



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

National Qualifications Framework Levels 2–3, 2006

Media Studies

National Moderator's Report

General Guidance for Assessors of Achievement and Unit Standards

The purpose of external moderation is to provide reassurance that assessor judgments are at the national standard and are made on the basis of assessment materials that are fair and valid.

All assessment materials are expected to:

- give the learner the opportunity to meet the requirements of the standard
- have an assessment schedule that gives evidence of appropriate learner responses and clear judgments at all levels.

The Ministry of Education contracted subject experts to write assessment resources for achievement standards. These are not pre-moderated. The intention is that they are modified to suit teaching programmes and learner needs. They do not provide “rules” but suggest different ways of assessing to the nationally registered standard.

General Overall Comment

Accuracy and consistency in assessment decisions across the country continues to improve as assessors become more familiar and confident with standards based assessment. Assessors are becoming more aware of the nature of the relationship between the standard and activity. In a subject area with such a diverse range of contexts and approaches, it is important that assessors continue to modify and develop their own activities to best meet the needs of their learners, using published activities as guidelines for what might be appropriate. Assessors should remind themselves that, in the final analysis, the standard itself is what is being assessed, and the activity, as an interpretation of the standard, can be reworked in many different ways as long as the standard is still addressed in a valid and sufficient way.

There is still some confusion over standard version and published activity version. All achievement standards are now at version two (except for the two ‘new’ standards 90765 and 90779, both at version one).

The latest version of a published activity, on the other hand, could be anything from version one to version four. Care must be taken in matching standard version with activity version (for example, 90765, a version one standard, is assessed by Media/2/6 – D version four, and all other version four 2.6 activities).

The moderation cover sheet requires that the provider list standard version used, not activity version.

90277: *Close read unfamiliar media text*

While *unfamiliar* is embedded in the standard, it is not necessary for learners to be responding to texts of which they have no knowledge. In a film study, for example, assessors might consider studying several sequences of a film in class and then set another sequence for assessment. For analysis (excellence), it is particularly important that learners have experienced the whole text in order for them to carry *the study to wider implications, issues or ramifications*. *Unfamiliar* should be read as requiring

learners to respond to samples of media language that they have not specifically studied in class.

Often, insufficient time was provided for learners to achieve at merit or excellence. This standard does not have to be assessed under test conditions over a single class.

For achievement, description (a detailed account) of the way media language *contributes to meaning* is required. A standard interpretation of this is that learners must give an ‘effect’ comment. However, it is not sufficient for the ‘effect’ to be described in general terms, for example, ‘The high angle shot makes him look vulnerable’. A ‘detailed’ account is one where description of a specific effect occurs, for example:

‘The high angle shot makes him look vulnerable as he comes through the door. He is about to get attacked from behind by the villain. The high angle emphasises his vulnerability to this attack.’

For merit, using the same example, the ‘effect’ comment needs to be explained (*include reasons/justification*). For example:

‘The high angle shot makes him look vulnerable as he comes through the door. The director has deliberately done this to foreshadow the attack that is going to happen in the next few shots. We peer down at him as if we are perched on the ceiling and the effect is to make him seem unsettled, as if we are spying on him and the attack to come. The attack then happens as we expected.’

For excellence, analysis occurs (wider implications, issues or ramifications). For example:

‘The high angle shot makes him look vulnerable as he comes through the door. The director has deliberately done this to foreshadow the attack that is going to happen in the next few shots. We peer down at him as if we are perched on the ceiling and the effect is to make him seem unsettled, as if we are spying on him. This shot recurs through the film at many points just before characters are attacked and by now we have come to expect what happens. The director is using typical horror film shots to lead us on but in this case the outcome is different because the victim ends up defeating the attacker, which is a shock for the audience. The director succeeds in making us expect one thing and be jolted into experiencing another.’

It is not necessary for the standard that correct terminology be used at all times. It is appropriate that learners use correct terminology at this level, but the standard does not require it. Simple terminology mistakes should not affect a learner’s level of achievement. A useful strategy to avoid this is to allow learners to correct terminology errors in a brief resubmission opportunity. There is no reason why learners could not be given access to a terminology sheet during assessment.

90280: *Demonstrate understanding of narrative conventions in media texts*

When describing narrative conventions, it would be useful for learners to consider the overall shape of the story and how this is created by characterisation, setting, plot, structure etc. It is not generally helpful for learners to close-read scenes or focus on individual features of film language. Learners should be looking for large patterns that help create narrative. For example, when studying the way characterization creates narrative in film, rather than focusing on an individual shot showing a powerful character, learners should consider the characters motives, personality, situation, desires etc and the way these help to drive the story. As supporting commentary, learners might comment on the way these aspects of character are shown, and they might mention the

use of low angle shots to show power (for example), but this detail would come as part of a larger study of characterization in the film.

90282: *Use technology in media production*

Technology use was judged using two broad methods. The first involves setting a technology test and requiring learners to perform various functions under test conditions. The second involves judging technology use from a finished product. Each method has advantages and disadvantages worth considering. The first allows high levels of authenticity and is easy to manage but assesses only a single performance. The second measures a number of performances, is also easy to manage but presents authenticity challenges.

It is vital that learners complete technology use as individuals for assessment. Where they are working as part of a group, assessors need to take care to ensure that appropriate processes are in place to ensure authenticity of assessment.

It is important that assessors and moderators are able to make judgements on the evidence available. Mark-sheets alone are not sufficient. In most cases, work completed as a result of technology use supported by annotated mark-sheets and/or learner reflections/evaluations will provide ample evidence to verify assessment decisions.

90765: *Design and produce a media product and evaluate the process used to create the product*

It is important that sufficiently complete designs are produced to allow assessment of the first achievement criteria. For moving images, a concept, treatment, storyboard and production schedule is appropriate. For print, a concept, research notes, interview plans, draft layout and image ideas and production schedule is appropriate. For radio, a brief, scripted voice-breaks and advertisements, an interview plan and list of other elements is appropriate.

For the second achievement criteria, the product is assessed holistically. Both form and content are important. For film, ideas, narrative, production design, acting, technical aspects (camera, sound, edit etc) all contribute to the polish of a text. For print, ideas, narrative or structure, writing style, layout and other visual elements, technical aspects (spelling, punctuation etc) all contribute to the polish of a text. For radio, scripting, content and ideas, delivery and technical aspects all contribute towards polish.

Polish should not be read as just pertaining to technical proficiency. A text can be relatively 'rough' technically (eg in film, sound level problems, mistimed cuts, lighting problems) but still have sufficient 'polish' in other areas to be awarded merit or excellence.

Where assessing a group performance, all members must make a sufficient contribution to the production, and this must be clearly identifiable and assessable. It is quite possible for a learner to not achieve based on lack of input, whilst other learners in the group receive an achievement grade or higher. Assessors should monitor this during production and warn learners who are in danger of not achieving due to absences or lack of input. It would then be up to the learner to make a sufficient contribution under assessor guidance, or work on another production as a second opportunity.

90600: *Explain how meaning is created in media texts*

Most material submitted used moving image texts as a basis for the exploration of the language of a medium. This standard continues to attract work of a consistently high standard. Learners clearly enjoy the detailed study of media language, and the shift in the standard from readings of texts to readings of a text made the standard more manageable.

It is worth noting that learners often write too much, and go into too much detail concerning their chosen texts. Learners should be encouraged to pick significant features of media language, and find one or two examples at the most to illustrate each feature. The examples should be chosen for the richness of their language use and creation of meaning; ie, not all examples are equal, and learners should look for ones (and be guided to find ones) that will allow them to explain and analyse easily. Too often, learners chose to write about many examples in a superficial way, rather than few with analytic depth or insight. Careful teacher guidance during the drafting process would be useful.

Learners continue to have difficulty making different readings of the same text. There are many different ways of reading a text, and there are useful notes in a number of the published activities to guide assessors and learners alike. It may be useful for learners to look for oppositional or alternate readings where appropriate, as these are often the easiest ones to write about and analyse. Detailed teacher guidance for learners when they are deciding what readings to complete would be appropriate; the standard does not require that the learner come up with the type of reading themselves, and assessors can assist learners in deciding how to read.

90604: *Complete and justify a concept and treatment for a media product*

Work of a consistently appropriate standard was submitted for this achievement standard. The best responses were often from those learners who developed a clear understanding of their specific audience's profile and needs. For learner-produced work, this was most often a local community based audience.

90606: *Create a media product using appropriate media technology*

The three achievement criteria were most often assessed as part of one production activity. In the case of moving image production this was often a small group production.

For the standard to be awarded, pre-production tasks must be complete. Each group member must be able to show that they have contributed to this process- they must have done some of the pre-production work. This can be shown through paperwork and reflections on the process. It is not necessary for every learner to complete all pre-production tasks (eg- all do their own storyboard for a film).

Technology use now allows greater specialisation as it is no longer necessary for learners to use two technologies. Their technology use must be identifiable and assessable, however. Supporting documentation (reflections on work done, lists of shots completed, or timecodes showing what portion of the final edit has been done by an individual) is usually necessary to ensure that the learner technology use is identifiable and assessable

Particular care needs to be taken when assessing some types of technology use. For example, in video editing, learners often work better if they edit collaboratively. For technology use, however, the learner must actually be controlling the editing interface,

not just contributing ideas to the edit process. If more than one learner wishes to gain technology-use credit for editing, then it would be appropriate to require learners to complete independent edits of the same material.

The question of what constitutes a polished product was not always appropriately decided. The wide range of elements that can contribute to polish in any media text has been considered elsewhere and a number of resources have been published to help assessors with this question. It is important to note that the level of polish required for this standard should be significantly higher than that required for achievement standard 90765. For learners to be creating a polished product for 90606, one would expect them to have had significant experience in using the specified technology in creation of media texts either during the year or in previous courses. Rapid advances in technology (and price reductions) have brought powerful media technologies within reach of secondary school learners and it is certainly the case that the ‘polished’ product of five years ago might not be considered as such today. However, polish is also concerned with story, ideas, characterisation, personality, and other aspects independent of technology. A careful judgement is necessary to weigh up the relative qualities of any text in arriving at a final judgement concerning polish.

There was also variation in what constituted a media text completed to a competent standard. The explanatory note gives the same definition for competent as ‘publishable’ under version one of the standard. The text should be complete and ready for the exhibition contexts listed. Thus, most texts of a competent standard will have one or several aspects that are polished about them, but not sufficient to say that the text overall is polished (and merit). Another way of thinking about ‘competent standard’ at level three is that it would be equivalent to at least a merit text at level two (ie- polished at level two overall is similar to competent at level three).

An integrated, excellence level text is one that is outstanding. Many aspects of the text will be polished, and combine to make a product that has considerable impact. In general, too many assessors award excellence to polished, well constructed texts which are not ‘outstanding’.

It would be appropriate to consider the three terms ‘competent, polished, integrated’ as a quality continuum where all qualitative aspects of the text (carefully weighed) contribute to the final grade.

90779: *Investigate an aspect of media and explain its significance for New Zealand*

There were very few submissions this year for this standard.

It is not necessary that this standard be assessed as a fully-fledged research task. Assessors could provide appropriate material (topic, resources). The learner must define their investigation (angle, key questions) and identify appropriate material from supplied resources in order to write an analysis of the aspect of media and its significance. By providing materials, the assessor can significantly reduce learner workload and better focus learner effort on the key skill being assessed by the standard.

General Notes on Production

In radio production, a number of providers have been using community radio station shows as assessment context. Care must be taken to ensure that any assistance given by professionals is not assessed as part of the learner work. In practice, it may be more appropriate to assess work done prior to broadcast if it is not possible to limit

professional involvement during broadcast. The key principle is that only learner work can be assessed, and any professional assistance cannot be considered as contributing towards the assessment.