, an ability to adapt to new technologies, an ability to get along with others in group situations, and the determination to succeed

Enrollment

Students should apply for the program on RMSP's website at www.RMSP.com. The details of the application and enrollment process are explained on the website and below. Please note that being accepted into the program does not reserve a spot. A student must complete the enrollment process and pay the \$1,000 deposit to officially register for Professional Intensive and reserve one of the 36 seats in the program.

To apply for the Professional Intensive program, go to www.RMSP.com. Choose Professional Intensive from the Course list. Click the "Apply Now" button and follow the online instructions. There are no specific application deadlines. Applications are accepted until the program meets maximum enrollment (36 students). Applications received after the program is filled are put on a waiting list; if an enrolled student cancels or withdraws, students on the waiting list may be contacted. Due to limited enrollment, students are encouraged to apply early. There is no application fee.

During the application process, an applicant will be asked to:

1. Provide some personal information
2. Write a short essay about photographic goals
3. Provide a professional letter of recommendation
4. Design an imaginary shoot or project
5. Take a short quiz on computer skills

Once an application is reviewed, RMSP will send an email indicating acceptance or denial. If an applicant is accepted into the program, they will return to the RMSP website to enroll. To complete the enrollment process, an applicant must read and agree to the Enrollment Agreement. If the applicant is younger than 18 years of age at the time of enrollment, a parent or guardian must perform this task. The enrollment process is complete once the tuition deposit is paid.

Program Costs

Tuition

Tuition for the 2024–2025 Professional Intensive program is \$29,950.

- A \$1,000 non-refundable*, non-transferable deposit is due upon enrollment in Professional Intensive. The deposit amount of \$1,000 is applied to the tuition of the program.
- 90 days prior to the start date, a minimum payment of \$7,950 is due to RMSP.
- 30 days prior to the start date, the final balance is due to RMSP.

*Tuition deposit is refundable to Veteran's Benefit Eligible students who cancel their enrollment.

If a tuition payment is not made within 14 days of the due date, the student's spot in the program may be forfeited to a prospective student on the waiting list. In the event that a student's spot is forfeited due to nonpayment, they can be re-registered as soon as the payment is made, provided that the program has not reached maximum enrollment.

Tuition includes instruction only. Housing, meals, travel, equipment, supplies, and all other expenses are the responsibility of the student.

Equipment & Supplies

Professional Intensive requires specific equipment and supplies for use by each student. The exact cost will vary from student to student, depending on their personal preferences and existing gear.

A detailed list of equipment and supplies is provided on RMSP's website and is updated twice a year. Because the program curriculum includes a great deal of information on photographic gear, it is recommended that students come with a minimum of gear and make purchases after the start of the program. (There are some items that are required on Day 1; reference the equipment list on the website.)

Details for Veteran's Benefit Eligible Students

Veteran's Benefit Eligible students or "covered individuals" are those entitled to education assistance under chapter 31, Veterans Readiness and Employment, or chapter 33, Post-9/11 benefits. Any covered individual may attend or participate in the program during the period beginning on the date on which the individual provides to RMSP a Certificate of Eligibility for entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 31 or 33 (a "Certificate of Eligibility" can also include a "Statement of Benefits" obtained from the Department of Veterans Affairs website – eBenefits, or a VAP 28-1905 form for chapter 31 authorization purposes) and ending on the earlier of the following dates:

1. The date on which payment from VA is made to RMSP.
2. 90 days after the date RMSP certified tuition and fees following the receipt of the Certificate of Eligibility.

RMSP will not impose any penalty, including any late fees, denial of access to classes or other facilities, or the requirement that a covered individual borrow additional funds, on any covered individual because of the individual's inability to meet his or her financial obligations to the institution due to the delayed disbursement funding from VA under chapter 31 or 33.

Refund Policies

Cancellation (prior to Day 1 of the program)

1. For cancellations received within 72 hours* of enrolling in the program, a full refund of all money paid will be made to the applicant. *(until midnight on the third day, excluding weekends and legal holidays)
 - If the applicant enrolls after Day 1 of the program, please reference the *Withdrawal* section below for relevant policies. This 72-hour cancellation privilege is available only before the program start date.
2. For cancellations received 30 days or more prior to the start of the program, RMSP retains the \$1,000 deposit. A full refund of all other tuition paid will be made to the applicant.
3. For cancellations received within 30 days of the start of the program, RMSP retains the \$1,000 deposit and a cancellation fee of \$7,950. Any additional tuition paid will be refunded to the student.

Withdrawal (on or after Day 1 of the program)

1. For withdrawals on the 1st through the 14th calendar days of the program, RMSP retains the \$1,000 deposit and a cancellation fee of \$10,000. Any additional tuition paid will be refunded to the student.
2. For withdrawals after the 14th calendar day of the program, RMSP retains all tuition paid and no refunds are available.

The official date of withdrawal will be considered to be the date of receipt of written withdrawal notice from the student. Withdrawal notices should be emailed to the Program Director at jeannec@rmsp.com.

In the case of a student's prolonged illness or injury or a death or severe injury in the student's immediate family, RMSP, at its sole discretion, will make a settlement that it considers reasonable and fair to both parties. The settlement proposed may include an option for re-enrollment in a future instance of the program. The school will propose a settlement within 30 days of the official date of withdrawal.

Additional Policies

Refunds will be processed within 30 days after our office received notice of cancellation or withdrawal. A full refund of all money will be paid to any applicant in the event that educational services are discontinued by RMSP.

Tuition Refund Policy for Students Using VA Education Benefits

For students receiving VA education benefits who withdraw or are dismissed from Professional Intensive, RMSP will refund the portion of the tuition that represents the percent of the program not completed (as measured in days). Portion paid by the VA will be refunded to the VA according to the following table. Portion paid by the student will be refunded to the student according to the following table. Refunds will be made within 40 days of written notice of withdrawal from the student / written notice of dismissal from the school

Student Entitled Upon Withdrawal / Dismissal	Refund
10% of program completed	90%
20% of program completed	80%
30% of program completed	70%
40% of program completed	60%
50% of program completed	50%
60% of program completed	40%
70% of program completed	30%
80% of program completed	20%
90% of program completed	10%

STUDENT PROGRESS & EXPECTATIONS

Attendance

Attendance is necessary to succeed in RMSP's intense environment. Attendance is recorded for all required classes and shoots.

- If a student is in class / on set by the start time, they will be marked as Present.
- If a student is up to 30 minutes late, they will be marked as Late.
- If a student is 30 or more minutes late or never arrives, they will be marked as Absent.

Attendance is recorded per session, not per day.

Absence Accruals

Four (4) tardies will count as one (1) absence. Example: if a student has 2 absences and 4 tardies their record will show 3 absences.

If a student accrues more than 25 absences*, they will not be eligible for a Certificate of Completion. In addition, they will not be scheduled for any remaining shoots.

If a student accrues more than 40 absences, they will be dismissed from the program, unless there are extenuating circumstances which have been discussed with and approved by the Program Director.

*In the case of a student's prolonged illness or injury, the death of a loved one, or other circumstances that make it infeasible for the student to attend Professional Intensive for an extended period, the student should contact program staff as soon as possible. If a student has shown good-faith efforts to attend sessions and achieve satisfactory grades (as determined by program staff), eligible absences can be excused and will not contribute to the absence accrual.

Prior Credit

RMSP requires that all* students attend the entire Professional Intensive program, regardless of previous education or training.

*There is an exception for Veteran's Benefit Eligible students: RMSP will evaluate all previous education and training, grant credit when appropriate, and adjust course length and cost

accordingly. It is the student's responsibility to submit any transcripts or relevant documentation prior to the start of the program. The school is responsible for maintaining credit evaluation records as part of the student's files, as well as notifying the student and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of any credit awarded.

Grades

Student progress is evaluated through photo assignments, video assignments, written assignments, written quizzes or exams, in-person skill tests or demonstrations, presentations, self-directed projects, and class / shoot participation and engagement. Most assignments are completed outside of classroom hours. All unit final assignments and assessments are graded on a 0 to 4 scale:

- 0 = not submitted
- 1 = incomplete / unsatisfactory
- 2 = satisfactory
- 3 = very good
- 4 = exceptional

Late work is not accepted. Assignments *within a unit* are evaluated, but are not graded. These assignments provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate knowledge or skills and get feedback from instructors, but they do not affect the student's unit or overall program grade. They are marked either "Pass" (Completed) or "Fail" (Not Completed). In each unit, if a student fails to do in-unit work, they will be required to attend a make-up day at the end of the unit. This allows program staff to meet with underperforming students and discuss issues or questions before moving on to the next unit. Failure to attend sessions on the make-up day will result in absences.

Each unit will also have some version of finals; this will vary from unit to unit. Finals are graded on the zero to four scale, are weighted and contribute to a student's program grade:

Unit	Weight
1: Photography Foundations	10%
2: Professional Foundations	15%
3: Industry Expertise	20%
4: Entrepreneurial Preparations	10%
5: Professional Specialties	15%
6: Breakout Weeks	10%
7: Business Development	20%

If a student is unable to complete unit finals due to serious illness or other personally incapacitating circumstances, an "Incomplete" grade will be given. Program staff will work

with the student to determine a plan for work to be completed and submitted. It is the student's responsibility to reach out to program staff as soon as possible. If the student does not complete and submit work by the new deadline, a grade of "0" will be given.

Unsatisfactory Progress

Students who are not making satisfactory progress will be placed on Academic Warning. If they fail to make satisfactory progress while on Academic Warning, they will be placed on Academic Probation according to the policy below:

Academic Warning

If a student earns below a 2.0 on two consecutive units, they will be placed on Academic Warning.

While on Academic Warning, if a student submits all in-unit work and earns a unit final grade of 2.0 or higher on the subsequent unit, the Academic Warning will be lifted.

Academic Probation

While on Academic Warning, if either of the following occur, the student will be placed on Academic Probation:

- Failure to submit an in-unit assignment
- A unit final grade below 2.0

Academic Probation may extend for two units. For Academic Probation to be lifted, a student must submit all in-unit work and earn a unit final grade of 2.0 or higher.

If Academic Probation is not lifted after two units, the student may be dismissed from the program. Program dismissal will not result in a tuition refund (with the sole exception of Veteran's Benefits Eligible students).

Certificate of Completion Requirements

To earn a Certificate of Completion, a student:

- Must earn at least a 2.0 as their final program grade.
- Must not exceed 25 accrued absences.

Student Conduct

Professional Intensive enrolls a maximum of 36 students, which means the conduct of one individual can influence the learning experience for the entire class. Therefore, RMSP expects Professional Intensive students to be respectful and dedicated students.

Expectations

RMSP expects that students:

- Will respect fellow students, RMSP staff, and instructors in words and actions – regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, background, political opinions, or beliefs.
- Will abide by all RMSP policies and procedures. Detailed policies / procedures will be provided throughout the program.
- Will show up to class on time and be prepared to participate.
- Will bring all required equipment and supplies to classes or shoots.
- Will refrain from visible or verbal interruptions or distractions during classes or shoots that inhibit another student's learning experience.
- Will complete assignments on time and in a professional manner.
- Will ask questions and seek help when needed.
- Will respect RMSP facility and equipment rules, usage, and hours.*
- Will follow safety procedures for shoots in the studio and on location.**
- Will not violate RMSP's Code of Conduct (see below).

If a student does not meet these expectations, staff and instructors may dismiss a student from a class or a shoot. That dismissal will result in an absence.

*Students are liable for repair or replacement of RMSP property and equipment that is damaged or lost during use.

**There are significant hazards associated with studio equipment, while working in studio, and while shooting on location. Safety procedures are discussed before related classes and shoots, and students must follow these procedures closely. Continued failure to follow studio/shoot procedures may result in the student losing the ability to use equipment and/or attend shoots.

Code of Conduct

Misconduct as outlined below will not be tolerated and may, at the sole discretion of the School Director, result in the student's dismissal from the program:

- Continued or persistent failure to follow RMSP's Student Expectations (see above).

- Knowingly furnishing false information to the school and alteration or use of school documents or instruments with intent to defraud.
- Theft or vandalism of RMSP property or property of a member of the school community.
- Destructive or disruptive behaviors that create risk to others, infringe on the rights of others, or otherwise disrupt the learning environment of RMSP.
- Failure to follow health and safety procedures in the classroom, in studio, or on location.
- Conduct which threatens the health or safety of any person, including but not limited to physical or verbal abuse, retaliation, threats, intimidation, harassment, and any form of coercion.
- Abusive or harassing behavior, including but not limited to stalking, unwelcome communications, and all forms of sexual misconduct.
- Disorderly, lewd, or indecent conduct.
- Accessing, downloading, and/or distributing lewd or illegal content on RMSP's Wi-Fi network.
- Participation in all forms of gambling.
- Smoking or other tobacco in school buildings, including e-cigarettes.
- Possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia, or alcoholic beverages on school premises.
- Failure to comply with a reasonable request or to follow a directive from an RMSP staff member or instructor acting in performance of their duties.

It is a student's responsibility to report any harassing or unsafe behavior to program staff or the School Director.

Program Dismissal

As detailed in sections above, the following may result in a student's dismissal from the Professional Intensive program:

- A student has accrued more than 40 absences*
- Academic Probation is not lifted after two units
- A student has violated the Code of Conduct

Dismissal from the Professional intensive program is a severe repercussion for either an egregious Code of Conduct violation, or a sustained and serious lack of effort and commitment on the part of the student, as reflected in excessive absences and/or poor grades or failure to complete assignments.

*If a student accrues more than 40 absences, they will be dismissed from the program, unless there are extenuating circumstances which have been discussed with and approved by the Program Director.

In the case of a student's prolonged illness or injury, the death of a loved one, or other circumstances that make it infeasible for the student to attend Professional Intensive for an extended period, the student should contact program staff as soon as possible. If a student has shown good-faith efforts to attend sessions and achieve satisfactory grades (as determined by program staff), eligible absences can be excused and will not contribute to the absence accrual.

Dismissals will not result in a tuition refund (with the sole exception of Veteran's Benefits Eligible students).

Students who have been dismissed are not eligible for re-admission to Professional Intensive in the same program year. However, they may reapply for a future instance of the program as a new applicant. Their attendance, grades, and conduct during their time as a Professional Intensive student will be considered when reviewing their application. Past tuition will not be applied to future enrollment.

Guidance Counseling

Occasionally students may have problems of a school-related nature that they wish to discuss. Students may contact program staff or the School Director for a meeting. For guidance on issues of a personal nature, staff will refer students to local resources.

Access to Student Records

Students may review their records upon request. RMSP will maintain school records for a minimum of 3 years. Records will include, but may not be limited to, attendance, grades, progress reports, conduct-related documents, previous education and training, enrollment application, and Enrollment Agreement with student acknowledgement.

ABOUT RMSP

Facilities & Equipment

Rocky Mountain School of Photography (RMSP) is located at 301 Expressway in Missoula, Montana. Enrolled Professional Intensive students have access to classroom spaces, a demo studio, a 6000 square foot studio space, and a student area with a kitchenette and lockers. Enrolled Professional Intensive students also have access to photo gear and equipment during shoots, and select gear is available to check out.

Governing Body

Rocky Mountain School of Photography (RMSP) is owned by Neil & Jeanne Chaput de Saintonge, who founded the school in 1989. Their son, Forest, is the School Director and his wife, Sarah, is the Assistant Director. The governing body of the school is comprised of these four individuals, all of whom reside in Missoula and work at the school. Collectively, the Chaput de Saintonge family has been teaching photography for 80 years. With that experience comes knowledge of effective program management and proven teaching techniques.

Program Staff

Professional Intensive is administered by two staff members and two teaching assistants:

- Program Director (Jeanne Chaput de Saintonge): Jeanne provides direction and oversight on program curriculum, policies, systems, and logistics. As co-owner and founder of RMSP, she has over 35 years of experience in photo education.
- Program Coordinator (Shawn Strasburg): Shawn coordinates and implements program logistics and is students' primary staff resource. Shawn is a graduate of RMSP's Summer Intensive and Professional Intensive programs.
- Teaching Assistants change from year to year, but they are all graduates of Professional Intensive who demonstrated exceptional knowledge, skill, and conduct during their time as students.

Instructors

Professional Intensive has 7-10 local core instructors and 15-20 visiting instructors. Core instructors teach foundational topics in photography, business, marketing, and entrepreneurship; visiting instructors are professionals working across the industry who provide more advanced instruction on their areas of expertise. Instructors, along with their bios and credentials, are listed on RMSP's website at www.RMSP.com/professional-intensive.