

Assessment on creative specialties

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Sun is in every person. Just let it shine.
Socrates

Among the specialties of higher and secondary specialized educational institutions there are those which require special artistic abilities and creativity. They are acting, performance, singing, painting, graphic and decorative arts, architecture, design, etc.

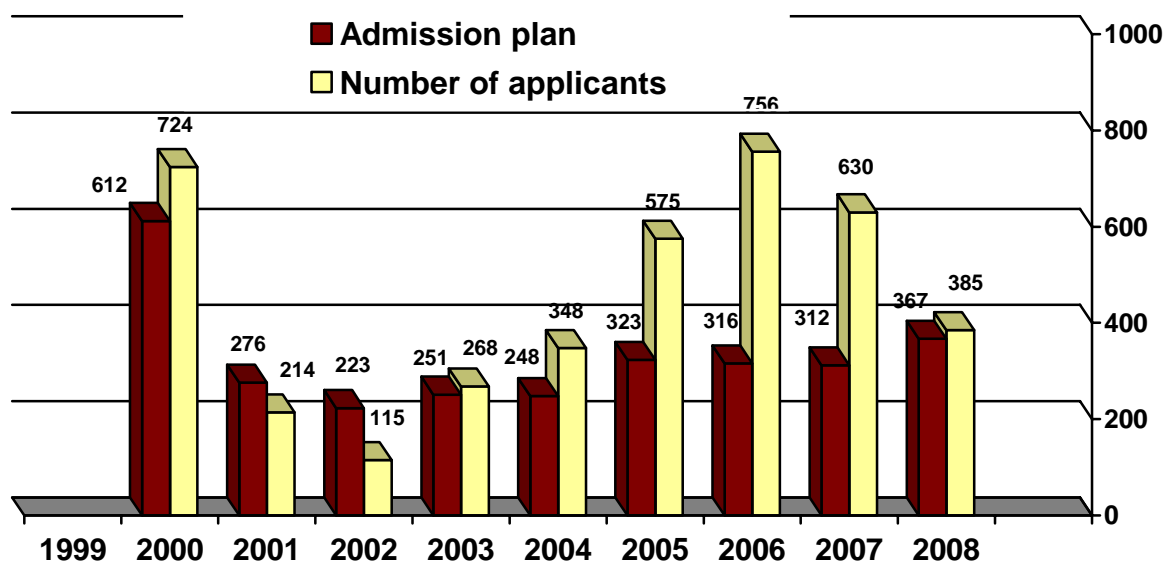
Creativity in the traditional sense was linked to the activities of people of creative professions. Being a product of biosocial development in its formation and development, it has a significant influence of social and cultural processes, in particular, the influence of environment, family, social, communication, education, etc.

In higher and secondary vocational schools of Azerbaijan we also have faculties on creative specialties. Admission to higher educational institutions of Azerbaijan has been implemented by the State Students Admission Commission (SSAC), the main agency conducting academic examinations, as well as examinations for the creative specialties since 1999. Taking into account international practices, national circumstances and realities, the SSAC's primary goal is admission of talented youth to creative specialties transparently and impartially.

Here, conditionally creative specialties are grouped into five concentrated areas. Among those are Visual arts, Music, Architecture and design, Theater, cinema and choreography, Physical education and sport.

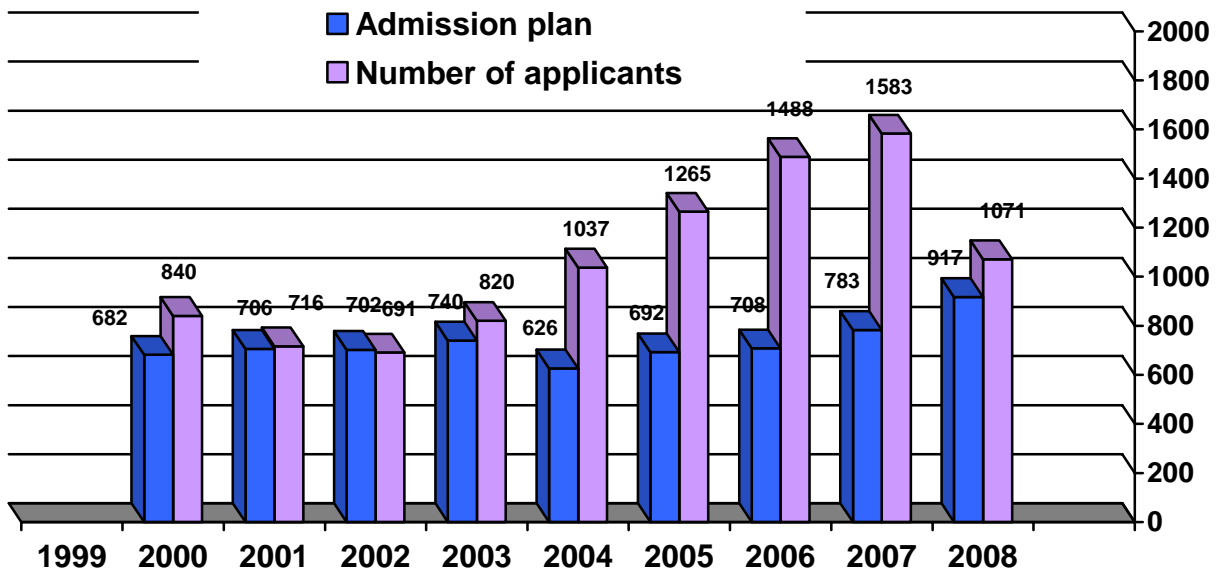
Different types of creative fields of activity require different levels of artistic competence of the students who choose these specialties. Let's look through admission plan for the creative specialties of higher schools and the number of applicants who have passed examinations of specific skills for academic years 2000-2008. They are based on scientific and statistical analysis of the students' admission represented in the scientific and methodical records of the SSAC. The results of data processing are summarized in the following diagram:

Architecture and Design

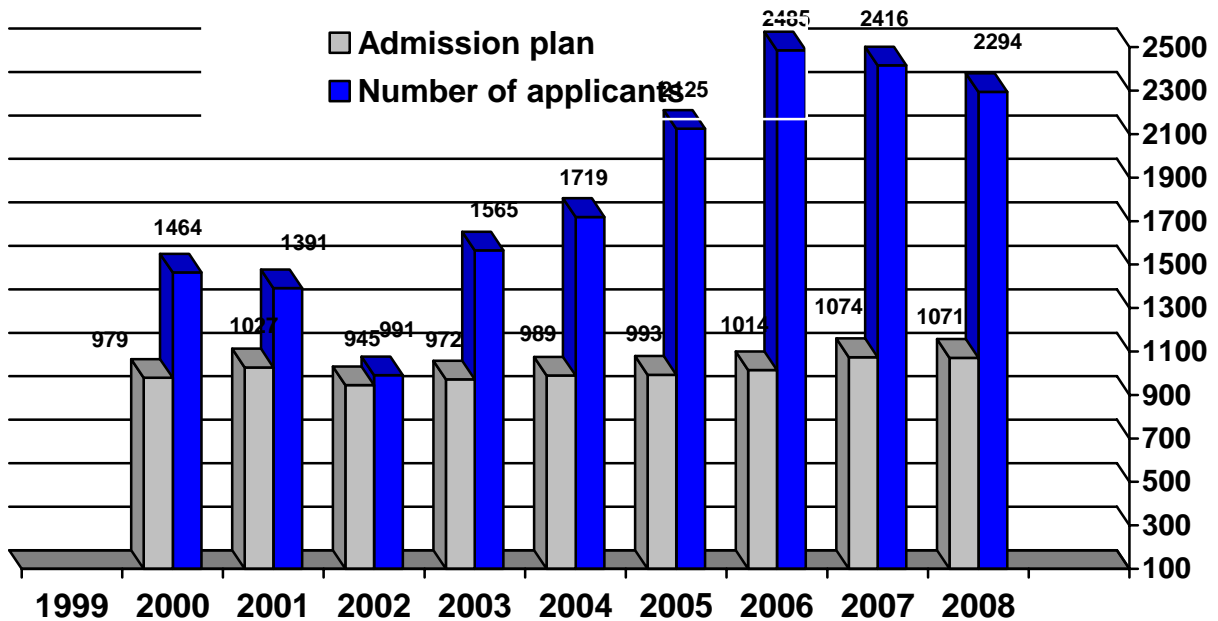


Art and Music

This diagram combines data for the areas of Art, Music, and Theater, movies and choreography.



Physical Culture and Sports



Comparative analysis of the admission plan and the number of applicants who successfully passed the examination by year show that the lowest of these data were observed in 2002. The objective reason was that the number of graduates of the year declined sharply as a result of reform in secondary education. On the other hand, the majority of graduates in 2002 were from rural areas. The statistical analysis over this period shows that only 30-40 percent of rural school graduates apply to universities.

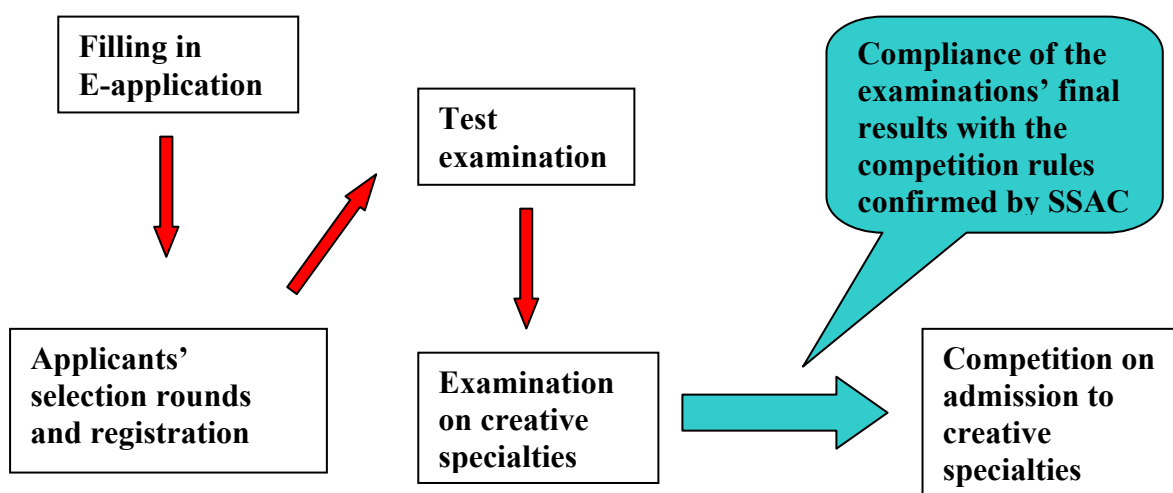
A different picture is presented in diagram for next years. There is observable increase of the admission plan and the number of students successfully passing the exam which demonstrates the growing interest in creative specialties, as there is a demand for these skills in the labor market. In addition, correct organization of Vocational Guidance also makes an impact on it. The SSAC makes a

great job in this field by publishing guidance materials on the content of occupations and future prospects of the specialists. Besides, in order to increase interest of applicants to specialties that require special skills, SSAC organized series of TV programs.

According to the «Rules of the entrance exams for the specialties requiring special abilities of higher and secondary special educational institutions of the Republic of Azerbaijan», the centralized examinations are carried out by the special commissions established by the SSAC.

These commissions include specialists of higher and secondary special educational institutions, members of creative unions and SSAC employees. As the examinations are conducted in a centralized manner, exam venue is chosen due to the area.

Process of participation at entrance examinations on creative specialties



For participation in examinations on creative specialties after confirmation of the electronic application according to the general rules an applicant should pass the selection and registration stage in the Examination Commission on creative specialties. Applicant presents his homework/portfolio and the required documents to the Examination Commission.

Depending on the selected specialty examinations on creative specialties can be conducted on one or more subjects.

If the applicant gets a bad mark (non-pass) on any of the subjects, he loses the right to choose the appropriate specialty and is not allowed to participate at next examination in the commission.

Taking into account the endowments of applicants who choose creative specialties, the SSAC gives them the right to participate in the competition for these specialties assembling no less than 100 points in the test exam and receive good mark (pass) on the exams on creative specialties.

Competition for creative specialties is carried out on the basis of final scores of applicants at an examination on creative specialties.

Entrance examinations on creative specialties differ in content. For example, in fine arts area, exactly in sculpture, fine art and decorative art examination commissions applicants have exams on three subjects: drawing, painting and composition. At examination on drawing in the Fine Arts Commission students draw from the life naked figure (nude), and in the Sculptures and Decorative Art Commissions - a portrait from life with shoulder-girdle. There is also a difference between the content of the examination on painting and composition.

Based on the specific characteristics of the creative specialties, these examinations differ also in the form of conducting and criteria for evaluation.

All examinations on creative specialties are valued at 10-point scale. For example, in Table 1 are the major criteria, and their expression in the scores on the examination on painting in the Fine arts, and in Table 2 - on drawing in Architecture and design.

Table 1

Fine Arts

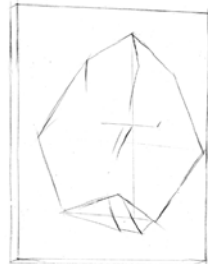

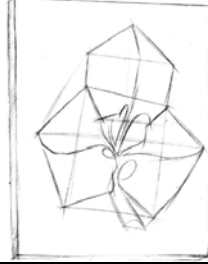



Criteria of estimation and their expression in the score for the subject «Painting»

№	Requirements	Score
1	Placement of a given figure (the head) or an object on canvas and paper	1
2	Proper placement of the model or the object on the horizontal line	1
3	Color fill of canvas or paper, in accordance with the structure (texture) and coloring	1
4	Correct choice of coloring and balance of colors between the background and the model or the object	2
5	Tone decision of relations between the background and a model or an object	1
6	Correct light-shadow solution of the model or the object	1
7	Proper use of cold and warm shades	1
8	Work on details of the model or the object in accordance with integrity	1
9	The correct completion of tasks in accordance with the requirements	1

Table 2

Architecture & Design

Criteria of estimation and their expression in the score for the subject «Drawing»:

№	Requirements	Job		Score
		<i>Ornament (garniture, tracery)</i>	<i>Antique (classic) head</i>	
1	correct placement of the model or the object in the given format			1
2	Finding out and correct construction of perspectives according to eye level			2
3	Finding out relative measurements of the model or the object			2









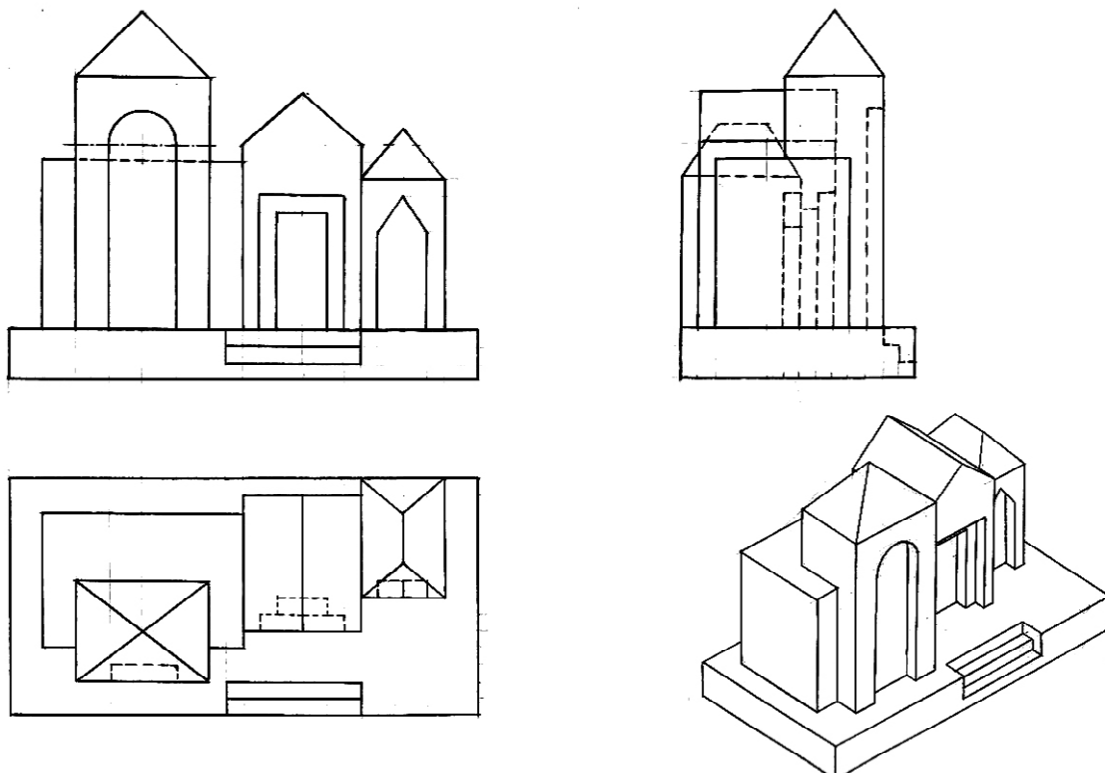
4	Structural construction of the model or the object			2
5	Correct light-shadow solution of the model or the object			1
6	Correct working on material structure of model			1
7	The final light-shadow conclusion of drawing			1

Table 3 shows the criteria for evaluating and the expression in the scores of the tasks on the subject “drafting” of Architecture and design direction, shown in picture 1.

Applicant should show the 3rd projection and axonometry (perspective geometry) of the object on the basis of 2 given projections.



Picture 1

Table 3

Architecture & Design
Criteria of estimation and their expression in the score for
«Drafting»:

Subject

№	Requirements	Score
1	correct choice of thickness of drawing lines	1
2	parallel and perpendicular drawing lines	1
3	correct construction of the third projection	3
4	correct construction of axonometric projection	5

In the field of music the criteria of evaluating are the following: the content and instrumental or solo performance of the examination program, a creative attitude to every task, error-free spelling dictation, sequence, modulation, pure intonation, etc.

In the field of Theater, movies and choreography the criteria of evaluating are as follows: the richness of content and performance of the exam program, the implementation of practical tasks, creative thinking.

There are differences between above-mentioned areas and the area of Physical education and sport. In contrast to other creative areas here we have clear criteria for estimation expressed in regulations. Along with the regulations, the technique of a task implementation also affects the estimation.

During the entrance examinations in contrast to the traditional methods of estimating when each teacher developed his own system of verification of tasks, the State Students Admission Commission is guided by unified criteria of estimation. This system helps to reduce or avoid teacher bias (subjectivism) in the estimation.

In the list of evaluation technologies oral examinations take special place, i.e. dialogue of the expert (an examiner) and the applicant. This dialogue has always had the nature of improvisation, and unclear criteria for evaluation. Practice shows that at the oral entrance examinations only a few tasks stated on the examination card can be stable. Nevertheless, we have provided a list of questions, some of which expert (examiner) should ask entrants. In addition, this exam, in contrast to test exam, has a direct contact between the expert (examiner) and applicants; it may also lead to teacher bias in

evaluation. To avoid this, the SSAC involves independent experts to take part in exams as one of the drivers of elimination of defects and subjectivity in evaluation.

Conducting the entrance examinations for the creative specialties needs hard work in preparation for the exams methodologically and organizationally.

With that end in view, the SSAC organizes scientific and methodological seminars in the areas of creative specialties. They function like open board of experts. Experts play an important role in drawing up the examination programs, criteria for evaluation, preparation and conducting of the selection rounds and exams. Their selection, training and participation at exams are an essential part of the examination procedure. The objectivity of evaluation of the examinations on creative specialties depends on the professional skills of experts, their civil and professional positions.

Preparation for the next exam on creative specialties begins with a large meeting – the scientific-methodical seminar (workshop). Here, on the basis of statistical data the results of admission to the creative specialties are analyzed. The results are used widely in the preparation for the next exam on creative specialties.

This year the teaching aids on Art, Music, Architecture and design, Theater, movies and choreography, Physical education and sports contained programs of the examinations, methodological guidelines, as well as criteria of evaluation, samples of examination tasks and so on. This helps applicants to prepare more intensively for their entrance exams and to choose the school for continuing their education.

Now during the workshops in conjunction with psychologists we are developing a new practice – psychological testing for the identification of creative potential of applicants. Psychological tests help identify the applicant's level of learning, i.e., demonstration of his personal skills, level of development of certain mental processes (memory, thinking, imagination, speech), the characteristics of his nature, etc. The level of learning helps to identify the psychological mechanisms for the ability to learn.

In conclusion, I would like to note that in order to improve the quality of applicants' preparation for admission to universities on creative specialties, the work on the development of creativity in all areas of secondary schools should be strengthened, and the network of out-of-school training be expanded.

I believe that the proposed methods for entrance exams on creative specialties and their assessment validated by the State Students Admission Commission of Azerbaijan will make their contribution to the process of selecting the best applicants in the competition of knowledge, talents and abilities.