

Options and Preparation for Reapplying

You may not pass the aptitude test for Visual Communication at the Kunsthochschule Kassel on your first attempt. For many, a rejection is certainly a great disappointment. Please do not let this discourage you: most students—and most lecturers as well—have had this experience at some point in their educational path.

First of all, we would like to thank you for taking on the challenge of participating in the aptitude test. You completed an assignment and additionally faced our questions in an interview. You can already be proud of that!

There can be various reasons why you have received a rejection from us.

Below, we have compiled a number of recommendations on how you can prepare if you wish to apply again:

- **Research carefully which university or type of higher education institution suits you best**—a university, an art academy, or a university of applied sciences. What kind of structure and learning environment do you need? Read the descriptive texts of the institutions and their departments carefully. Try to understand what these texts say about the type of people they are looking for as students. Art academies differ greatly from universities of applied sciences, and it may be that a university of applied sciences better matches your interests.
The Visual Communication program at the Kunsthochschule Kassel (KhK) is a project-based program. This means that students work in and on projects and, over large parts of their studies, must develop their own study structures. In other words, lecturers in the classes and work areas of Visual Communication assume that students largely organize their own technical and craft-related development, while receiving primarily conceptual and content-related support in the specialist classes and work areas. If you are particularly interested in developing your technical and craft skills, you should consider choosing a different institution, as Visual Communication at KhK places a strong emphasis on development as an author*.
- **Try to gather as much information as possible about the art academy and the Visual Communication program.** Inform yourself thoroughly about the content of the program. The website provides detailed information on the individual work areas of Visual Communication. Visit the annual Rundgang (open studios) or the graduation exhibition of the Kunsthochschule Kassel to get an impression of the Visual Communication program and the working atmosphere at the institution. Further information can be obtained by subscribing to the academy's newsletter or following the activities of the Kunsthochschule Kassel on social media.
- **Seek out suitable advisors to obtain feedback on your portfolio.** Attend the portfolio consultation offered by the program (dates are announced on the website). Make an appointment with the student advisory service for Visual Communication at the Kunsthochschule Kassel—this counseling is provided by

students who can offer a great deal of experiential knowledge from a student perspective. Feedback from third parties on online platforms rarely constitutes appropriate guidance.

- **When assembling your portfolio, make sure not to submit only assignments from an advanced art course or a portfolio preparation course.** Work on questions or tasks that personally concern you. Use the portfolio to show what currently interests you and what you are engaged with. The jury that evaluates the portfolios is not particularly interested in technical skills. Rather, it seeks to understand whether what Visual Communication offers and requires as a university program genuinely matches your interests and expectations.
- **The jury, which reviews approximately 200 portfolios each year, is rarely convinced by a portfolio created very quickly and spontaneously.** In other words: take enough time to create your portfolio. It is not important to the jury that you apply immediately after completing secondary school. Often, those aspects of portfolios that address experiences such as travel after graduation or a voluntary social year are particularly interesting to the jury.
- **Studying Visual Communication at an art academy can pose specific challenges for applicants who have previously been employed or have already completed another degree,** particularly challenges related to age differences. Keep in mind that in the foundation class of Visual Communication and throughout the further course of study, you will work closely with fellow students who may be up to ten years younger than you. In addition, consider what it means for you to study at the Kunsthochschule Kassel for five years—does this fit into your future plans?
- **Engage deeply with the image you have of a profession in the field of Visual Communication.** Where does it come from? What appeals to you about it? In application processes, we repeatedly encounter a fascination with the idea of “being an artist.” This fascination often has little to do with the professional reality in the field of Visual Communication. Examine your expectations regarding what and how much you will need to invest in a professional career. We emphasize that successfully graduating from an art academy does not provide any job guarantee.

In short, we are looking for image/text/sound authors: people with ideas and questions, with the ability to critique, with attentiveness and curiosity, with an interest in social and political worlds—people who enjoy constructing meaning in visual, textual, and acoustic media and expressing themselves through drawings, sketches, photography, new media, film, sound, design, and games. Technical and craft skills are not the primary focus in Kassel.

We do not make the selection process easy for ourselves. Reviewing and evaluating all applications is always an immense challenge for us. We, the lecturers in Visual Communication—who ourselves completed artistic and design-based programs—have all

gone through this process at the beginning of our studies. Therefore, we strive to conduct it as respectfully and fairly as possible.

As a rule, after each application process we offer an online group meeting for applicants whom we were unable to admit. If you are interested in participating and engaging in a personal conversation, please register by email with the subject line **“Rejection Visual Communication”** to our administrative office (oberjorg@uni-kassel.de).