NZQA
Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

2023 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Music (RAS)
Level:	Level 1
Achievement standard(s):	91950, 91951

General commentary

These assessments were completed as part of the pilot programme for Music in 2023. Both assessments were completed during class time and submitted digitally to NZQA by 25th October 2023. Individual schools could determine when the assessments could be completed and teachers were required to ensure authenticity of candidates' work.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 91950: Demonstrate understanding of music in relation to contexts

Assessment

This standard was assessed via a submitted report. Candidates were required to gather supporting evidence towards the standard during the year and then select their best evidence to submit. To achieve the standard candidates had to present evidence for both a Māori context and one other context.

The report could be in the form of a written report (pdf) OR a slideshow (pptx). Up to 6 hours of class time was recommended for candidates to prepare their report. Teachers could not provide any advice or guidance to candidates about the report content once candidates started to curate their response.

Commentary

The intent of the standard and the unpacking document stresses the need for candidates to examine connections between context and concepts in both pieces.

Choice of music is critical. Many candidates chose popular songs they liked, but which did not have enough context and / or musical evidence to meet the requirements of the standard. Evidence presented must be at curriculum level 6 to achieve.

Many candidates only discussed one piece of music. Often, candidates wrote a report about the song and the story of the lyrics, rather than addressing the requirements of the standard. Successful candidates engaged with the music and used well-chosen examples from the music to illustrate the points they were making.

For the Māori music piece, most of the songs selected by students were from the 1900s to the present. Some were in te reo Māori while others were bi-lingual. However, all songs were contemporary by genre and would be considered modern music, the foundation of sound

identified as distinctly Māori, primarily by the language of lyrics. In general, many responses explored the surface of contexts mainly through the lyrics and opportunities for deeper meaning were often missed. In contrast, successful candidates demonstrated a deeper understanding of a distinct Māori worldview, and looked beyond the lyrics to choose clear and relevant musical concepts to support this e.g instrumentation (including taonga puoro), rhythm, etc. In order to extend perspectives of Māori contexts, noho and wānanga with schools and tangata whenua communities within their local areas could be considered.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified links between concepts inherent in both the chosen pieces of music and their stated contexts, i.e. socio-cultural, historical, composer's intent or musical style
- identified examples of these links in the music
- discussed concepts that were not significant to the piece of music chosen.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- chose appropriate pieces of music which clearly demonstrated strong links between the concepts and context
- identified concepts which were significant in each piece of music
- examined each concept / context link explaining how they are related
- incorporated examples sourced from the chosen pieces of music to support their answers
- demonstrated a deeper awareness of the Māori context in their chosen piece.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- evaluated the concept / context links in both pieces
- drew conclusions about the significance of the relationships
- selected relevant musical examples to support the discussion of how the music and contexts are related
- demonstrated a deeper understanding of context in both pieces with some responses including meaningful insights from a Te Ao Māori lens.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- discussed the context and analysed the music but did not draw links between them
- discussed the context of the music only, with no musical concepts
- identified links between concepts and contexts for ONE piece of music, not two
- discussed one concept (often the lyrics of a song)
- discussed concepts that were not significant to the pieces of music
- presented evidence that met the standard for one piece, but did not sustain the level of achievement across both pieces. Often the response to the Māori context was weaker
- made superficial statements that were not at curriculum level 6.

Achievement standard 91951: Shape ideas to create an original composition

Assessment

This standard was assessessed by a submitted portfolio.

The portfolio consisted of THREE artefacts:

- a recording of a completed piece of original music
- a stylistically appropriate visual representation of the music
- a brief report on how the music was created.

Commentary

Candidates who were able to compose melodies, use repetition and contrast effectively, select appropriate timbres, and use accompaniment figures generally did very well, no matter what style or medium they chose to work in. Many candidates submitted a composition that was well beyond the expectations at curriculum level 6.

Candidates were more creative when not required to compose in a specified medium or style (such as all students being required to use Western notation, or set a complex poem to music, or all use the same DAW or compose in a specified style or form). Word setting is usually too demanding at Curriculum level 6, particularly if notated. This disadvantaged students who attempted it.

Annotated scores were generally well presented and chord charts for some compositions were superb. In contrast, the visual representation of digital music was often blurry, too brief and unclear as to what was a simple pasted loop and what tracks if any had been recorded, played or modified by the student/s. All digital music be accompanied by clear, annotated screen shots.

There was a lot of unnecessary writing about inspiration, feelings and what the composer/s wanted to express and why. This was somewhat counter-productive, particularly if the piece seemed to bear no resemblance to these aims.

Some groups uploaded the same written description on their creative processes which meant that it was very difficult for markers to work out which person / player / composer they were assessing. Any written statement of the group's creative process must be followed by a unique individual description for each candidate's submission, explaining their role (e.g. bass player) and how they contributed to the creative process.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- composed music that had a perceivable structure and style but with minimal musical development
- composed music that was quite brief (eg 1:00 – 1:20)
- used harmonic progressions that did not always align with melodic material
- relied upon loop software with minimal original material
- submitted a valid written description explaining how the music was composed
- submitted some form of visual representation that might enable others to perform or produce the music.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- used simple ideas inside a standard structure, with some development
  selected appropriate timbres
- composed recognisably stylistic music that mostly held together as a whole but which contained a few elements that were not always cohesive to the larger piece, such as unexpected dissonance, or awkward transitions

- submitted mostly clear visual representation that could probably be reproduced or played by others
- submitted a written description that aligned with the other two files.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- used repetition effectively
- composed effective melodies
- used contrast effectively
- used accompaniment figures that aligned with harmonies
- wrote stylistically appropriate harmonic progressions that aligned with melodic material were secure in the format / genre / medium
- developed creative ideas in a stylistic manner
- were thorough, clear and practical in their visual representation so that the music could easily be played or produced by others.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- presented music that was confused, unfinished and / or lacking in structure. This was particularly the case for loop-based compositions where loops in different keys were superimposed over percussion tracks that did not seem to relate to the music as a whole piece
- submitted a composition that was not at curriculum level 6
- did not provide adequate representation, eg one extremely blurry screenshot that could not be interpreted
- submitted music of insufficient length to communicate ideas
- did not provide any written description and/or visual representation.