Good Practices for Equitable and Fair Admission Examinations

A...kademie der bildenden Künste Wien

Good Practices for Equitable and Fair Admission Examinations
at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

With many thanks to all interview partners for their input
and for sharing their experience!

This compilation of Good Practices was developed in
cooperation between the Quality Development Department
and the Working Group on Equal Opportunities (AfG).

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Preface

According to the Universities Act, "artistic aptitude" is an essential prerequisite for studying at an art university.[1] The Academy of Fine Arts Vienna therefore has program-specific admission examinations, within which various processes for demonstrating this aptitude have been established.

A study conducted at the Academy in 2009[2] and further analyses on the social dimensions of students[3] show that studying at the Academy primarily appeals to individuals who already come from an academic and art-oriented background. Against this backdrop, the Academy's Equality Plan[4] set the goal of increasing student diversity.

As a concrete step toward achieving this goal, the Quality Development Department and the Working Group on Equal Opportunities collaborated to develop this collection of Good Practices for equitable and fair admission examinations at the Academy. This compilation is primarily intended for the admission juries of the Academy's various study programs. It aims to stimulate a dialogue about existing admission examinations that transcends the boundaries of institutional and discipline-specific guidelines and facilitates reflection on admissions practices. The Good

1 Universitätsgesetz 2022, § 63 (in German only).
2 Barbara Rothmüller (2010): BewerberInnen-Befragung am Institut für bildende Kunst 2009. Studie im Auftrag der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien. https://www.akbild.ac.at/de/universitaet/arbeitskreis-fur-gleichbehandlungsfragen/aufgaben-und-tatigkeitsfelder/endbericht.pdf (in German only).
3 See, e.g.: Quality Development Department: Opportunities Monitor. Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. https://www.akbild.ac.at/en/university/quality-development/chances.
4 Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (2025): Equality Plan. § 18 Composition of the Student Body. In: Statutes of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. https://www.akbild.ac.at/en/university/statutes.

Practices presented below should be understood as suggestions and recommendations, not as overarching standards for all admission examinations. From this extensive collection, those responsible can select the practices that seem appropriate for their respective procedures.

These suggestions and proposals are based on 25 guided interviews (16 with applicants, 9 with Academy staff) that were conducted and analyzed by colleagues of the Quality Development Department. The experiences and expertise of those who have participated in or gone through the admission examinations thus form the core of this compilation. Original quotes from the interviews have been included to illustrate the respective perspectives more vividly. Discussions between the Quality Development Department and the Working Group on Equal Opportunities, as well as an examination of relevant literature, were also crucial in formulating the Good Practices.

The compilation is divided into four sections, focusing on the following objectives:

- Good Practices for Clear and Transparent Communication
- Good Practices for Equal Opportunities and Diversity of Perspectives
- Good Practices for Identifying and Removing Barriers
- Good Practices for Creating a Welcoming Atmosphere

The individual sections follow the chronology of the admission examinations, from preparation through the decision-making process. The compilation concludes with a closing statement that offers guidance on how to use it.

In terms of content, it is important to note that the sections cannot always be clearly distinguished from one another. Good Practices associated with one objective may well contribute to the achievement of another objective. At the same time, the suggestions mentioned are not without their ambiguities. An action classified as supportive by one person may sometimes be perceived differently by another person who may be in a different situation. For example, the question of how open guidelines for the portfolio and the exam assignment should be was discussed

with some ambivalence in the interviews. Different preferences also emerged when weighing in-person versus online admission interviews.

Furthermore, the very different framework conditions of the various admission examinations at the Academy must not be overlooked. Whether a Good Practice can be meaningfully implemented in an admission examination also depends on how many applicants go through the process and what resources are available on the part of the institutes. In many cases, however, these Good Practices can be implemented with relatively little effort.

We wish you an inspiring read and lively discussions!

I don't really want to say whether anything is better or worse. I think it just depends on what kind of person you are and what you're better at handling.
Applicant

I actually find it an enormous responsibility; it sometimes overwhelms me to the point where I think: I'm deciding people's futures right now.
Academy staff member

I think our process is good. But if there are good tips, especially from the applicants, I'd be interested in hearing about them.
Academy staff member

A culture of feedback means that we don't simply check off topics as resolved, but rather that we can discuss them again and again.
Academy staff member

1 Good Practices for Clear and Transparent Communication

Providing prospective students and applicants with clear and comprehensive information on all steps of the Academy's admission examination forms the basis of fairness. The Opportunities Monitor shows that in 2025, just under 30% of applicants learned about the Academy's study programs through parents or acquaintances. More than 55% cited recommendations from current students as a source of information.[5] The Graduation Survey also highlights how important applicants' immediate social circle is during their initial contact with the Academy.[6]

In this context, clear and transparent communication ensures that even individuals who have no personal connections to the Academy – or to the arts field in general – can obtain sufficient information about the process and requirements of the admission examination.

Blog posts and videos in which former applicants share their personal experiences in an accessible way – as can already be seen on the *Kiosk* platform[7] – can help bridge this gap. In addition to the information written on the website, applicants appreciate having points of contact as well as information and counseling sessions where they can ask questions and resolve uncertainties. Younger people in particular, who are accustomed to many

5 Abteilung Qualitätsentwicklung (2026): Chancenmonitor. Chancen unterschiedlicher Bewerber_innengruppen in den Zulassungsverfahren der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien. Zulassungsverfahren 2024 und 2025. https://www.akbild.ac.at/de/universitaet/qualitaetsentwicklung/chancen, S. 21 (in German only).
6 Abteilung Qualitätsentwicklung (2024): Studienabschluss-Befragung. Absolvent_innen der Studienjahre 2019/20 bis 2021/22. Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien. https://www.akbild.ac.at/de/universitaet/qualitaetsentwicklung/studienabschluss-befragung, S. 13–17 (in German only).
7 https://kiosk.akbild.ac.at/en.

rules and little leeway in a school setting, want clear guidance on formalities. The point here is not to limit flexibility, but rather to explicitly name it as such.

Preparation

- The process, requirements, and deadlines for the admission examination are communicated clearly and in a timely manner, and the information is consistent across all channels. In addition to the information, contact persons are also listed.
- To ensure clarity, all documents and the website use highlighting, structured headings, and links.
- Frequently asked questions (FAQ) are answered in a consolidated manner on the website for each field of study.
- Formal admission criteria, such as language proficiency and required prior education, are clearly communicated. Information is provided regarding deadlines for language proficiency and the availability of language courses.
- Information is also provided on “special cases”, such as the option to apply to multiple studio groups within the Fine Arts or the requirement to take two teaching subjects in the teacher education program.
- Subjective and individual experiences of former applicants, specifically regarding the creation of their portfolios, are made available (e.g., on *Kiosk*[8]).
- Points of contact such as the Student Welcome Center and the Registrar’s Office are in regular contact with the institutes and admission juries and provide up-to-date and consistent information.
- Information sessions are organized to give prospective students and applicants the opportunity to ask questions.
- Email inquiries are answered as quickly as possible, regardless of how they are worded.
- Questions are also answered even if they do not directly concern the admission examination, such as inquiries about the amount of tuition fees. After all, if a person fears they cannot afford to study, they are less likely to apply.

8 https://kiosk.akbild.ac.at/en.

I found the process in Vienna to be the least complicated, because it was the smoothest there to gather the information and get the deadline for when, what, where, and how to submit the application. I thought that was the easiest application process. I was able to navigate this website very easily.

Applicant

You could say there's a lot of text, not just on the website, but the emails I received were always very detailed as well. I felt like questions that had come up in previous years had had been anticipated. I found that very reassuring. The process is laid out very clearly, so one doesn't have to panic.

Applicant

During the Open Days: I signed up for an architecture interview with the professor. And that definitely eased some of my anxiety, because I find it hard to get a sense of things just by looking at a website. Where do I find that? How many people get in, so many people. What are my chances, anyway? What do they want to see? And that helped me a lot. But of course, it was also quite an effort to travel there.

Applicant

In times like these, when everything is digital and there's no one there to talk to, an in-person appointment like this is, of course, almost a stroke of luck, it allows you to ask questions.

Academy staff member

Registration

- The form for online registration and for uploading the portfolio is designed to be easy to understand. It is clear whether the information entered can be edited later.
- Explanations are provided as to why information on demographic characteristics such as gender or background is requested.
- Successful registration, including the upload of documents, is confirmed or logged via email.

Portfolio

- The purpose of the portfolio is clearly stated.
- A checklist of formal requirements is provided for the portfolio, as well as for the exam assignment. The checklist includes, for example, information on scope, acceptable file formats and media, software to be used, the level of completion of the artistic works, and the need for accompanying texts. If such formal requirements do not exist, this is clearly communicated.
- Portfolio reviews are offered. These take place in groups so that students can also learn from the feedback given to others.
- The portfolio review is scheduled to allow sufficient time for revisions before the portfolio submission deadline. Information regarding the dates of the portfolio consultation will be provided in a timely manner. Additionally, the Academy will specify the level of completion required for the artistic works by the time of the portfolio consultation.
- If technical issues arise on the Academy's website during online registration or when uploading the portfolio, the submission deadline will be adjusted.

I remember I spent time browsing on Kiosk from the Student Welcome Center. And I found this interview about seven portfolio tips for applicants. I was inspired by this interview about portfolio tips. And I also used some of them.

Applicant

I also took part in a portfolio review. Afterward, I made quite a few revisions. We had a video call. I think there were seven or eight other people there. As a group, we went through every single portfolio, so we could hear the feedback given to others and reflect on it ourselves. At first, I was still pretty unsure. But after the portfolio review, I had a much clearer idea of what I still wanted to do. And then I was happy with it, too.

Applicant

If you come from a school that's never done anything like this before, you have no idea. I don't even know what a portfolio is.

Applicant

That there's just a bit more transparency about what's expected in terms of the requirements, the scope, and things like that. You only get that information if you go to the extra trouble of coming here in person or calling everyone to sign up for consultations and such. It's not just freely available.

Applicant

There was uncertainty the whole time, right up until the end. Whether it would work out, in terms of the scope, the layout, the use of software, the number of images, the number of drawings, the number of words, and even how much I explain and so on.

Applicant

What stressed me out a bit, though it was kind of cool in the end, was that it felt a bit like being thrown in at the deep end: just filling out the portfolio with zero guidelines. I don't know if there really are any guidelines. It stressed me out. Okay, the portfolio is supposed to look a certain way, but I just don't know what it's supposed to look like.

Applicant

Assignment

- The assignment is precise and articulated clearly. For orientation purposes, examples from the previous year and/or guiding questions are provided.
- Applicants also receive the assignment via email.
- The objectives and evaluation criteria for the assignment are communicated transparently.
- There is an information session being offered regarding the assignment.

Admission Interview

- Information regarding the general conditions of the admission interview (date, duration, sequence of appointments if there are multiple parts to the exam, location, procedure, content, purpose, language) and the number and roles of the jury members present is provided as early as possible. It is also made clear whether this is an exam or an interview – that is, whether knowledge is being tested or whether the focus is on getting to know one another and exchanging ideas. The information provided corresponds to the actual interview situation.
- The procedure for the admission interview is briefly explained again at the beginning of the interview.
- For in-person interviews, the location is clearly signposted, and at least one contact person is available on site.

Decision-Making Process

- The decision will be announced as soon as possible, and candidates will be informed in advance of the expected timing.
- The jury will decide which information can be provided to the applicants.
- If their application is unsuccessful, applicants will receive feedback upon request, which will enable them to improve their application for a future opportunity.

- When feedback sessions are offered, they take place promptly, with the opportunity clearly communicated.
- Upon acceptance, additional information regarding the next steps (points of contact, required documents, registration deadlines, start of studies) is sent, and applicants are informed about support services such as the Student Welcome Center.

2 Good Practices for Equal Opportunities and Diversity of Perspectives

Interviews with Academy staff made it clear that ensuring equal opportunity in the admission examination is a shared concern. Since various biases[9] can come into play when perceiving and evaluating people and situations, concrete measures are needed to ensure equal opportunity. Key areas of focus here are the composition of the admission jury, the structure of the admission interview, and reflection on the decision-making process.

A jury composed as diversely as possible allows for a variety of perspectives. This can, for example, counteract the tendency to favor individuals who are like the jury members. A predetermined set of standard questions helps ensure that the same basic information is obtained from all applicants. Taking notes on each individual admission interview reduces the risk that the assessment of one interview will be unduly influenced by the subsequent interview. When reflecting on the decision-making process, internal university reports and analyses on equal opportunity in admission examinations, such as the Opportunities Monitor[10] from the Quality Development Department, can provide important insights.

9 An overview of various types of bias can be found here: Diversity Glossary: https://www.anonyfy.jobs/diversity-glossar (in German only).

10 Quality Development Department: Opportunities Monitor. Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. https://www.akbild.ac.at/en/university/quality-development/chances?set_language=en.

Registration

- Explicit reference is made to the principle of equal treatment of all applicants.

Admission Interview

- The jury is composed as diversely as possible, representing different social positions, areas of expertise, and hierarchical levels. Concentration of power within the jury is to be avoided.
- The jury also includes members from other fields of study who focus more on the applicants' skills and their work and less on their fit with the specific study program.
- Students are also part of the jury. Students could request that an application is to be reconsidered if the decision is incomprehensible to them.
- The advisory and support services provided by the Working Group on Equal Opportunities are reviewed and utilized by the jury members.
- The questions for the admission interview are discussed in advance by the jury, and a set of standard questions is established so that all applicants are asked the same questions.
- Questions are asked that are tied to as few prerequisites as possible. For example, asking about the last art exhibition an applicant attended assumes that exhibitions are accessible to applicants, whereas asking how applicants engage with art involves fewer prerequisites and is therefore more equitable.
- Notes are taken during each admission interview so that the jury's impressions of individual applicants and their responses can be recalled later. The documentation is structured as clearly as possible, transparent, and based on objective criteria.
- Time is set aside between admission interviews for discussion and reflection within the jury.
- The admission interview follows a set procedure, ensuring that it is the same for all applicants.
- The focus of the interview is generally on the applicant's

artistic work and practice, not on the person. At the same time, the jury considers that various structural factors and social conditions can influence an individual's ability to develop their artistic practice.
- Assumptions about the applicants and their artistic work are addressed and clarified.

There is also one person [in the jury] who is from outside the Academy. I find this quite interesting because this person has absolutely no insight into how the program is structured and is not integrated into the Academy or its structures.

Academy staff member

They [the Students' Union, the students] have no voting rights [in the decision-making process]. But if they feel a decision isn't fair, then we put it on hold, so to speak. That means: Okay, we won't vote on this person right now, or we'll write down the person's name and discuss it again at the end.

Academy staff member

I've heard this time and again that it feels strange when you're sitting in front of such a large group. But from our perspective, it's good because we then have very different perspectives. I mean, this real diversity. We often have people saying, "Hey, that person is great," and others saying, "No, I don't think so at all." And the smaller you make the group, the more consensus there tends to be. I appreciate these discussions because they incorporate different perspectives, which then allow us to invite a diverse range of people.

Academy staff member

There's a balance: standard questions are important so that we ask everyone the same question. And I think it's also important for the applicants themselves that such questions exist. But of course, we also must address the work itself on a very individual basis, and then these interviews simply take very different paths. In other words, we ask follow-up questions tailored to each person.

Academy staff member

Decision-Making Process

- Jury members have the opportunity to attend anti-bias training.
- The members of the jury are aware that the applicants' language (dialect, accent), manner of expression, and habitus may influence their decision.
- The jury establishes evaluation and selection criteria in advance, which are regularly discussed and reviewed for appropriateness. The jury considers whether certain criteria lead to structural disadvantage.
- Each application is evaluated by several jury members, and the overall assessment is made following a discussion within the jury.
- The jury considers whether diverse perspectives are represented among the selected applicants.
- The jury reviews internal university reports and analyses on equal opportunities in the admission examination, such as the Opportunities Monitor[11]. The selection of applicants is considered in light of these reports and analyses.
- The jury does not make a decision until all applicants have completed all stages of the admission examination. In making this decision, the jury takes into account all demonstrated achievements (e.g., portfolio, exam assignment, interview). The jury's decision is thus based on as broad a foundation as possible, allowing strengths and weaknesses to be balanced.

11 https://www.akbild.ac.at/en/university/quality-development/chances.

We always try to make the group diverse. So, we always discuss: Okay, how many male, female, and diverse persons. We then tried to even things out a bit during the interim discussion. We have a good distribution; these were simply the better candidates. So, we talk about age, that not everyone is 22 and already has a bachelor's degree, and that people come from different countries and aren't all just from Germany.

Academy staff member

Of course, I think it would be good if these criteria, artistic potential and relevance to contemporary art, were mentioned, when there are, say, five points listed there. Yet, I don't know whether that would lead to better or more transparent decisions.

Academy staff member

3 Good Practices for Identifying and Removing Barriers

Various social groups encounter barriers along their educational paths. If opportunities are to be not only equal but truly equitable, these barriers must be identified and dismantled. In doing so, it is important to note that equality for people with disabilities, for example, through alternative testing methods, is also regulated by law.

Barriers can be significantly reduced if care is taken to ensure that the venues for selection interviews are accessible, or if the need to be physically present for various steps of the admission examination is eliminated through online options. Not having to be physically present at the Academy benefits, among others, applicants with mobility impairments, financially disadvantaged applicants who must travel long distances, and applicants with caregiving responsibilities. Providing information in multiple languages and allowing applicants to bring translators to the admission interview supports individuals whose first language is not German. It is also helpful to include references in all informational materials to support services, such as the contact person for applicants with disabilities and the Student Welcome Center. Specific outreach initiatives, such as *The Academy Goes to School (AgidS)*[12], begin even before the admission examination and target groups that are still underrepresented at the Academy.

12 https://www.akbild.ac.at/en/studies/academy-goes-to-school?set_language=en.

Preparation

- The website and informational materials are accessible.
- The website and informational materials are available in German and English.
- The website provides information on financial support options for students.
- The contact information of the person responsible for applicants with disabilities and of the Student Welcome Center is clearly displayed on the website and in all informational materials.
- For applicants with disabilities, needs-based solutions are offered to ensure the accessibility of the admission examination.
- Networking opportunities are offered, e.g., through links to the studios' Instagram accounts or to student representatives.
- To reach out to individuals who are underrepresented at the Academy, there are education- and career-related information events (e.g., information booths at the *BeSt* career fair[13]) or specific initiatives, such as *Akademie goes to School (AgidS)"*[14] and *Kiosk*[15] .
- There are designated contact persons for issues that could represent various potential structural disadvantages, so that applicants do not have to "come out" before the admission jury.
- The admission examination is scheduled to allow applicants from third countries sufficient time to apply for visas, etc.

Maybe there is a better way to collect all the information about available financial help, because it's a little confusing on the website. And this whole system with the refunds for the tuition costs, which is a great thing, by the way, is not completely clear.

Applicant

13 https://www.best-messe.at (in German only).
14 https://www.akbild.ac.at/en/studies/academy-goes-to-school?set_language=en.
15 https://kiosk.akbild.ac.at/en.

For example, we have little experience with people with disabilities, so we're currently discussing how we can improve our website to make it more accessible.

Academy staff member

Registration

- Specific needs are explicitly addressed, providing a direct opportunity to communicate them. In this way, the Academy also demonstrates its awareness of barriers and its conscious approach to addressing them.

Portfolio and Assignment

- Both the portfolio and the exam assignment can be submitted online.

Admission Interview

- Attention is paid to the pronouns used in the application materials, and applicants are asked to include their pronouns with their (login) name during an online interview.
- Applicants can choose between a German- or English-language admission interview and, if needed, bring a translator to the interview; they will be informed of this option in advance.
- Applicants may choose between an online and an in-person interview without having to provide a reason. Both options are treated equally.
- When scheduling online admission interviews, the applicants' time zones are taken into account, and they are asked about any time constraints.

It's not fair to do it in-person, because then people must travel. It just costs money and everything. That's why I think it's okay if it's online, and if it's online for everyone.

Applicant

It's up to each individual applicant to decide whether they want to go to the trouble of traveling from, say, Germany or Korea. But that doesn't result in any significant advantage or disadvantage in terms of content, because both formats are *structured more or less the same*.

Academy staff member

What's also helpful for applicants during the interviews with the professors, and then during the second part of the exam, is that they can have translators present if they don't speak enough English or German.

Academy staff member

Decision-Making Process

- The applicants' background, such as age and prior education, is considered when evaluating their artistic work.
- The evaluation refers back to the portfolio and other application materials to ensure that the decision is not unduly influenced by personal impressions or a particular demeanor during the admission interview.
- Structurally determined differences, such as varying levels of writing proficiency, are not considered grounds for exclusion but are addressed through appropriate support measures within the program.

For example, that you don't just look at the work, but also consider the person's background, that there's simply equal opportunity. So, for example, when it comes to educational background: Maybe the artist statement isn't written very well, but this person is 19 years old and simply doesn't have any experience in this field yet. In that case, you see more potential. So, we evaluate applicants very differently, with different starting points, so to speak, but really for the sake of fairness.

Academy staff member

So, the applicants themselves say: "I'm from the countryside and I don't have the opportunity to visit as many museums." Of course, that's considered as well.

Academy staff member

People have said, "Yes, their demeanor during the interview would have led us to reject them." And then we tried to focus more on the actual work to give the person a chance to reverse that negative impression. And that actually worked.

Academy staff member

4 Good Practices for Creating a Welcoming Atmosphere

Admission examinations serve as the gateway to an artistic degree program at the Academy. Due to their great importance, they can be experienced by applicants as stressful situations and are potentially associated with pressure and uncertainty. Precisely for this reason, it is essential to create an atmosphere in which as many people as possible feel welcome and respected.

Good Practices can be implemented here, particularly in situations where applicants and Academy staff are in direct contact. Measures such as listing the names of the jury members in an email before the admission interview or noting that applicants may ask questions during the interview require little effort. For in-person interviews, a carefully considered seating arrangement can help break down hierarchies. In online interviews, increased verbal communication can help compensate for the lack of other ways to gauge the applicant's demeanor. Even before the admission interviews, assignments that allow sufficient room for the applicants' artistic freedom can convey a sense of appreciation.

Preparation

- Jury members attend information sessions so that applicants are already familiar with them before the admission interview.

I took part in this online meeting where the exam assignment was presented. There were many people from the jury there who presented it and talked about the pedagogical aptitude exam [for Education in the Arts]. So, I already knew them. And I found them to be extremely friendly, supportive, and reassuring as well.
Applicant

Portfolio

- The guidelines for designing the portfolio are open-ended enough to allow applicants artistic freedom.

I don't know if there are any requirements at all. Maybe you can just do whatever you want. I don't think it's that easy to say how much guidance you want. Because on the one hand, if it's open-ended, you can do whatever you like. And that's okay, too. And sometimes, when it's so heavily guided, you end up trying to force yourself to fit into that mold. And I'm not sure how much that helps you create something you find interesting.
Applicant

Assignment

- The exam assignment is kept open-ended enough to allow room for the applicants' artistic freedom.

Just like with the portfolio, it was completely open-ended, and I did what I thought was right. So, in the end, I thought it turned out as good as it did because I stayed true to myself the whole time. And if it doesn't work, then it just doesn't work in general.
Applicant

I was very happy with an open topic because I already had some ideas in my head. And when I realized I could do anything, I was so happy. I just started the project.
Applicant

Admission Interview

- The jury members are listed by name and position in the informational email sent prior to the admission interview, and they introduce themselves at the beginning of the interview or are introduced by the chair.
- The jury members agree among themselves on "rules of conduct" to ensure a pleasant atmosphere.
- If the admission interview is held in small groups, care is taken to ensure appropriate group composition.
- For online admission interviews, the process is explained to the applicants in a separate room (e.g., via an informational text in the waiting room) before they meet with the entire jury.
- For in-person interviews, the applicant is personally escorted to the room.
- For in-person interviews, the seating arrangement is designed to reduce hierarchy. For example, applicants and jury members sit together at a table rather than having the applicants seated across from the jury.
- At the beginning of the admission interview, it is made clear that applicants may ask for clarification if anything is unclear.
- For admission interviews in small groups, the purpose of the group setting is clarified, along with whether interactions between applicants can or should take place.

- Group situations in which no interaction takes place, where applicants merely listen to one another, are avoided.
- In online admission interviews, space is provided for reflection on how online presentations affect the perception of artistic works.
- During online admission interviews, attention is given to the fact that sensory input is more limited than in an in-person setting, and therefore more information is conveyed verbally.
- During online admission interviews, it is ensured that everyone is visible and that the audio quality is good.
- If technical issues prevent an online admission interview from taking place at that time, an alternative date will be offered.
- Buffer periods are built in between admission interviews to allow for the resolution of technical or other difficulties.
- Even during short admission interviews, some form of feedback or commentary, as well as visual cues for active listening (e.g., nodding, eye contact), is provided so as not to give the impression that the interviewer is not listening.
- Only one question is asked at a time. Sufficient time is allowed for answering each question. If the interview time is very limited, fewer questions will be asked accordingly.
- If applicants lose their train of thought, follow-up questions are asked to help them refocus or regain their bearings.
- Applicants are also given the opportunity to ask questions, for example, at the end of the interview.
- The admission interview is not a test of knowledge or "correct" answers; rather, the questions allow applicants to express themselves. No overly personal questions are asked; the focus of the interview is on the applicants' artistic work.
- As far as possible, applicants are not interrupted while answering.
- For full-day on-site admission examinations, a meal is provided for applicants.

Basically, this setup, arriving early in a separate room, so to speak, really helped, I think.
Applicant

I think it's just the way the interview was conducted. It was just a very competent talk about the work. So that's what made me feel comfortable, that we were talking about the work and not anything else.
Applicant

I found it [the interview] to be very friendly, open-minded, and warm, so much so that it helped calm my nerves. The interview convinced me to attend this art college and join this class, because I found the conversation so interesting.
Applicant

It was nice that the jury introduced themselves at the beginning. They radiated a sense of relaxation and calm even during the introductions and were very welcoming. And that made the atmosphere relaxed.
Applicant

And we were all sitting at one table, and I wasn't standing up front or anything like that. I found that pleasant, it's just the way it is, and we're sitting together now, and even when we ask questions, it's more on an equal footing. I had the feeling that it wasn't condescending.
Applicant

Decision-Making Process

- The rejection letter is worded in a way that is not discouraging or interpreted as a rejection of the person.

5 Continuing to Work with Good Practices

The Good Practices compiled in this compilation are based on the experience that applicants and Academy staff have had in specific situations during the admission examination. Many of them have already been implemented in practice or were perceived by interviewees as helpful and supportive. The idea is that these positive experiences will provide a foundation for the future development of the admission examinationa and help to improve procedures and approaches, and, where necessary, redesign them. The Good Practices are intended to demonstrate that

- there is more than one way to ensure equitable and fair admission examinations.
- there are different ways to design processes.
- sharing suggestions and positive experiences can be helpful, but that these often need to be adapted to a specific context.
- there are unconscious decisions in processes that should be critically reflected upon on a regular basis.
- new approaches should be explored.

This compilation deliberately avoids formulating normative or definitive guidelines. On the contrary, these Good Practices are intended as a starting point. Equitable and fair admission examinations can only be designed in collaboration with all stakeholders and through continuous dialogue, even across boundaries of study programs. The proposed practices can be applied, further developed, and adapted. This compilation is intended as a source of inspiration for this process.