

New Zealand Scholarship Drama 2024

Performance standard 93304

General commentary

Of the 168 Drama Scholarship candidates in 2024, there were 55 candidates with scores of 15 and above who achieved Drama Scholarship, which is approximately 3.09% of the national Drama cohort (2004).

Six students achieved 'Outstanding' with scores of 21 or above. All candidates in this category achieved 7 or above in two of the three questions. No candidate in this category scored lower than 6 in any part of the examination.

Approximately 45% of the students not awarded Scholarship gained scores of 5 or 6 in one section of the examination.

Report on performance standard

The standard of candidates in 2024 was high and, with the increase in the Level 3 national cohort this year, it was possible to award more Scholarships.

The majority of candidates appeared to be clear about the requirements for each part of the examination and able to demonstrate their range of skills across the various tasks. This suggests that the published information on the Standard, the Assessment Specifications, and the detailed Assessment Schedule are informative and useful for candidates.

The updated online information for examination supervisors has meant that in 2024, almost all candidates were invited to 'reflect' on their Part Three presentation rather than to 'explain and justify' it. This re-orientation meant that many candidates acknowledged and addressed problems in their impromptu performance to demonstrate their understanding of dramatic interest, techniques, and conventions.

Markers noted more clarity in candidates' approach to the different parts of the exam – particularly the original and often meaningful material demonstrated in Part Two.

Many candidates referenced New Zealand practitioners as models for devising, which in many cases produced interesting and relevant performances. The less successful candidates this year tended to perform a string of 'devising exercises', whilst those gaining higher scores selected relevant exercises to create their own performance composition or story.

A few candidates presented work that was very similar to other candidates at the same exam centre / school. These were often formulaic responses to the specifications for Part Two – for example, all candidates using the same subject matter for their devised piece, or the same play. This often prevented candidates from demonstrating individuality and relevance.

The Performance Standard requires "a clear awareness of wider drama practice and theory as well as evidence of independent thought". Accordingly, the Assessment Specifications state: "The self-devised piece" (prepared for Part 2) should be based on the candidate's "individual exploration of something of relevance to them".

Self-devised performances based on existing scripts also limited candidates' ability to demonstrate their "independent exploration" and meet the assessment criteria.

Regarding observations on introductions and reflections made by candidates to the camera in 2024, the candidates who gained the highest scores were able to distil their understanding of appropriate theories and practices. They expressed and applied this understanding through performance, as well as in introductions and reflections.

In Parts One and Two, those who spent too much time explaining practitioners like Stanislavski and Brecht in generalities (often listing terms and practices without reference to which aspect of the theorist's practice they had applied to their specific problem) gained lower scores.

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with **Outstanding Performance** commonly:

- communicated their ideas convincingly, showing perception and insight when introducing their performances. They often chose material that resonated with their own experiences, life, and concerns
- identified appropriate tools and methods to prepare their performance pieces, and applied performance techniques in sophisticated and imaginative ways
- reflected coherently on their impromptu performance, explaining how they developed dramatic interest through the use of specific drama conventions and techniques, and accurately identifying what they thought was successful, what was problematic, and how they might change it if they were to do it again
- demonstrated an independent and explorative approach to the tasks set, often extrapolating from the given brief with authority
- demonstrated a sophisticated and assured integration of theory, or an exceptional ability to integrate techniques.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- demonstrated their ability to analyse and think critically about the performances they created, and showed evidence of relevant supporting research
- integrated and applied their knowledge and skills to the performance parts of the examination, often matching appropriate theory / practice to their chosen style or genre of performance
- demonstrated their ability to logically develop, perform, and reflect on how they created their two-minute impromptu piece, and described in some detail how they developed dramatic interest through the use of drama conventions and techniques
- demonstrated sound skills and understanding overall, even if they may have shown some lack of sophistication or perception in one aspect (communication of thinking, embodiment of techniques, realisation of ideas).

Candidates who were **not awarded Scholarship** commonly:

- demonstrated some understanding and ability to apply techniques
- performed less consistently across all parts of the assessment
- were less convincing in their analysis of their work
- were less imaginative in their responses to the tasks set.