

SY25-26 and SY26-27 Duke Ellington School of the Arts: Admissions Process Rubric

For Grades: 9-12

Note: This rubric will be in effect for SY25-26 and SY26-27 admissions.

About Duke Ellington School of the Arts (Ellington) Admissions Criteria: At Ellington, we are looking for scholars who have a passion for the arts, a commitment to community and promotion of artist citizenship, and who can work through challenges – balancing a rigorous college-preparatory schedule while committing to pre-professional arts training. We find the most successful applicants are those who put in effort in all their classes, even if their grades or scores are not perfect.

About Ellington’s Admissions Process: At Ellington, we request that all applicants submit an essay, report card, and three recommendations as part of their initial application. All lottery applicants who successfully submit their My School DC application are eligible to audition. There is no minimum GPA for entry.

Please note, Ellington will review applicants entering the 11th and 12th grade so long as they are transferring from an arts school and have sufficient arts credits in a similar program as their intended course of study.

Each component of the application process is scored and weighted according to the chart below. Applicants are evaluated as individuals and weighed against the needs of the school’s various arts programs. All eligible applicants (within a department) will receive equal ranking.

Admissions Component	Weight	Notes
Report Card Review (GPA)	10 points	<p>Ellington reviews grades (GPA) as part of the report card review. Applicants should submit their Final SY23-24 and SY24-25 First Quarter report cards. There is no minimum GPA required, but both report cards must be submitted for the application to be considered for admission.</p> <p>Applicants who receive a D or an F grade on a report card/progress report may be asked to provide more information or detail in their family interview.</p>
Essay(s): In My School DC application	10 points	The essay is used to assess applicant interest in our program, commitment to community, and experiences demonstrating personal perseverance. This essay is completed through the My School DC application.



		<p>Note: Depending on the department to which the applicant is applying, they may be required to submit additional essays, writing samples, or materials through the My School DC application or directly to the departments that the applicant is applying for via email. These additional materials are evaluated as part of the audition/portfolio review portion.</p> <p>Essays will be reviewed by each Art Department and the Ellington Admissions Team. Though applicants will be expected to write regularly throughout high school, the evaluation of essays does not solely focus on technical writing skills such as grammar and vocabulary.</p> <p>The essays focus on the applicant’s reasons for wanting to attend our school for the department they are applying to. These essays are intended to offer more detailed insight into their reasons for hoping to attend our school.</p>
Recommendations	10 points	<p>Ellington uses teacher recommendations to better understand an applicant’s experience at school and to provide context to their academic outcomes.</p> <p>Ellington requests three (3) recommendations. Applicants should make every effort to have their teachers submit a recommendation on their behalf. However, applicants will not be penalized for incomplete or missing recommendations and can be evaluated to move on based on available recommendations. If no recommendations are submitted, then the school will reallocate the points to the audition/portfolio review.</p> <p>We strongly encourage applicants and families to follow up with the individuals submitting recommendations on their behalf and to check the accuracy of recommender emails.</p> <p>Since the auditions begin immediately following the application deadline, when possible, we encourage applicants to submit their applications well before the deadline to ensure their recommenders have enough time to complete their recommendations. If necessary, Ellington staff may call the applicant’s school directly to receive information on behalf of the applicant.</p>

Audition/Portfolio Review	50 points	<p>All applicants who successfully submit a My School DC application in the Lottery round are eligible to participate in an in-person audition or portfolio review.</p> <p>Depending on their selected department, applicants will be asked to submit supplemental materials, including a headshot (if not submitted through the My School DC application), portfolio/work samples, etc. These materials (such as writing samples, portfolios, etc.) must be submitted directly to the department that the applicant is applying for via email and are evaluated as part of the audition/portfolio review. See our Audition Procedures which provide additional insight on each department’s process.</p> <p>Based on health guidance and family circumstances, auditions may be requested to be conducted virtually for SY25-26.</p> <p>Detailed instructions will be sent to all applicants, including information and next steps for any applicants who may need support or accommodations to complete the audition/portfolio review. Support and accommodations are also available on the school’s website year-round.</p>
Only applicants who pass the audition and application review stage will be invited to continue to the next steps of the process.		
Department Presentation Night	Participation is not required, but highly recommended	The purpose of the Arts Department presentation night is an opportunity for families and applicants who passed their audition to meet with the department to review department-specific expectations and ask questions about that area of study.
Family Interview	10 points	<p>Ellington believes strongly in identifying applicants with a passion for our program, commitment to community, and who can demonstrate perseverance. We request that applicants participate in the in-person interview along with at least one family member (parent, legal guardian, or other close family member) or other important figure (such as a coach, counselor, or mentor) who regularly supports the applicant. The accompanying adult’s participation is not factored into scoring in any way.</p> <p>Based on health guidance and family circumstances, interviews may be requested to be conducted virtually for SY25-26.</p>
Admissions Review	10 points	After the family interview is completed the Admissions Committee (Principal, Admissions Team, Assistant Principals, Dean of Students, Teachers and/or Department Chairs) will review the total application and provide final feedback to make a final eligibility determination.



After the Admissions Review, top scoring applicants from each art department will be marked eligible. All applicants will receive the same ranking (within a department) for eligibility determination in the My School DC Lottery.