

## PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDELINES

Strong, compelling photos help to convey your story. When using a professional photographer is not an option, use the recommendations below to improve your own photography and learn what images will best serve your story.

### Provisions for Submitting Photos for Inclusion in Rutgers Today

Photos for Rutgers Today will be used on the primary landing page for your story, as well as newsletter thumbnail images and the Rutgers Today home page. Photos should convey what the story is about, rather than focusing on an individual, unless the story is a profile. For example, research stories should feature the work, rather than the researcher. It's best to avoid research graphics as thumbnails. Email photos for Rutgers Today to [andrea.alexander@rutgers.edu](mailto:andrea.alexander@rutgers.edu).

### Photography Submissions:

- Provide high-resolution jpegs (recommended size 5 x 7 inches, 2100 x 1500 pixels at 300 dpi).
- Provide the photographer's name and contact information. Include copies of usage rights agreements, if available.
- Provide the name and contact information of all photography subjects, the date, and location.
- Include copies (scans are recommended) of the completed photo model release or HIPAA authorization forms for all subjects. Releases are not required for public events. Note that one form is for minors and must be completed by a parent or guardian. [Releases can be found here.](#)
- For Rutgers Today and photography usage universitywide, only use authorized photos. Stock photography is allowed when license is obtained and a record is available. Avoid using copyrighted imagery without permission and supply the appropriate credits.

### General Photography Guidelines:

- Set your camera on its highest resolution quality setting to ensure the best images.
- In low-light situations, turn the flash to avoid grainy or blurry images, but be aware that the flash will not light your subject from a far distance.
- Compose your photograph so the reason for taking the picture is clearly evident.
- Do not shoot toward windows or bright backgrounds unless you want your subject silhouetted.
- Avoid cluttered or complex backgrounds.
- Don't cut off hands, feet, or the tops of heads in photos. Images can be cropped later if needed.
- Avoid mergers, such as a tree seeming to grow from a subject's head.
- Considerations for clothing and props:
  - Encourage subjects to wear Rutgers attire and/or add a Rutgers prop (e.g., mug, publication, or sign) to your image setting. Avoid logos of other universities, offensive material, or brands.
  - Avoid all white or all black clothing, busy patterns, florals, or stripes.
  - Encourage subjects to bring an extra jacket, sweater, or tie(s) to change out for variety.
  - Bring a comb, mirror, and oil-blotting tissues for hair and skin touch-ups.
- Enhancing the technical quality of a photograph is acceptable (getting rid of red-eye, reducing shadow, etc.), but changing the meaning of a photo is not. Alteration of a photo that misleads, confuses, or otherwise misrepresents its accuracy is not allowed.

### Smartphone Photography Guidelines:

- Clean a smartphone lens by gently wiping with a clean cloth
- Set your phone to its highest picture quality and resolution.
- Use HDR mode, or High Dynamic Range, which is a staple feature for smartphone cameras. It brings detail out of the darkest and lightest parts of your picture and creates a better balance of color. Note that in HDR mode photos take slightly longer to process.
- Adjust focus and exposure. If manual focus is available, it's usually activated with a tap on the screen, on the point where you want the camera to focus.
- Turn off picture frames. A great shot may be ruined by a forced frame or background.
- Turn off date stamps and other effects such as black and white, sepia tones, or inverted colors.
- Avoid photographing subjects in low light if you want them to be consistently lit. The small sensors in camera phones cannot run at high ISO speeds (i.e. high sensitivity to light, permitting indoor photos without a flash) without introducing large amounts of noise (pixilation).
- If you must shoot indoors, avoid fluorescent lighting. It can cast a green tint.
- Avoid bright reflections and other "hot spots." This will either force the camera to underexpose the rest of the shot or cause the camera to blow out the highlights on the brightest parts.
- Smartphone cameras are sensitive to movement. Minimize camera shake to avoid blurry images. You can steady your shot by using a small tripod made for smartphones.
- Smartphone cameras slow the shutter speed in low light, which can blur the photo. To avoid this, be especially sure the camera is stable in low light.

### Composition Guidelines



Keep in mind the universal “rule of thirds,” a photographic composition principle that says an image should be broken down into thirds horizontally and vertically. We recommend using the gridline option on your camera or smartphone, which superimposes these lines on the screen. Avoid centering your subject, which can result in a static photo. Place your subject(s) on one of these lines, or at an intersection of these lines, for a more dynamic image.

## Photographing a Speaker



People do not look their best while speaking. Try photographing the individual during a pause or take as many shots as possible to ensure you capture at least one strong image. Another option is to take set-up shots of the speaker at the podium prior to the event. This allows you to get closer to the subject (five to six feet away is ideal), have better control, and not disrupt the flow of the presentation. The flash will not provide sufficient lighting when photographing a speaker from a distance in a large room. The best strategy is to use available light.

## Individual Portraits



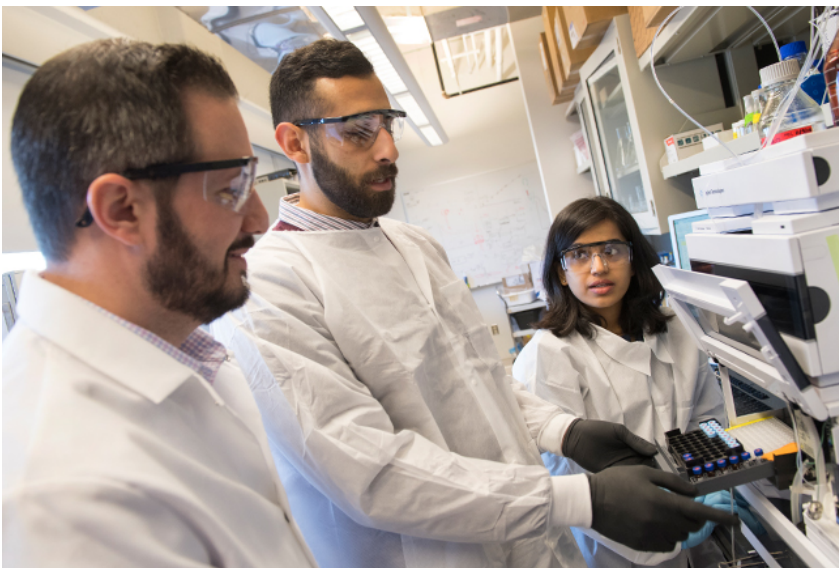
When shooting indoors, try to use indirect window light. The flash may be useful but can cause red-eye and shadows. When shooting outdoors, standing in open shade or shoot on an overcast day to avoid shadows. Place the subject in an area with a nondescript background at least ten feet away from a wall or any other background. Be conscious of avoiding lines in the background—such as poles, lines on a building, or utility wires—that can look like arrows bisecting the subject's head.

## Group Portraits



Grip and grin photos and group shots can be less than inspiring. Consider having the subjects do something to tell a story. Pose people creatively in a group shot rather than in a line up. Try to limit the group to three to five people and stand five to six feet away when shooting. Try to keep the group at least ten feet away from a wall or any other background.

## Photographing in Labs, Clinical Settings, and Clean Rooms



When photographing in active labs or clinical environments where research, hands-on equipment use, procedures, hazardous materials, or patient care are taking place, follow these guidelines:

- If research activity is visible or implied, all required PPE (e.g., safety glasses, gloves, lab coats, etc.) must be worn by all photo subjects without exception.

- Consult with laboratory or clinical personnel in advance to confirm which safety gear is required for that location to ensure all necessary PPE is clean, available, and ready prior to the photoshoot.
- Do not remove or adjust required safety equipment for the sake of capturing a better image.
- Adhere to all protocols and safety requirements of clean rooms, which are enclosed spaces where airborne particulates and contaminants are kept within strict limits.
- PPE may be optional only when a laboratory is used as a backdrop for environmental portrait photography and no active research, equipment use, hazardous materials, procedures, or patient care are being depicted.

**Environmental Portrait Example:**

