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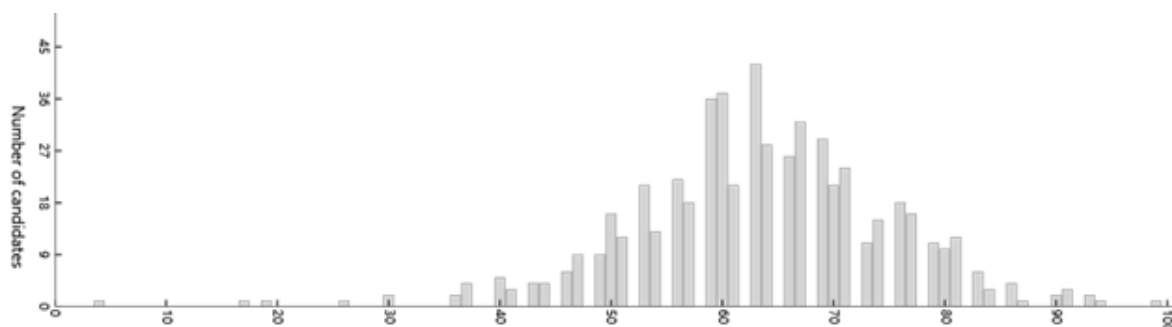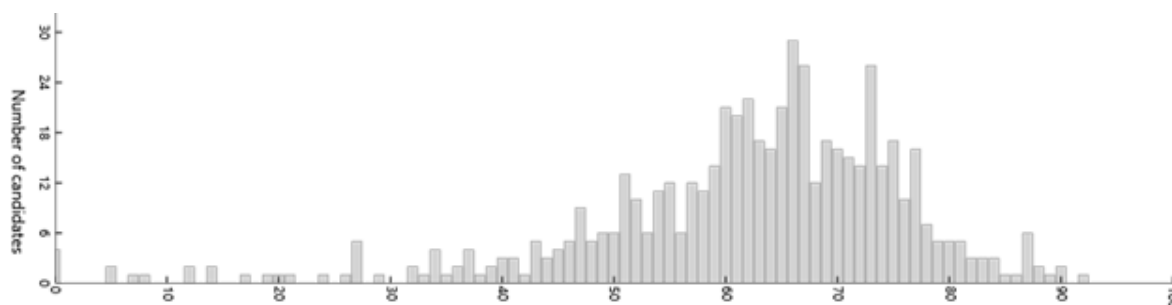
Summary report of the 2019 ATAR course examination:
Media Production and Analysis

Year	Number who sat all examination components	Number of absentees from all examination components
2019	558	5
2018	665	6
2017	639	6

Examination score distribution–Practical

Examination score distribution–Written

Summary
Practical examination
Candidates generally submitted strong practical (production) examination submissions, resulting in a mean of 63.43%. Most examination submissions were audiovisual, with only two photography and no digital, print or radio practical submissions.

Written examination
Candidate responses indicated that they were well prepared for Section One of the examination as the stimulus materials were well referenced. In general, responses were well thought out and measured. Section Two worked well in discriminating between candidates, however, a lot of students attempted to use prepared answers that weren't relevant. Stronger responses addressed the questions posed with reference to relevant contextual examples.

Practical examination
Audiovisual

The statistics are not provided for the photography practical (production) examination submissions due to the small cohort. There were no digital, print or radio practical (production) examination submissions.

Attempted by 566 candidates	Mean 63.43%	Max 98.57%	Min 4.29%

Section means were:

Audiovisual: Practical Production	Mean 63.44%		
Attempted by 564 candidates	Mean 50.78(/80)	Max 80.00	Min 11.43
Individual documentation	Mean 64.11%		
Attempted by 561 candidates	Mean 12.82(/20)	Max 20.00	Min 0.00

Written examination

Attempted by 560 candidates	Mean 61.73%	Max 92.48%	Min 0.00%

Section means were:

Section One: Short answer	Mean 64.91%		
Attempted by 554 candidates	Mean 19.47(/30)	Max 29.09	Min 1.36
Section Two: Extended answer	Mean 61.54%		
Attempted by 552 candidates	Mean 43.08(/70)	Max 64.75	Min 1.75

General comments
Practical examination
The use of technology and effects are getting stronger every year, mainly due to cameras and editing software becoming cheaper. Candidates produced media work using a wide variety of equipment (e.g. DSLRs, tripods, dollies, drones, lighting kits, steadicams). Lighting set-ups were attempted in at least a third of the productions, however the majority of candidates opted to work with natural light. A number of candidates experimented with external microphones and audio-recording devices.

The technical ability of candidates was impressive, especially in regards to post-production editing effects and techniques. Generally, candidates edited using either Final Cut Pro X or Premier Pro. DaVinci Resolve was also popular, used mostly for colour grading. Many productions were peppered with a glitch-style editing effect using Premier Pro. This effect contributed very little to the theme or purpose of these productions, working more as a distraction rather than to aid either narrative or thematic meaning.

Overall, there was no real observable difference in the effectiveness of a film and/or its style, despite the disparity in terms of filming equipment (e.g. 4K cameras compared to iPhones). In addition, use of expensive equipment did not conceal limited understanding of film theory and language, cinematography and basic psychology of editing.

Some candidates explored different and challenging locations for their films. Productions in remote locations, overseas, iconic settings or an actual office building added layers of professionalism and interest. The different settings/locations allowed for more complex and compelling narratives to be crafted. In some cases, the lack of insight into the production process was poor. For example, productions filmed in extraordinary locations lacked discussion as to how the location was secured. Many candidates opted to film in a suburban house or park, however, the selection of setting and location were often in conflict. Narrative and theme seemed at odds with the setting and location for many films.

Candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of art film movements like expressionism, noir and surrealism. Knowledge of general documentary conventions such as archival footage, voice of God narration, interviews and re-enactments were evident. Candidates displayed a wide knowledge of broader social and political issues, reflected in the variety of topics in documentary production submissions, with many presenting compelling narratives. Although there were still many films with cliché storytelling tropes and narrative structures, more films presented narratives that were engaging.

Pre-production, idea generation, context, etc. were usually articulated with clarity in the supporting documentation. Quite a few candidates had trouble identifying audience values and how they specifically catered for these in planning and production. Inconsistencies in writing styles appeared within the documentation, suggesting that others had input or that candidates were copying phrases from external sources.

Advice for candidates
- Consider all elements of storytelling. The use of setting, clothing, costuming, make-up, body language, colour, titles, music, sound effects and dialogue could improve your results.
- Story and structure, next to the refined camera skills and editing, is the most important component. Focus on creating a compelling message, ensuring that all of your sound and vision is telling the story and making all of your content count.
- Consider your available actors before committing to a storyline that cannot be realised. Avoid casting issues such as having adult characters being played by teenagers.
- Work and stay within a style or genre(s), rather than representing a myriad of styles in your production.
- Use careful and deliberate camera shots, camera angles and camera movement.
- Use audio effectively. Avoid poorly mixed soundtracks or artefacts from filming as these detract from the finished production.
- Do not submit a short production, as this will reduce your opportunity to fully and successfully develop narratives (art film) or explore issues/topics (documentary).
- Start early with your production and spend more time re-shooting where possible.

Advice for teachers
- Ensure that students compress large files as these can be problematic.
- Check that students are not wearing clothing with school initials on display.
- Encourage students to make use of careful and deliberate camera shots, camera angles and camera movement.
- Teach students specific and refined camera and editing skills.
- Ensure that students have a sound understanding of concepts of cinematography, such as shot construction, clear depth of field and consistent lighting. They need to master basic filming skills like smooth camera movement, framing and mise-en-scene. If students decide to make a documentary, aid them in understanding the difference between an informative documentary and a persuasive or powerful piece, which is expected at an ATAR level.
- Make sure that students clearly identify the style and genre of their production in the supporting documentation, including how they have developed their distinct style.

Written examination
The means for Sections One and Two of the written examination were similar to 2018 (65.20% and 62.93% respectively).

Candidates responded well to the the stimulus materials in Section One. Many provided lengthy answers to questions that were allocated fewer marks. This may be due to candidates receiving the stimulus materials early and their ability to work with these before

the examination. Section Two provided opportunity for candidates to showcase their understanding of the syllabus.

Advice for candidates
- Make sure your writing is legible.
- Answer the questions posed.
- Spend the appropriate amount of time on each section. As Section Two is worth 70% of the paper, more time needs to be spent on this section.
- Familiarise yourself with previous marking keys.

Advice for teachers
- Teach to the dot points in the syllabus.
- Provide students with relevant media works/texts that have strong links to the syllabus dot points.
- Provide students with response tasks that reflect questions in previous examinations.
- Demonstrate to students the structure of the questions and help them understand how this relates to the marking key.

Comments on specific sections and questions
Practical examination
Audiovisual (28 Marks)
Generally, audiovisual production submissions were well done. The majority of submissions were short films. While documentaries were underrepresented, they were generally produced to a high standard. The majority of candidates produced five pages of supporting documentation, although this often did not align well with the submitted productions. Frequently, claims about style and/or genre and/or intended purpose and/or effects were made, but could not be observed clearly in the production.

Written examination
Section One: Short answer (33 Marks)
The stimulus materials were well chosen and responded to. Each stimulus was used for a variety of questions, with Bandersnatch the most popular choice for discussing media trends, Mystery Road for discussing representation and symbolic codes, and Exposed: The case of Keli Lane for discussing perceptions of an issue. Candidates made similar stimulus selections for the same questions and, in some instances, the same kind of language, phrasing, observations and textual examples were used.

Section Two: Extended answer (40 Marks)
There were many outstanding responses to all of the questions in Section Two. Candidates who wrote extended responses that focus mostly on a single part of a question essentially limited their opportunity to address the requirements of the question. Some responses were outstanding in terms of their content, examples and sustained argument, but these responses were not always tailored to any specific question. Many candidates tried to use rote-learned responses to questions. No particular texts stood out as perfect examples to address all/some questions. Run Lola Run was, however, a popular choice by many candidates for addressing Question 8 (cultural influences and aesthetics), Triumph of the Will was relatively popular for Question 7 (media theories and audience interpretation) and Question 10 (media trends influence the use of persuasive techniques).