

Welcome to the Pretoria Photographic Society!

A primer for new and old members

Version 12, February 2021

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Getting started with the Pretoria Photographic Society (PPS)

“I’ve attended a few meetings as a guest, taken the plunge and joined the PPS. What do I do now???”

This booklet is your guide to how to become an active member as easily as possible.

Our club exists to help us **enjoy** photography together, and that takes precedence over all other activities. We also hope to build our skills, to promote photography and to compete with other photographers regionally, nationally and internationally. But above all we are here to enjoy photography.

How PPS works

We provide a home for all the **media** used in photography. Our monthly and annual competitions cater for these media in two **streams (projected images and prints)**. Within projected images we also cater for **audio-visual (AV)** presentations.

Our Streams:

- Projected Images (digital photography)
- Prints (monochrome & colour) (In recess)

The print section of our competition is in recess at present. It can be re-activated on request of print workers, provided we can get competition entries from several members at a time, perhaps quarterly or annually.

Our members progress through a series of **Star ratings**. In order to progress you need to earn Gold or Certificate of Merit (COM) awards at our monthly competitions, and to gain acceptances in **Salons**. For the promotion to 4-Star or higher, members must also give service to the PPS. You are in a separate class for each of the streams. New members with experience in previous clubs may submit a panel of their work to the committee, who may place them in a higher initial class. One panel is needed for each stream.

- 1-Star
- 2-Star
- 3-Star
- 4-Star
- 5-Star

Five-Star members are eligible to PPS Bertus de Jongh Honours, not covered further in this primer.

We have a main monthly **meeting**, where we have a speaker, tea and the monthly competition. We also have two additional monthly meetings, a **Photo Café where we cover various items of interest to members** which from time to time includes the **SIG for AVs** and a **Photo Challenge**, where we invite you to submit pics for discussion on specific topics or using specific techniques. The AV SIG takes place on request, and could include members from other clubs in the region. We recognise the potential of other SIGs for the remaining media, e.g. monochrome prints, colour prints and e-photos, and these could form part of a future strategy for handling our growth.

We arrange **outings and workshops**. **Outings** are an opportunity to share in photographing a place of interest. We aim to have workshops of different sizes, ranging from a quick hour after work, to a morning or afternoon, to a weekend away. Our target is one or two outings a month, with one or two

per year being weekends away in an area with photographic opportunities. The **social** aspect of these outings is just as important as the photographic side!

Workshops are designed to build our skills in specific techniques, and will be matched to the needs and requests of members. Workshops and outings allow additional entries for photos taken during the event, in the monthly competitions.

Set Subjects are a series of topics designed to challenge you to try something new. There is one for each main meeting, and allows you one additional entry. They are published in our magazine e-Flash and on the website.

Our **Annual Competition** allows members to submit the entries of the year in a number of set categories, where they can compete for the best entries of the year. We also award certificates for the most golds and most points in each stream. Proposals for new categories from members are allowed at the beginning of each year.

Current Annual Competition categories:

- Beginner
- Landscape
- Visual Arts
- Nature
- Macro (including Floral)
- Photo-journalism
- Portrait
- Pictorial
- Monochrome
- Best of the year
- Most versatile author
- Most Golds and COMs

PPS is associated with the **Photographic Society of Southern Africa (PSSA)**, and we take part in their activities and events. These include salons (which are competitions at the national or international level), national and regional conferences and interclub competitions. We encourage participation and membership of the PSSA, and use PSSA recognition (called Honours) as qualification for promotions.

Our club is **governed** by a constitution, a set of competition rules and rules for the annual competition. These documents are part of your new members' package, to be provided to you on paper and/or by email; or by download from the Join us section of the website, www.pretoriaphotographic.co.za. Administration is by a committee, who meet monthly. Our committee is elected at the Annual General Meeting, in August.

Our financial year is from July to June, to allow financial statements to be prepared in time for the AGM,

Communication is by announcement during meetings, our monthly bulletin (e-Flash), by e-mails and WhatsApp. There are two WhatsApp groups, one for formal communications from PPS to members, the other for Chit-Chat, and anyone may post on that.

The intention is that the remainder of this primer will contain a series of **one-page articles** on the key topics that will help the new member to get up to speed as rapidly as possible. However, if we slip (your committee is also human) the constitution and rules take precedence over anything we say here.

The **topics** included in the primer are:

- Topical information – regular dates, times etc
- About the monthly competition

- Preparing and submitting my e-photos
- Promotion to the next level
- Preparing for salons
- Preparing my prints
- Preparing for the annual competition
- Workshops and outings

Some topics will be excluded from this primer as they form separate units which are published elsewhere. These are:

- Constitution
- Club rules
- Year-end rules
- About PSSA
- Detailed submission instructions

This primer complements our monthly bulletin, e-Flash. The primer will contain material that stays constant, while e-Flash will contain current information. Hence we do not intend to publish specific dates, times etc.

Virtual and Hybrid meetings

During lockdown, all meetings are held virtually on Zoom. Invitations are issued by email and on WhatsApp.

Once face-to-face meetings restart, all meetings will become hybrid, with a presence on Zoom for those who cannot attend in person.

How do I enter the monthly competition?

How many entries may I have?

You may have 3 normal entries in each of the two streams in each monthly competition. This means that the total of scanned slides and e-photos is 3, and the total of mono and colour prints is 3.

In addition, you may submit 1 extra entry taken in each workshop or outing, in each of the streams, provided this is done in one of the two meetings immediately following the outing or workshop.

In addition, you may submit 1 set subject entry each month. This is 1 per member, not 1 per stream.

You may enter resubmissions of photos which you have improved and would like to have re-judged., limited to 4 resubmissions per stream per year. The new mark replaces the old mark.

If you judged and could not enter in a previous month, you are allowed a double entry the next month. If you judge in the last meeting of the year (August) then you are allowed a double entry the previous month. Set subjects in this case must be the set subject of the month they are entered, not the set subject of the missed entries.

You do not have to be present to enter the monthly competition, you may send entries with another member or submit e-photos electronically.

Preparing digital photos for projection

The standard format for submission within the PSSA and most clubs and salons is the jpeg (xxxx.jpg). Jpeg is a compressed format, and can cause loss of quality, which scares most people. However, the amount of compression is controlled when you save the jpg, and by using a relatively high number for the quality (about 9 to 11 on a scale of 1 to 12) you can get a very good image that is also small. However, you must only save it ONCE, right at the end, as a jpg.

Secondly, the projection standards of PSSA and the PPS require your image to be **no larger than 1920 pixels wide by 1080 pixels high**, with a maximum size of **2MB**.

To achieve these things, do the following, always working from a **copy** of the photo:

1. Process your picture as you want it, in the software of your choice, including all manipulations EXCEPT RESIZING AND SHARPENING. During this, save it in one of the formats that protects the integrity of the image, like .tif or .psd (the photoshop native format). This is your working copy if you ever want to change the image.
2. Before the following steps, save to keep the full-size unsharpened, uncompressed file, in the working format, e.g. tif or .psd.
3. Change the size of the photo (usually Image then Image Size) to be **no more than 1920 pixels wide and no more than 1080 pixels high**. PhotovaultOnline will reject any image unless either one of the dimensions is exactly 1920 or 1080. Make sure the tick box is on to keep the proportions. Then if the photo is landscape, reduce the width to 1920. Check the height, if it is 1080 or less, fine, else reduce the height to 1080. If the picture is portrait format, reduce the height to 1080.
4. Then sharpen if you would like to, preferably using Unsharp Mask. Most members seldom exceed 100% for the sharpening, and always check boundaries for the ugly signs of over-sharpening.
5. Then check that the image Mode is 8-bit sRGB. In Photoshop this is in the Image > Mode menu.
6. Then Save As a jpg, making sure that the filename is different from the original. When the system asks for the quality, start with 8. In Photoshop, you will be able to see the image size at this stage, before finally converting. Your image is likely to be between 500 and 1400 k. Sounds unlikely, but that is the size of image most members enter. If image is bigger than 2MB, use a smaller quality factor. If much smaller than 500k, use a higher quality factor.

Naming your image

With the use of PhotoVaultOnline from May 2012, there is no set naming convention, and a simple descriptive title, in mixed upper and lower case, but **without special characters** is all that is required.

Submitting your photos

The instructions for submitting your photos using PhotoVaultOnline are provided in a separate document, "PhotoVaultOnline on a Page".

Arrangements for members without internet access

A few of our members do not have email, and we must be able to support them as well. We will set up as follows:

- Each member without email (the adoptee) will be ‘adopted’ by another member who lives close by, and who has email (the adopter).
- The adopter will distribute all communications about PhotoVaultOnline to the adoptee
- The adopter will submit entries and entry forms on behalf of the adoptee.

How do I get promoted?

Members are promoted to a higher Star-rating after complying with the set requirements, and when ratified/approved by the Committee. Promotion happens separately for each Stream.

The set requirements are earned during the member’s stay in each Star-rating, with the exception of Salon Credits, which will be based on the cumulative salon credits achieved by a member, i.e. they are carried forward with each promotion

The Competition Secretary tracks the Gold /COM award and Salon performance of members and recommends promotions to the Committee for ratification. The Gold/COM awards are drawn from the competition management system and the Salon credits as submitted by the members to the Competition Secretary. The Competition Secretary then notifies the member of the promotion.

Promotion takes place after each Monthly Competition, and excess Gold awards earned during a competition are lost.

Members may be promoted with the gaining of the following numbers of Gold or Certificate of Merit awards, Salons and Service to PPS:

Promotion Criteria

Promotion	Gold or Com Awards	Salon Credits (Cumulative)	PSSA Honours	Regular Service to PPS
1 * to 2 *	12	None	N/A	None
2 * to 3 *	18 OR 50 (Note 1)	1 None	N/A	None
3 * to 4 *	24	13 (Note 2)	APPSA	Required
4 * to 5 *	25	37 (Note 3)	FPSSA	Required

Notes:

1. The promotion from 2-star to 3-star can take place in two ways: Either with 18 golds and 1 salon credit, or with 50 golds without salon credits. None of the more senior promotions can happen this way.
2. Certain of the salon requirements may be replaced by achievement of PSSA Honours: The Associate of the PSSA honours (APPSA) replaces the 13 cumulative salons needed for the promotion from 3 to 4-star, and the Fellow of the PSSA honours (FPSSA) replaces the 37 cumulative salons needed for promotion from 4 to 5-star.
3. Service to the PPS is by being Committee Member, Speaker, Lecturer, Judge or Contributor to the Magazine or Newsletter is required for promotions to 3-star and above. Note that the rules require regular, ongoing service at these higher levels.

Salons

What is a salon?

Salons are competitions run by photographic clubs or groups of clubs, and sometimes by other types of organisations. They usually follow the same pattern, with different sections or topics, specified rules and acceptance criteria. The top entries may earn special recognition such as Certificates of Merit and the class winners can receive medals.

Salons may be international or local. Note that some locally-run salons are marked as International in their names and their rules, and this is important in earning the credits. International salons run outside the country must be recognised by the Royal Photographic Society (RPS), the Photographic Society of America (PSA) or the Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique (FIAP).

Most local salons are run under PSSA patronage, which sets a standard guideline for the form and running of the salon, and usually requires that about 20 – 25% of entries be accepted. You can find the notification of all their salons on the PSSA website, www.pssa.co.za.

How do I enter a salon?

Before we can enter a salon, we need to know that it exists and when it closes. Within PPS, we try to keep you alerted to upcoming salons, but the authoritative source of South African salons is the PSSA on the website mentioned above. For international salons, you need to know the salons you are targeting and watch for their own announcements. The welcome page of PhotoVaultOnline lists upcoming salons.

Next, you download the rules and entry form from the website. Please read the rules very carefully, as they may differ in important details. It is too easy to get disqualified by having a man-made object in a landscape where the rules prohibit this.

The categories in salons usually include an Open or Pictorial section which allows images excluded by the rules for other categories. It is not advisable to use such a section as a catch-all, as the winners and acceptances are usually pictures selected for pictorial excellence and impact. Manipulated images that do not fit the rules of Nature or Photojournalism generally do not fare well. The categories for local salons usually follow the rules published on the PSSA website (www.pssa.co.za) and it is worth studying and conforming to those rules.

Payment is easy in South Africa, usually by internet transfer. Payment for overseas salons is more difficult, and may require cash (high risk), Paypal or similar schemes. In general, it is easier if members get together to pay for overseas salon entry. Sometimes PSSA members offer to join forces for payments as a group.

Submitting your entries is easy for most local digital salons, which accept online entries through PhotoVaultOnline.

A valuable tip is to select Circuit Salons, both local and overseas, because your single entry stands a chance in multiple salons.

Where an entry form is used it must be completed with precision, taking careful note of items like use of capitals, separators in naming conventions, etc. Again, any mistakes can lead to disqualifications.

Slides and prints require some form of delivery service, by hand or by courier. Such salons are becoming rarer and it is thus becoming more difficult to gain the required levels of salon credits for your promotions. Some overseas salons are allowing scanned images to replace the original medium, making delivery easier. The PPS committee has decided to allow such entries to receive credit in the original medium.

Salon Credits – how do I get them and manage them?

Before we look at the detail of salon credits, we note that the first promotion that requires a salon credit is from 2-star to 3-star for each stream (prints and projected images). This requires one credit, but it can be replaced by earning 50 rather than 18 Gold awards. All higher promotions require either salon credits or a PSSA honours award as part of the criteria.

The acceptances are the basic requirement for promotion. You earn extra salon credits for awards and for international salons.

The credits for salon acceptances are calculated as follows:

	National	International
Acceptances	1	2
Special awards	2	3
Category winners	3	4

A maximum of three sets of credit points may be claimed per image. This is to be done in date sequence of salons, and it is not possible to replace an existing earlier entry with a later one that might attract more salon credits.

Topical Information

This page contains information which is fairly stable and is frequently required. It will be updated continuously, but not distributed on each change. e-Flash is the main medium for communicating changed information.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Key information and deadlines</u>
Main meetings	<p>Monthly, third Tuesday of each month, except December, in the church hall at NG Kerk Lynnwood, 439 Sussex Ave, Lynnwood; at 18:30 for 19:00.</p> <p>During lockdown, virtual. Once face-to-face meetings start, all meetings will be hybrid with a virtual presence for members who cannot attend in person.</p> <p>Entries close at 23:59 on the Saturday before the meeting.</p>
Photo Cafe	<p>Monthly, First Tuesday of each month, except December, in the church hall at NG Kerk Lynnwood, 439 Sussex Ave, Lynnwood; at 18:30 for 19:00.</p> <p>Virtual and hybrid arrangements as for main meeting.</p>
Photo Challenge	Fourth Thursday of each month at 18:30 for 19:00. Virtual only.
Annual-General Meeting	The August main meeting
Year-end Competition	Entries are due in October to be judged in time for the November main meeting
Year-end Function	The November main meeting
Constitution and rules	PPS operates in terms of a constitution and a set of rules. The current constitution was accepted in June 2013 and the rules were revised in August 2018. The Year-end rules are adjusted each year at the beginning of the PPS year
Audio-Visual SIG	First Tuesday of month at the Photo Café, to be announced, on request.
Photo Essay	Annual, on an announced topic, with entries closing in September for presentation during the year-end function.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Key information and deadlines</u>
Committee contact information, promotion, set subjects, meeting dates, tea duties, speakers and judges, forthcoming salons, annual fees, PSSA matters, outings, workshops.	Published monthly in e-Flash and on the website.
Submission of prints	Currently in recess. The entry form and digital image must have been submitted to PhotoVaultOnline previously and the print brought by 18:45 on the meeting night.
Submission of e-photos	By midnight on the Saturday preceding the main meeting, according to the published standards, online using PhotoVaultOnline.
Submission of images for publication in e-Flash	This is done by the projection team. Entry in our competitions assumes permission to do this.
Submission of images for PSSA Best of the Month competition	This is done by the projection team. Entry in our competitions assumes permission to do this.
Monthly floating trophy	To the winner of the best of each Stream, Junior and Senior, presented at the main meeting, to be returned to the next meeting. Physical trophies in abeyance during lockdown.
eFlash	Articles by members, including Letters to the Editor, are welcome. The editor is currently Joan Fouche, joan.fotracon@gmail.com
Website	PPS has a website at www.pretoriaphotographic.co.za The webmaster is currently Sarita Louise Downing, sarita.downing@gmail.com . Contacts for all committee members are listed on the website.

Specific details on this page last updated 21st February 2021.