

# 2024 NCEA Assessment Report

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|---------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Subject:</b>                 | Music        |
| <b>Level:</b>                   | 1            |
| <b>Achievement standard(s):</b> | 91950, 91951 |

## General commentary

2024 was the first year of full implementation of the new level 1 standards. Both assessments were completed during class time under teacher supervision and submitted to NZQA by 30 October 2024. 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 of music. Evidence presented must be at curriculum level 6 to achieve.

The responses for this standard were very varied in their approach, with some candidates showing evidence of strong engagement with the chosen pieces.

Many candidates were disadvantaged by being directed to answer a series of questions or respond to a list of headings provided to them. In general, teacher-directed and highly scaffolded templates limited achievement.

Choice of music is crucial. Candidates who achieved well had chosen appropriate pieces of music to study and had clearly engaged with the contexts of both. Some candidates were disadvantaged by their poor choice of music, which did not have a well-defined context with concepts that could be clearly linked. This led to responses that were either vague or consisted of a musical analysis without

linking the analysed concepts to a stated context. Candidates who started with a well-defined context, then selected relevant musical concepts to support this did much better overall.

Generally, candidates found it challenging to provide actual musical evidence to support their statements and assertions that was not simply just quoting the lyrics of the chosen song(s).

A number of responses where a classical work was chosen were very well executed. There was also a pleasing number of candidates who demonstrated a deeper understanding of a distinct Māori world view, looking beyond the te reo lyrics to choose clear and relevant musical concepts to support this, such as the use of instrumentation, including taonga puoro.

## Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- wrote a statement of the context for each musical work
- identified music concepts, giving a brief description of each
- described music concepts in the pieces of music and described a logical connection between the concepts and the context
- responded with one music work being considerably weaker than the other
- made simplistic generalisations regarding the concepts evident in the music, rather than give timestamps or notation-based evidence.

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

- chose pieces of music that had the potential for strong links between the musical concepts and their context
- wrote a clear statement of the context for each work, including an explanation of the significance of the context to the composer or event that inspired the piece
- identified music concepts that were relevant to the stated context and explained why they were significant
- included direct evidence (quotes, timestamps, notated extracts) of some concepts.

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

- chose pieces of music with strong and obvious context / concept links
- stated the context that they would later link the concepts to clearly and discussed the significance of the contexts to the composer's inspiration
- focused on those concepts that they could directly relate to the context
- discussed in detail the relevant musical concept, how each concept was significant to the context, and included relevant evidence in the form of quotes, timestamps, or notated extracts from the music work for multiple significant concepts.

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

- chose pieces of music that were not suitable for this assessment
- did not identify the context with a clear statement
- used a template to complete the task, hindering their ability to link musical concepts to the context
- responded with a detailed contextual discussion and / or musical analysis but did not relate concepts to context
- spent most of their response talking about the background of the music or the biography of the musicians
- provided evidence for only one piece of music
- attempted to compare contexts (not required in this standard), with no mention of the music itself.

## Achievement standard 91951: Shape music ideas to create an original composition

### Assessment

This standard was assessed 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 short descriptive statement 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. This was particularly the case for students composing music in a Māori medium.

Many original waiata were submitted. It is historical and valid practice to take a well-known song and write new lyrics in te reo Māori, adding new vocal harmonies and guitar rhythms, etc. However, this is arrangement, not original composition. While many students successfully wrote new and effective waiata from scratch, some students used a well-known pop song and arranged it. This is not composing an original piece of music and not a valid response for *this* standard.

Candidates were more creative and successful when not required to compose in a specified medium or style (such as all being required to use Western notation, or set a complex poem to music, or 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. Theme and variations should be avoided, as they are based on source material that the student has not composed.

When presenting a collaborative (group) composition, it is imperative that candidates explicitly state their individual contribution, so they can be identified individually, and not just supply a generic group statement. Markers do not mark the whole group, but are randomly assigned submissions. The candidates are not identifiable to the marker by name, NSN, school, or group, so markers need to be clear on the contribution the individual made to the group composition. If group members have created a combined report where each person explains what they contributed, it is imperative that when the individual candidate uploads their submission, they identify themselves as "I".

As individual contributions to a group may vary, it does not follow that all members of the group will receive the same grade.

Candidates need assistance from teachers during the teaching and learning programme to unpack what is appropriate visual representation.

Annotated screenshots needed to be clear. It was sometimes difficult to perceive which musical lines were existing loops and which had been composed by the student.

Lyrics and subject matter should be read and approved by the teacher prior to submission.

Candidates need to be aware that material that may be considered suitable in a school context can be inappropriate for a national assessment.

### Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- composed music that had a perceivable shape or structure but with minimal musical development

- composed music that was quite brief (e.g. 0:50–1:20) or very repetitive
- used harmonic progressions that did not always align with melodic material
- relied upon loop software with minimal original material
- submitted a valid but often brief written description explaining aspects of how the music was created
- submitted some form of visual representation that might enable others to perform or reproduce the music.

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

- described their creative process clearly
- used simple ideas inside a standard structure (e.g. ABA), with some development or manipulation
- selected instruments or timbres appropriate to the style / genre / medium
- composed recognisably stylistic music that mostly held together as a whole, but contained a few elements that were not always cohesive to the larger piece, such as unexpected dissonance, awkward transitions, or overuse of repetition
- submitted mostly clear visual representation that could be reproduced or played by others, at least in part
- submitted a written description that aligned with the visual representation and recording.

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

- explained their creative process clearly
- used repetition, contrast, and structure effectively
- composed effective melodies
- used accompaniment figures that were appropriate to the instrument and that aligned with harmonies
- wrote stylistically appropriate harmonic progressions that aligned with melodic material
- were secure in the chosen format / genre / medium
- developed creative ideas in a stylistic manner
- created compositions that were cohesive and engaging
- were thorough, clear, and practical in their visual representation, so the music could easily be played or produced by others
- composed music that had a clear sense of expressive purpose.

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

- presented music that was confused, unfinished, and / or lacking in structure/ shape /cohesion, such as for loop-based compositions, where loops in different keys were superimposed over percussion tracks that did not seem to relate to each other
- did not provide adequate representation, such as one extremely blurry screenshot that could not be interpreted
- submitted music of insufficient length to communicate ideas
- did not provide a written description and / or visual representation
- did not provide sufficient evidence of having made a valid contribution to a group composition
- presented material but their individual contribution to a group composition could not be identified
- submitted a composition that was not at curriculum level 6.