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New Zealand Qualifications Authority
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Assessment Report

New Zealand Scholarship Media Studies 2022

Standard 93303

Part A: Commentary

The 2022 quotations/statements required deliberate and considered interrogation by candidates. Overall, the examination questions offered opportunities for candidates to excel, as demonstrated by the quality of responses from Scholarship and Outstanding Scholarship candidates. Most quotations/statements were broad enough to allow candidates to approach them from a range of different perspectives. Unfortunately, many candidates were armed with only a limited range of texts and scenarios, in some cases outliers or extreme examples, and often cherry-picked these to argue their point of view. Such responses were unconvincing.

The quotations/statements within the questions proved a challenge to candidates that had not completed a broad and inclusive programme of study, most notably one that included achievement standards that investigated interaction with media, relationships with media, and/or aspects of media industries (90989, 91248, and 91490) as well as standards investigating media governance, ethical issues, and/or significant developments (90995, 91254, and 91496). It is recommended that candidates undertake a full and well-rounded course of study to write convincing responses at Scholarship level that includes an understanding of a media industry and practical media production experience. Having a good
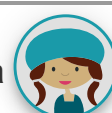
understanding of a media industry and practical production experience is essential for writing convincing answers across all three questions. For example, in Question One, most candidates attempted statement 4 about social media, and Elon Musk's very recent takeover of Twitter formed a substantial part of many candidates' answers. Such responses were often compared with Trump's use of social media and were not framed within any theoretical or academic context, suggesting a response based on a general awareness rather than any course of study.

Candidates awarded Scholarship kept their responses clearly focused on their chosen quotations/statements. They unpacked the quotations/statements in a clear and structured manner. Terms or phrases such as "New Zealand stories/content" (Question One, statement 3), or "misinformation" (Question One, statement 4), or "plagiarism" (Question Two, statement 4), or "diversity" (Question Three, statement 2) were defined, and their meanings unpacked in a convincing way.

Question One was dominated by quotation 2 and statement 4, with candidates largely ignoring quotation 1 on Māori representation and statement 3 on New Zealand narrative stories. In Question One, quotation 2, many candidates took the metaphor of online platforms as supermarkets too literally and struggled to interpret the question as one of distribution and promotion. Question One, statement 4, was the most popular statement choice. However, many candidates confused "misinformation" with opinion, and were unable to define how misinformation undermined trust in the mainstream media. Many candidates did not contrast and compare social media with mainstream media, often completely ignoring mainstream media in an attempt to discuss the rise and popularity of social media or how social media spreads ideas. The best responses focused on a specific platform or event and traced its development, while synthesising media theory and critical opinion, considering the likely implications. Weaker responses tended to discuss social media, in general terms, and discussed broad social movements or concepts, such as clickbait, without proving specific or relevant examples. It is important to address the specifics of the chosen statement. The best responses engaged with the key words of each quotation/statement. Overall, the responses were largely based on opinion and lacked specific and meaningful details. It is important for candidates to be supported in their understanding of the development of a medium/media industry and/or the factors that shape it.

In Question Two, candidates generally provided strong and well-composed arguments. Successful responses described the intended audience for their product and were able to discuss how design and production choices were made

to appeal to that audience and critically evaluate the success of those choices. Candidates that performed well maintained a balance of answering the question whilst critically reflecting on choices, challenges, or successes, and their impact on the outcome, using supporting evidence from their own production journey. At the same time, successful candidates also made convincing links to other film-makers or media producers to support their critical reflections on their production experiences. Successful responses also referred to influences or models and were able to convincingly connect their own experiences to these. However, many candidates failed to adequately tie influences with the creation of their own product. Whilst some candidates relied too much on their own production, other candidates relied too heavily on influential products and failed to connect links between them. Print productions were, overall, very well argued and provided strong analysis and arguments. However, many candidates continued to provide basic narratives of their production instead of providing an analysis, and made non-specific or no references to an audience, or in some cases, their own production experience. They also tended to lack insight into what made their production experiences so successful or unsuccessful in terms of completion, or audience appeal. Furthermore, many candidates failed to fully interrogate the quotations/statements. Candidates who attempted Question Two, quotation 4, often confused conventions with plagiarism and took the question too literally applying percentages to each stage of their production. A few responses discussed the production of texts or products outside the scope of the question, as they were not considered media productions; these included personal poems or letters that might normally be produced in an English context.

In Question Three, quotation 4 was the most popular choice for candidates, followed by statement 2. Many candidates responded to the statement with detail. Film Noir and Science Fiction were popular genres, as were the films of Jordan Peele. These provided successful case studies. Less successful answers tended to focus on either the artistic merit of different films without referencing specific social issues, or described the various social issues that films dealt with but failed to account for what made these entertaining; in short, the statement was not addressed in its entirety. Question Three, statement 2, which referred to "diversity", also offered scope for candidates who had enjoyed a comprehensive film study to respond to the question. There were some strong, thought-provoking responses here. Quotations 1 and 3 provided candidates with the opportunity to dig much deeper and demonstrate scholarly responses to long-form narratives from streaming services and alternatives to the well-worn three act structure. However, few candidates attempted these quotations, and those that did provided superficial responses, indicating a lack of understanding on these topics.

Part B: Report on performance standard

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with **Outstanding Performance** commonly:

- provided well-considered, thoughtful analysis with considerable insight and/or originality, including multiple viewpoints and cultural considerations where appropriate

- developed a clear, convincing argument that addressed the whole quote or statement

- had a strong understanding of historical context and societal links and could make connections between the past and current trends/events/developments

- 'unpacked' the quotation/statement and argued from a range of positions

- demonstrated originality and flexibility of thought with considerable understanding of ambiguity and subtlety in their argument

- applied their considerable subject knowledge in a convincing argument

- wove media theory and critical perspectives in their argument in a convincing and knowledgeable manner, by choosing relevant theorists and framing their approaches in a clear and appropriate way

- stated personal opinions appropriately and questioned both historical and contemporary decisions and trends

- synthesised critical understanding of their production experience with realistic and convincing reference and comparison to other media creators and/or texts.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- responded effectively to the whole quotation/statement and developed an argument using their subject knowledge

- included well-considered analysis with some insight

- used evidence from a range of sources in support of their argument

- demonstrated some understanding of ambiguity and subtlety in their argument

- demonstrated an understanding of historical context and/or societal links, in relation to the quotation/statement and how it fitted within the context of the question (going beyond giving an historical summary, by offering thoughtful reasons for specific developments)

- showed broad and/or deep subject knowledge through their argument

- used media theory where appropriate

- analysed their media production experience with reference to other film-makers or media creators.

Candidates who were **not** awarded Scholarship commonly:

- did not adequately address the whole quotation/statement in a convincing way

- developed simplistic arguments

- applied pre-learnt answers to quotes/questions that were not reflective of the quote/question selected

- made claims without clear supporting evidence

- used inappropriate or insufficient evidence

- did not attempt or complete all three essays

- argued from one narrow point of view

- described or summarised their production experience with limited analysis or reflection.

Subject page

Previous years' reports