

2023 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Making Music / Music Studies
Level:	Level 3
Achievement standard(s):	91420, 91421, 91423.

General commentary

Across the three standards, candidates were generally well prepared and a range of grades was awarded. The assessment papers provided candidates with appropriate opportunities to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. For those candidates who gained higher grades there was evidence of both careful preparation and familiarity with the format of the papers. On the other hand, those candidates who did not complete parts of questions or who relied heavily on pre-prepared answers in response to context questions were less likely to gain Merit or Excellence.

Candidates are encouraged to refer to the resources on the NZQA Music subject page, especially the Aural skills and Conventions documents.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 91420: Integrate aural skills into written representation

Assessment

This assessment is a written examination with three questions.

This year the assessment gave all candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their skills in a number of ways, and these were well spread across each question.

Commentary

Transcription questions provided the most challenge for candidates overall with some appearing to lose track of where they were and giving up. The quality of the sound system used for the examination is vital in allowing candidates to hear the music clearly.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified some individual chords, generally without inversions
- used incorrect conventions for chord indications
- identified contours in melody
- used some musical terminology but generally without description or explanation
- gave very brief and simple responses and left some questions incomplete.

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

- identified some pairs of chords and some inversions, using necessary accidentals in chord names
- identified a mixture of melodic contours and rhythmic and melodic phrases with some confidence
- used musical terminology to identify elements and features
- demonstrated an understanding of the function of different instruments within an extract in some detail.

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

- identified chord phrases throughout most or all of an extract, including inversions
- transcribed melodies and rhythms with confidence and few errors
- used musical terminology to explain what they heard in the music coherently and in detail, relating this to the whole extract and to styles and genre
- demonstrated an understanding of the function of different instruments within an extract.

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

- gave responses which did not answer the question
- did not use musical terminology
- gave very simple responses about stories in the music or the lyrics
- appeared to struggle to transcribe chords, rhythms and melodies
- showed limited understanding of keys, often identifying chords without necessary accidentals in jazz / rock chords.

Achievement standard 91421: Demonstrate understanding of harmonic and tonal conventions in a range of music scores

Assessment

This assessment is a written examination with three questions. The examination provided a range of opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge.

Commentary

Those who received Not Achieved generally failed to complete one or more questions.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- analysed chords and chord inversions with some accuracy
- identified tonal centres
- analysed and realised basic triads and / or bass notes
- demonstrated some understanding of harmonic techniques and compositional devices
- attempted most or all parts of each question.

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

- analysed chords accurately relative to the key identified
- analysed and realised added note chords with some accuracy
- wrote passing notes appropriately
- realised chord progressions accurately which showed some stylistic appropriateness
- identified and described specific compositional devices and harmonic features.

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

- realised chord progressions in a stylistically appropriate way, using appropriate chord choices where required
- analysed and realised added note chords with consistent accuracy
- identified pivot chords accurately
- identified compositional devices and harmonic features and were able to explain their function or impact
- provided consistency in the quality of their answers for all parts of questions.

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

- did not analyse basic triads accurately (including inversions)
- did not analyse tonal centres accurately
- did not realise chords or bass notes accurately
- wrote answers that were not legible
- could not identify compositional devices
- omitted parts of each question.

Achievement standard 91423: Examine the influence of context on a substantial music work

Candidates were clearly well prepared for the examination format. Four contexts were provided, with candidates required to select one.

Question numbers 1 and 4 were most responded to with very few candidates attempting questions 2 and 3.

Assessment

This assessment provided candidates with the opportunity to consider how a specific aspect of context impacts a music work they have studied. Four possible contexts were provided, with candidates required to select one. Candidates were required to select and explain aspects of their chosen music work as they related to the specific context in question, providing detailed and relevant examples from the music.

Commentary

Candidates should be advised that pre-prepared responses often hinder the capacity to respond specifically to the question, particularly when responses are pre-structured with a paragraph on each of conception, production and interpretation.

Good use was made of the planning page but many candidates wrote well in excess of the word limit, which in most cases did not improve their overall grade.

Some candidates were unable to provide in-depth responses as their works were not substantial – this was particularly apparent for short, stand-alone songs. Candidates should be careful to ensure that lyric analyses, plot summaries and social commentary are used to support the response to the question rather than be the main body of the response. It is important to demonstrate knowledge of the influence on the context on the music as well as the thematic content of the plot / lyrics / social history.

It would be good to see more candidates exploring substantial New Zealand works for this standard.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- provided responses that had some relationship to the question being answered
- provided large amounts of factual and musical detail that did not support the response to the question
- wrote generalised statements about the contexts and their influence on the work
- presented responses that were musically analytical but did not make use of the analysis to support a response to the influence of context
- wrote factual information that was not developed in any depth
- supported responses with simple musical evidence.

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

- provided clear and detailed explanations of the influence of context on the conception, production, and interpretation of the work
- provided relevant, specific musical evidence that supported key points, presented descriptively or as musical quotations on the manuscript provided
- planned their essay to ensure that it responded specifically to the question
- used accurate and purposeful musical terminology throughout their response.

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

- showed an in-depth understanding of both the question and the influence of context on the work
- made insightful links to wider contextual understanding
- structured and clearly defined the parameters of their responses provided in-depth, clear, and insightful discussion supported by relevant and perceptive musical evidence.

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

- wrote about works that were not substantial
- presented pre-prepared responses that did not respond to the question
- provided in-depth analyses of song lyrics or plots unsupported by musical or contextual evidence
- demonstrated limited ability to use musical terminology
- used very broad evidence that did not specifically support their response
- provided detailed biographical or contextual information that was unsupported by any musical information.