

Assessment Report

New Zealand Scholarship Media Studies 2021

Standard 93303

Part A: Commentary

Overall, the 2021 examination questions covered a wide scope of media aspects, encouraging critical and thoughtful responses from candidates across a range of media formats and texts. Candidates were required to draw upon their study and reflect upon recent issues affecting the media. Successful candidate responses integrated up-to-date current issues and events, including historical elements and media theory (where appropriate).

In general, candidates who produced rote-learned essays were disadvantaged. Some candidate responses indicated an expectation of genre-based essays focusing on representation, and these candidates typically tried to find a question that could be applied to their prepared essay, resulting in lower grades.

As mentioned in the Commentary section of the 2020 Assessment Report, it is recommended that “candidates undertake a full and well-rounded course of study to write convincing responses (at Scholarship level). This includes an understanding of a media industry and practical media production experience”. There was clear evidence of more provider-learnt/guided responses than in previous years. Similar essay structures, content, and conclusions permeated candidate responses from many providers. This hindered candidates’ chances of achieving Scholarship. Some media theories and perspectives presented by candidates this year were extremely complex and would usually not be widely explored until second- or third-year university programmes (evident from the limited way in which candidates presented them).

Some candidates used factual inaccuracies when trying to uphold their arguments. Stronger attention is required when presenting arguments of fact, especially regarding history, technologies, events, and outcomes.

Question One:

Quotations 2, 3, and 4 were the most popular options in Question One selected by candidates this year. Candidates continue to recycle ‘genre essays’, with only limited attempts to address the nature of the whole quotation. Candidate responses featured similar texts and genres, with Film Noir, Sci-Fi, Horror (and its sub-genres), being the most popular. Many candidates chose to disagree with quotations 2 and 4. Quotations 3 and 4 provided the opportunity to dig much deeper and demonstrate scholarly responses to narrative and audiences. However, a lot of candidates attempting these quotations provided very limited responses, indicating a lack of understanding of the complex nature of close reading media texts.

There was a noticeable pattern from providers this year, with many candidates all using the same texts, quotes, and theoretical perspectives. As a result, there was little evidence of independence, originality, and flexibility of thought in these responses.

It was disappointing that more candidates did not attempt Quotation 1. The scope of the quote was based around the analysis of media texts and directors known for their non-linear narratives, such as Christopher Nolan, Quentin Tarantino, etc, who many candidates would have been familiar with.

Question Two:



Quotation 1 was the least popular with few candidates selecting this. Nevertheless, quotation 1 provided an opportunity for candidates to respond about the social and political importance of media in modern society. This should have linked well with knowledge gained from Achievement Standards 91248, 91250, 91254, 91490, 91492, and 91496. However, there was a distinct indication that candidates had only a very basic understanding of media industries and the purpose of media within a functioning society.

Quotations 2, 3 and 4 were the most popular quotes selected by candidates. In some cases, candidates ignored the chosen quote almost completely – particularly in quote 3, which directed candidates to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the media. Candidates who focused on issues and developments pre-pandemic generally wrote responses which were not at Scholarship level. Other candidates misinterpreted the question to fit their answer. This also occurred with responses to quotation 2, where some candidates struggled to convincingly account for what the quote meant by “run it”. Similarly, in quote 4, many candidates did not adequately unpack what made a streaming format a “business model”. The better candidate responses discussed in detail how and why streaming was a business model rather than just describing that it made media production money.

As mentioned in last year’s Assessment Report under Question 2: “The best responses focused on a specific (industry) platform or event and traced its development, while synthesising media theory and critical opinion, and considering the wider, likely implications. Weaker responses tended to discuss social media in general terms and discussed broad social movements or concepts without providing specific or relevant examples”.

Question Three:

Quotations 1, 3, and 4 were the most popular quotes selected by candidates. Overall, a lot of candidates are still tending to misunderstand the nature of this question about one medium and its production context, instead focusing too much on structuring a response toward their own media production. Many candidates summarised their production processes by describing a range of production techniques, such as a camera shot and its effect, without reflecting on any practical considerations or evaluating the success of these choices. At times, these types of responses seemed more like exercises in ‘close reading’ rather than critical reflections of the process of producing a media product. Candidates that did 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. (Please refer to paragraphs two and three under Question Three of the 2020 Assessment Report for further guidance on how to navigate this examination question.)

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 sweeping 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

[2020 \(PDF, 153KB\)](#)

[2019 \(PDF, 225KB\)](#)

[2018 \(PDF, 101KB\)](#)

[2017 \(PDF, 47KB\)](#)

[2016 \(PDF, 192KB\)](#)