

The following report gives feedback to assist assessors with general issues and trends that have been identified during external moderation of the internally assessed Drama standards in 2019.

It does not clarify specific standards but provides further insights from moderation material viewed throughout the year.

Awarding Excellence

When making judgement for Excellence, it needs to be ensured that all indicators of the Excellence criteria in the standard have been fully addressed. These are outlined in the Explanatory notes. The quality of evidence provided should also reflect the curriculum level. If the evidence demonstrates that the Excellence criteria have been only partially met, then the grade awarded cannot be Excellence. This is critical in distinguishing between high Merit and Excellence.

Consideration also needs to be given to the overall submission, such as succinctness and clarity.

When teachers rationalise their decision to award Excellence and provide clear examples of effective and convincing work, judgements are more often consistent with the national standard.

Overall, students create effective work when they demonstrate audience awareness and carefully consider how they communicate ideas dramatically. For example, they reflected and adapted using metacognitive skills during the process of creating and/or performing drama. This also facilitated critical thinking skills.

Collecting evidence

Opportunities are encouraged that allow students to collect evidence through different modes, such as blogs, video clips, etc. Such opportunities allow students to have agency on how best to demonstrate what they know.

In moderation, some students are being awarded Not Achieved as they have not 'handed in' supporting evidence. It is strongly recommended that to promote equity and inclusivity, students are advised that written work is only necessary for the 'script-writing' standards.

Intentions for character and devising work can be evidenced via conferencing, and oral modes. For example, students can speak their intentions before performing the work, while evidence is filmed for moderation purposes.

Student wellbeing

Where students are guided in how to present their evidence succinctly, the quality of their responses improves. When students are aware of the concept that quantity is not an indicator of quality, this also helps to reduce workload pressures.

In terms of student wellbeing, it is also timely to consider the importance of positive contexts and guidance regarding potentially 'dark themes' or inappropriate material. While the need for self-expression and realism is not disputed, the mental and physical wellbeing of students in their learning and assessment should be a significant consideration in programmes.

Student wellbeing is clearly reflected through evidence seen in moderation when contexts selected and/or co-constructed are:

- culturally responsive
- mapped to the principles and values in the front-end of the New Zealand curriculum,
- appropriate for a secondary school/kura context
- frame distanced¹ when appropriate
- managed to ensure that traumatic material² does not negatively affect the wellbeing of students, teachers and the potential audience.

Assessor Support

The Best Practice Workshops (online and face-to-face) offered by the Assessment and Moderation Team continue to be viewed by the sector as significantly contributing to improved assessor practice:

*"The workshop helped to review my own knowledge, and great to share ideas."
"It was great having time to challenge my thinking in assessment."*

Based on the success of the 'on request' model and the ability to have targeted support, the Assessment and Moderation Team will continue delivering this support model in 2020. Workshops or presentation slots can be requested to provide targeted support to regional or national audiences.

Additionally, we will continue to run the generic Transforming Assessment Praxis Programme, an online programme which helps assessors learn about re-contextualising assessment resources and collecting evidence in different ways to better meet the needs of their learners.

¹ Dorothy Heathcote MBE invented mantle of the expert and other dramatic inquiry approaches. Roles and contexts *are framed by distance* to explore *multiple perspectives*. For example, "Each frame distance provides students with a different responsibility, interest, attitude and behaviour in relation to an event."
<https://mantleoftheexpert.co.nz/frame-distance/>

² Refer to the 2019 Drama National Moderator Report for guidance on 'Wellbeing and contexts for Devising'.
<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/subjects/drama/nmr/#five>

This report also includes a link to the Ministry of Education web page containing an updated "suicide prevention kit for schools" <https://www.education.govt.nz/school/health-safety-and-wellbeing/emergencies-and-traumatic-incidents/>

OXFAM's guide for teaching controversial issues around global citizenship education might also be useful for drama teachers: <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/teaching-controversial-issues>

More detailed information, including how to request or register for a workshop, can be found on our Best Practice Workshop pages or by emailing workshops@nzqa.govt.nz.

Culturally responsive assessment

Examples of the selection of New Zealand theatre, such as Māori theatre, Pasifika theatre and significant work by New Zealand playwrights are seen in moderation. These typically allow students to provide convincing, successful evidence in an authentic context. This also responds to levels 6, 7 and 8 Achievement Objectives for the Understanding Arts in Context (UC) strand in the New Zealand curriculum.

Two New Zealand plays *Dawn Raids* and *Waiora* have been revised to include an educational supplement. The supplement supports students to clearly understand the context and world of the play. The choice of text studied can significantly support student achievement, and teachers are encouraged to be mindful of their learners when selecting material.

Observations from 91513

Context and dramatic concept

The MOE TKI assessment resources provide contexts to devise drama by supporting place-based learning and dramatic inquiry that embed localised curriculum. Students who understand the process drama principle of 'Frame Distancing' consider multiple perspectives and fresh approaches to shape the material or are inspired with new themes and situations to be explored during the devising process.

Overall, when students refine their concept statements to ensure they are realisable and consider the purpose and context of the drama to inform their stylistic choice of influence (theatre form or practitioner), more coherent and convincing work is created.

The devising process and coherent drama

Students who were successful for both solo and ensemble work responded to teacher facilitation of all components of the devising process as described in Explanatory Note 5. They used 'outside eye processes' to ensure that a new audience does not have to read the concept statement to understand the ideas and meanings behind what is dramatically communicated. The use of complex symbolism, though well intended and evidence of an imaginative process, may compromise audience perception in brief drama.

Students achieving higher levels devised some expository material so that the audience has immediate clarity about the setting and roles being depicted in the performed pieces. For example, the drama elements role, time, space, action, tension, symbol, mood and focus are credibly established and developed using selected dialogue, techniques, technologies and conventions.

Compelling devised drama

While students had commitment and thoughtful production application, this did not always result in engaging or powerful material for Excellence. Those who made perceptive devising choices structured the piece to clearly convey to an audience an understanding of

circumstances critical to the drama, showed conflict in the action of the drama to create tension and mood, and demonstrated control of dramatic pace.

In successful solo work, students carefully selected and edited direct speech and shaped the drama to ensure interest, value, change and development. They had stage presence, energy, and communicated the material with confidence, which in turn, supported an effective realisation of the concept.

Playmarket New Zealand

[Playmarket](#) have recently published a 'Guidelines Series' and the following two booklets provide relevant information and guidance for teachers facilitating NCEA Drama.

- *Working together: Cultural Practice in the Theatrespace.*
- *Working Together: Safety, Respect and Wellbeing.*

Communications

Outcome statements in external moderation reports

In 2017, moderation report outcome statements changed from '**Confidence**' statements to '**Consistency**' statements, as explained in an NZQA [Circular](#) at the time.

The previous **FOUR** 'Confidence' statements were changed to **THREE** Consistency statements. This reduction in the number of categories of statement has, in some cases, resulted in moderation report outcomes previously noted as 'Confident' now being noted as 'Not Yet Consistent'.

It is important to recognise that 'Not Yet Consistent' does not imply major issues on the part of the assessor, but that the aspects highlighted can be easily addressed through the advice given in the report.