FINE ART ADMISSIONS FEEDBACK REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the admissions process in the Ruskin School of Art (the University of Oxford's Department of Fine Art) and contains generic statistical information from the 2022 UCAS cycle for entry in 2023. This information is relevant to the BFA course in Fine Art (the only undergraduate degree offered in the department). In some cases, statistics may be withheld to protect individuals within a very small cohort.

We thank all candidates for considering and submitting an application for Fine Art at Oxford. We appreciate the time and effort you have put into making an application. We again received an exceptionally high number of applications and there were many excellent candidates. Every year we have to make many difficult decisions. We hope that the data supplied in this document will help candidates and referees to understand an individual performance in the context of a very competitive field of applications and a complex process. (The figures are preliminary.)

Requests for clarification and further information should be directed to colleges in the first instance, but the Ruskin School of Art may be contacted via info@rsa.ox.ac.uk. The School is unable to comment on individual applications.

As the BFA is taught entirely within the School, shortlisting and interviews take place within the department, with colleges interviewing candidates at their discretion. The Ruskin makes the decisions about offers, subject to the colleges' approval.

Notes:
1. Portfolios were submitted via the online digital platform SlideRoom.
2. Interviews in 2022 were conducted remotely, on Microsoft Teams
3. The Ruskin School of Art does not offer deferred entry.

1. ADMISSIONS STATISTICS

In 2022, the number of applicants for Fine Art at Oxford rose compared to 2021, almost equalled the highest number received in 2020, and was considerably higher than 2019 (the admissions cycle prior to the pandemic).
- **251 complete applications in 2022** (compared to 237 in 2021, 254 in 2020, and 208 in 2019)

Overall figures are as follows:

	Applications (Incomplete*)	Complete Applications considered	Shortlisted for interview	College Offers	Open Offers**	Total Offers
Total	255 (4)	251	52	30	2	32
Identified as Female / Male	201 / 53 (3 / 1)	199 / 52	31 / 21	18 / 12	1/1	19 / 13
UK / EU / Overseas	179 / 11 / 64 (3 / 0 / 1)	177 / 11/ 63	42 / 1 / 9	25 / 0 / 5	2 / 0 / 0	27 / 0 / 5
of 177 Home candidates – post-16 school						
State	128 (3)	125	28	19	1	20
Independent or overseas school	52 (0)	52	14	6	1	7

* UCAS application received but no portfolio submitted
** In 2022-23, four colleges participated in the rota for the Open Offer Scheme for Fine Art, in which a participating college may underwrite an offer made to a candidate identified by the Ruskin for a place, in addition to their usual college places for Fine Art.

Of the 251 candidates with complete applications:
- **12.75% (1 in 7.84)** were offered a place
- **20.7% (1 in 4.8)** were invited to interview.

Of the 52 candidates invited to interview
- **61.5% (1 in 1.63)** were offered a place.

2. ADMISSIONS PROCESSES

Unlike in other Humanities subjects, shortlisting and final selection recommendations for Fine Art are centralised and determined by the Ruskin School of Art's Admissions Panel as a whole, and are not devolved to colleges. (This is because all teaching of Fine Art, including tutorials, takes place within the School, and not in colleges.)

2.1 SHORTLISTING

2.1.1 Selection Criteria
Candidates are assessed on the two parts of their application: the information on their UCAS form (past and predicted exam results, academic reference and personal statement), and their portfolio submission, For UK candidates we also use contextual data, such as school performance and postcode data, as outlined on the Oxford Admissions website:
http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/decisions/contextual-data

UCAS submission
Departmental webpage: https://www.rsa.ox.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/applying-to-study-for-a-bfa)

The UCAS form is expected to include a supportive reference, and evidence that the candidate has either
- achieved or is predicted to achieve 3 'A' grades at A-level or equivalent; OR
- if enrolled on or has completed an Art Foundation Diploma (or equivalent post-18 art-related qualification), achieved A-A-B at A-level or equivalent.

The shortlisting panels also referred to the candidate's personal statement for further information about their art practice and artistic and academic interests.

Portfolio submissions
Departmental webpage: https://www.rsa.ox.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/submitting-a-portfolio

- Having demonstrated that they have met the minimum entry requirements in their UCAS form, candidates', applications are assessed on the strength of their portfolio.

2.1.2 Procedure for shortlisting
- There were four short-listing panels, each consisting of three Ruskin tutors; the panels convened on a single day, with a final Shortlisting Review meeting at which all the panels joined together to agree final decisions.
- All candidates' UCAS applications were reviewed by a Fine Art admissions panel in conjunction with portfolios submitted on SlideRoom for the purposes of shortlisting for interview.
- Portfolios were reviewed by Fine Art department admissions panel members and scored from 10 – 0, with those candidates achieving a score of 7 or more being shortlisted for interview. See **Appendix 1** for the portfolio marking scale.
- Applicants with lower scores in some aspects of their application will only have been invited for interview with special consideration of other factors, for example, contextual data.

After the Shortlisting Review meeting, the Admissions Coordinator assigned all candidates invited for interview to a panel composed of three Ruskin interviewers. The Ruskin informed the colleges through the University's central Admissions system of the outcomes of the shortlisting, so the colleges could notify the candidates accordingly.

2.1.3 Weighting

Information – weighting	High	Medium	Low
Predicted or actual performance at A-Level (or equivalent)	Yes		
Portfolio Submission	Yes		
Personal Statement		Yes	
Reference		Yes	
GCSE scores			Yes

2.2 INTERVIEWS

2.2.1 Modes/Criteria of assessment of shortlisted candidates
Departmental website: https://www.rsa.ox.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/applying-to-study-for-a-bfa)

Shortlisted candidates were invited to send by email further examples of additional / more recent artwork, which were added to their previously submitted portfolio on SlideRoom, and which could form a basis for discussion.
- All 52 shortlisted candidates successfully sent their new work by the deadline ahead of the interviews.

Candidates were assessed on
- their extra / new work (in addition to the work submitted in their portfolio) – marked on the same scale as the portfolios (see 2.1.2 above and **Appendix 1**);
- their interview – marked on a scale of 10-0, with 7 as the minimum score to be considered for an offer (see **Appendix 2** for interview scoring scale). Tutors expected the candidates to demonstrate through the discussion:
    - the ideas and processes informing their work; their willingness and ability to communicate these; and their ability to listen and give considered responses within the discussion;
    - their motivation and commitment to the study and practice of Fine Art (including the History and Theory of Visual Culture);
    - their awareness of and critical engagement with contemporary art.

2.2.2 The Interview Process

All summoned Fine Art candidates were invited in advance (by the college of application/re-allocation) for a 20-30 minute interview with the Ruskin School of Art, either on Monday 5 or Tuesday 6 December.
Additional interviews with colleges (if required) also took place on these days or on Thursday 8 or Friday 9 December. All interviews were conducted on Microsoft Teams

There were two panels, each with three Ruskin tutors, on each day of interviews. Most candidates were interviewed by at least one interviewer from their first-choice college, either as part of the Ruskin panel and/or in a further interview at the college itself. Of the thirteen colleges offering places for Fine Art in 2023:
- Colleges with Ruskin Fine Art faculty on Ruskin interview panels: 8
- Colleges which sent non-Fine Art tutors to join the respective Ruskin interview panel: 1
- First colleges requiring an interview in college, in addition to the interview at the Ruskin: 3

Colleges which had conducted interviews in college sent their observations/preferences to the Admissions Coordinator.

2.2.3 Decision Making

The Ruskin panels met with the Admissions Coordinator at the conclusion of all the interviews, to discuss and scrutinise their decisions and the selection of candidates

The selected candidates were then allocated to first-choice colleges if possible, with reallocation to other colleges as necessary.

As well as the college offers, two candidates identified for a place by the Ruskin were made 'open offers' underwritten by colleges participating in the Open Offer Scheme*, with college allocation to be confirmed after A-level results have been received in August (or earlier if a space becomes available due to an offer-holder withdrawing).

Of the 30 successful candidates made college offers:
- 25 were allocated to their first college
- 4 were allocated to a second college without a further interview
- 1 was allocated to a second college following an interview in that college.

Of the 2 successful candidates made offers through the Open Offer Scheme:
- 1 was made an Open Offer underwritten by their first college
- 1 was made an Open Offer underwritten by a second college following an interview at that college.

Candidates who receive an Open Offer will be told which college they will go to after examination results are released in August 2023, if not sooner.

3. STATISTICS

3.0 Access: Home (UK) candidates' backgrounds

For UK candidates we use contextual data, such as school performance and postcode data (Oxford Admissions website: http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/decisions/contextual-data)

Home candidates	Applications (177)	Shortlisted (42)	Offers (27)
Most disadvantaged group	19	9	6
Next most disadvantaged group	47	11	8
Other applicants with available contextual information	62	9	5
Least disadvantaged group	27	9	6
N/A (data not available)	22	4	2

3.1 Entry Qualifications Statistics – Foundation courses

The Ruskin highly recommends that candidates commence a Foundation course in Fine Art (or equivalent) before applying, though candidates are also accepted directly from sixth form.
(Departmental webpage: https://www.rsa.ox.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/applying-to-study-for-a-bfa)

Home candidates *	Applications (177)	Shortlisted (42)	Offers (27)
Enrolled on or completed a Foundation Diploma or equivalent post-18 qualification	84 (47.5%)	27 (64%)	17 (63%)

* These figures are based only on Home candidates with complete applications and exclude EU and Overseas candidates, who may not have access to foundation courses.

3.2 Scoring Statistics

Once a candidate has demonstrated that their qualifications meet the minimum entry requirements (3 'A' grades at A-level or equivalent; or, if enrolled on or has completed an Art Foundation Diploma (or equivalent post-18 art-related qualification), achieved A-A-B at A-level or equivalent), their application is assessed largely on the basis of their art practice, as demonstrated through their portfolio and at interview.

3.2.1 Portfolio Scores

Portfolio marks at each principal stage of the admissions process
(Scale 10 – 0, with those candidates achieving a score of 7 or above shortlisted for interview)

	All Applications	Shortlisted	Offers
Range of marks	3 - 10	7 -10	7-10
Mean	5.8	7.7	7.9
Median	6	8	8
Mode	5	8	8

3.2.2 New Work Scores

Marks given to new work presented

	Applications	Shortlisted	Offers
Range of marks	N/A	5-10	7-10
Mean	N/A	7.2	7.9
Median	N/A	7	8
Mode	N/A	6	8

3.2.3 Interview Scores

Marks given to interviews

	Applications	Shortlisted	Offers
Range of marks	N/A	5-10	7-10
Mean	N/A	7.3	8.3
Median	N/A	8	8
Mode	N/A	6	8

3.3 Outcomes

Successful candidates (UK-domiciled – contextual data)

	State Schools
Intake across University of Oxford (provisional figures)	69.2%
Intake in Fine Art at the Ruskin	74.1%

The final outcomes show that of the UK Fine Art offer holders, 14 (51.9)%) come from the two most disadvantaged groups, and 6 (22.2%) from the most disadvantaged group.

We know how disappointing it is for applicants, their families, and their schools when, despite being well-qualified and submitting a strong application, they don't receive an offer from Oxford. As this report reveals, the standard is very high, and each year we are conscious that we do not have room for all applicants with exceptional academic records, and who have excellent potential as students of Fine Art. We thank you for your patience with our application process, and wish you well for the future.

Appendix 1 – Portfolio assessment for shortlisting (and new work presented at interview)

Departmental webpage: https://www.rsa.ox.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/submitting-a-portfolio

- *Portfolio Review*
  During the process of reviewing portfolios, tutors look for work that goes beyond the mere fulfilment of school curricula. We search for highly motivated activity, and for a breadth of engagement, a sense of purpose and a strength of opinion in the way the portfolio is edited. A high degree of competence in the use of specific media is expected, but it is not in itself sufficient. The portfolios of candidates called for interview will also exhibit curiosity and creativity beyond the expectations of the A-level or equivalent, and an awareness of contemporary art practice. It is important for us is to be able to discover a sense of the temperament underlying the work, and to sense the deeper interests that inform the portfolio. We are not interested in finding a particular formula or a specific style, but in signs of energy, ambition, critical reflection and creativity. Your portfolio should show that you have:
  - *An independent and creative mind*
  - *An ability to go beyond the requirements of the school curriculum*
  - *Visual curiosity and imagination*
  - *An informed awareness of contemporary art*

Portfolio Marking Scale - those candidates achieving a score of 7 or more were automatically shortlisted

10 - Exceptional work that invariably exhibits curiosity and creativity beyond the expectations of A-level or equivalent, and a critical engagement with contemporary art.

9 - Some exceptional work that exhibits curiosity and creativity beyond the expectations of the A-level or equivalent, and a critical engagement with contemporary art.

8 - Highly competent work that exhibits curiosity and creativity beyond the expectations of the A-level or equivalent, and some engagement with contemporary art.

7 - Some highly competent work that exhibits curiosity and creativity beyond the expectations of the A-level or equivalent, and an awareness of contemporary art.

6 - A diverse range of competent work that exhibits curiosity and creativity, but limited awareness of contemporary art.

5 - Competent work that exhibits some curiosity and creativity, but limited awareness of contemporary art.

4 - Work that exhibits some competence, curiosity and creativity, but limited awareness of contemporary art.

3 - Work which exhibits some competence and curiosity, but little or no awareness of contemporary art.

2 - Work which exhibits some competence or curiosity, but little or no awareness of contemporary art.

1 - Work which exhibits a lack of both competence and curiosity, and little or no awareness of contemporary art.

0 - An incomplete and/or incompetent portfolio.

Appendix 2 – Interview assessment for the offering of places

Departmental webpage: https://www.rsa.ox.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/applying-to-study-for-a-bfa)

- **Interviews**

  We consider the interview as an opportunity for candidates to tell us about themselves and the ideas that inform their work.

  The work included in the second, pre-interview submission will form a basis for discussion. Candidates are encouraged to talk about their work and interests and to discuss contemporary art, including books they have read and/or exhibitions that they might have recently visited.

Interview Marking Scale – candidates were expected to score at least 7 to be considered for an offer.

10 - An exceptional interview that transmits the candidate's inspiration to the interviewers themselves

9 - A very illuminating interview in which the candidate demonstrates consistent originality of thought and imagination

8 - A very illuminating interview that throws new light on the candidate's work and interests

7 - An illuminating interview that demonstrates the critical and imaginative potential needed to study at the Ruskin

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6 - An illuminating interview, but one that does not fully demonstrate the critical and imaginative potential needed to study at the Ruskin

5 - An informative but only partially illuminating interview about the work and the candidate's interests

4 - An interview that demonstrates an ability to talk about the work and to answer questions about it in a way that is informative but not illuminating

3 - Some communication, but limited ability to explain the work or respond to questions about it

2 - A very basic ability to communicate or answer questions

1 - Little or no communication of any kind

0 - Interview did not take place