

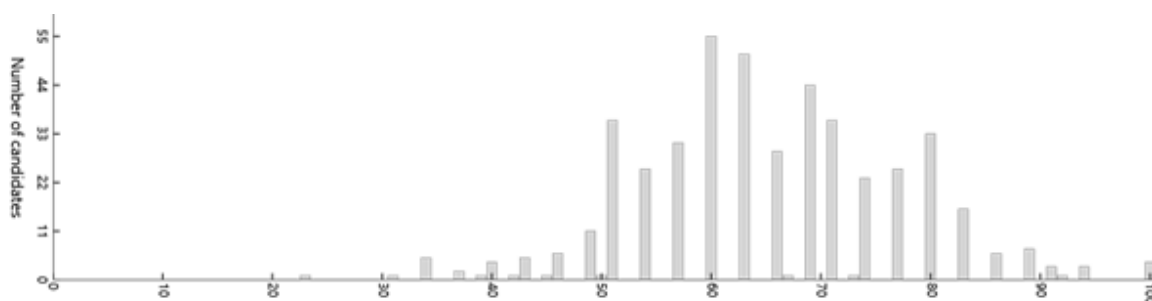


## Summary report of the 2020 ATAR course examination: Media Production and Analysis

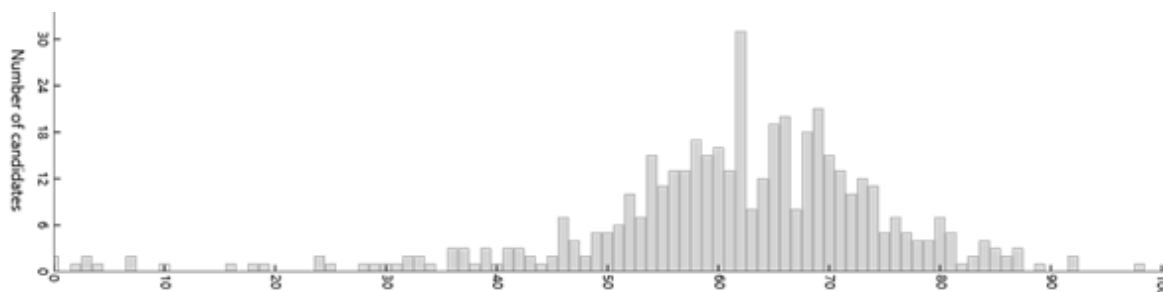
Year	Number who sat all examination components	Number of absentees from all examination components
2020	457	4
2019	558	5
2018	665	6
2017	639	6

The number of candidates sitting and the number attempting each section of the examination can differ as a result of non-attempts across sections of the examination.

### **Examination score distribution–Practical**



### **Examination score distribution–Written**



### **Summary**

The written examination paper as a whole was well constructed and candidates understood the questions and provided appropriate responses. The stimulus was well received and candidates responded to them all. Candidates appeared to know the stimulus very well, which stood them in good stead. Many responses were very similar in Section One. Section Two responses provided more discrimination between candidates.

For their Practical (production) examination, most candidates submitted art films or documentaries of five minutes duration with one page of supporting documentation which was new for 2020. Many students had put a lot of time and effort into their productions, producing well-crafted narratives. The length of productions has improved, with many films produced in the four to five minute range. Candidates demonstrated an understanding of the course content – specifically the manipulation of narrative structure and the manipulation of codes and conventions. There was a noticeable increase in the use of iPhones, freeware and other smaller personal filmmaking devices.

### **Practical examination**

Attempted by 469 candidates                      Mean 65.2%                      Max 100.00%    Min 22.86%

Section means were:

Audiovisual

Attempted by 465 candidates                      Mean 65.24(/100)    Max 100.00        Min 22.86

Statistics are not provided for the other practical (production) examination submissions due to the small cohort (four photography submissions). There were no print or radio practical (production) examination submissions.

### **Written examination**

Attempted by 458 candidates                      Mean 61.00%                      Max 98.22%        Min 0.00%

Section means were:

Section One: Short answer

Mean 62.64%

Attempted by 455 candidates

Mean 18.79(/30)

Max 29.09

Min 0.00

Section Two: Extended answer

Mean 60.30%

Attempted by 454 candidates

Mean 42.21(/70)

Max 69.12

Min 0.00

### **General comments**

The visual aesthetic of many production submissions benefited from the increasingly more sophisticated technology available. Students were filming in 4K with gimbals and drones, and many have access to professional grade editing software on their personal computers. However, there was no observable difference in the overall effectiveness of a film and/or its style, as the demonstration of film understandings is not equipment dependent.

### **Practical examination**

*Advice for candidates*

- Complete the *Production cover sheet* correctly. In many instances it did not match the written statement.
- Ensure you select the correct boxes and roles on the cover sheet.
- Do not to select a role that is difficult to demonstrate.
- Do not name your parent, teacher or school in the acknowledgement part of the *Production cover sheet*.

*Advice for teachers*

- Ensure that students provide acknowledgement of third party materials.
- Check that students do not identify the school or candidates in the production.
- Ensure that students are aware of all the requirements that are clearly stated in the *Practical (production) examination requirements* available on the Authority's website.
- Make students aware of the requirements that are clearly stated with regard to third party material on Appendix 1.
- The Declaration of Authenticity should not be signed if the candidate has not acknowledged third party materials or has identified the school, family member, candidate of the teacher.
- Discourage your students from producing films which include clichés or clichéd narrative elements. Such examples include aimless walking character films and unnecessary morning routine sequences (alarm clock, getting out of bed, brushing teeth etc.).
- Encourage your students to ensure every frame of their film contributes to the overall narrative or production in a meaningful way.

## **Written examination**

### *Advice for candidates*

- Read and address the questions asked.
- Do not rely on attempting to make rote-learned answers 'fit' the question.
- Provide relevant examples from media works.
- Use correct media terminology at all times.

### *Advice for teachers*

- Study contemporary media works with the students.
- Study the intertextual nature of different media forms and works.
- Study the constructed nature of media works.
- Relate the students' world to past, present and emerging media.

## **Comments on specific sections and questions**

### **Practical examination**

#### **Audiovisual (35 Marks)**

Most candidates understand media art and produced films with attempts at experimentation with editing and influence of auteurs. The COVID restrictions have had little impact on the quality of the practical production submissions. Candidates continue to explore unique and visually interesting locations. Unique locations add layers of professionalism and intrigue. The documentaries were good this year, and candidates seemed to understand how to use generic conventions (and breaking them) to their advantage. Some candidates were taking audio more seriously, experimenting with external microphones and audio-recording devices. Many candidates were also colour-grading their productions.

Most candidates downloaded pre-sets and LUTs, but some took this a bit further and manually graded each clip. The majority of productions drew inspiration from Unit 3: Media Art. The majority of productions were art film. Emulation of auteur directors' style and/or film movements was evident. The styles of Wes Anderson and Edgar Wright dominated the majority of attempts to emulate a director's style/technique.

Some candidates submitted a documentary that attempted to provide a point of view (POV). Only a few candidates experimented with various modes and most examples sat firmly within the expository mode. There was an observed increase in the number of candidates using film movements, directors' styles and genre conventions to help shape their work. Most productions attempted to colour grade. A few productions demonstrated outstanding cinematography (not just in terms of composition, but in the execution of ideas/themes/narrative visually). There was some appropriate use of special effects.

There was some superb casting choices with a handful of pro-level acting performances in the better productions. Some productions appropriately considered mise-en-scene and went to great lengths to get it right (both travelling to specific locations or through meticulous attention to foreground, mid-ground and background detail, including the acquisition (and at times, creation) of props and costumes). While a variety of filming [technologies/equipment] were used, there was no observable difference in the overall effectiveness of a film and/or its style, as the demonstration of film understandings is not equipment dependent. At times, there was an over-reliance on repeated footage to illustrate a character's monotonous existence. Some productions contained no diegetic audio and no foley, just third-party music. Some candidates focused entirely on their primary roles (cinematography and editing) without giving attention to all aspects of the production process.

More attention needs to be applied to the audio of productions. Some audio tracks contained unwanted wind noise, clicks or sounds from handling equipment, utterances from film crew off camera, or pure silence without any ambient replacement. Some productions superficially

emulated the style of an auteur. For example, a quick zoom would be labelled as Edgar Wright and any shot that had some kind of symmetry would be labelled as Wes Anderson. In some instances, the use of quick zoom or symmetry did not contextually align with the intent of the production.

Some candidates did not state a style, genre or any intent in the rationale. More often than not, a muddled rationale would be reflected in the production itself. These productions were often muddled in their filmmaking approach. This suggests candidates need to spend more time on idea development. Many productions used narration effectively. However, those that used narration without connection to the images and sounds presented were less effective. For some candidates, more effort and attention to mise-en-scene was needed. Candidates would be better to consider their potential pool of actors before committing to a storyline they cannot realise.

A number of films dedicated a large portion of their runtime to characters simply walking, opening fridges, having showers, sitting on beds and/or staring at themselves in mirrors. Many films began the same way: someone waking up, taking a shower, getting dressed, having breakfast, making a coffee, going somewhere (usually walking). By the time all of this has happened, two minutes of the runtime has passed and there has been no character development, no treatment of themes, ideas, or no exposition.

Candidates should be encouraged to use the one page support document as an opportunity to provide insight into the film's development, explaining how and why the equipment was used – allowing a better understanding of decisions made in the primary and secondary roles. Many candidates were relying on past exemplars that didn't support an overview of their production process.

There were a lot of films from a very specific genre/movement such as Film Noir and an abundance of 'non-narrative art films' with a montage of random clips set to a single song/audio track. Story and structure are, next to the refined camera skills and editing, the most important components of film-making.

### **Written examination**

#### **Section One: Short answer (33 Marks)**

So many of the answers were very similar due to resources that have been circulated to teachers. Early distribution of the stimulus to schools, due to COVID circumstances, has resulted in possible over-analysis by teachers and sample answers distributed which have been used in the examination.

#### **Section Two: Extended answer (40 Marks)**

There was more discrimination among candidate responses in this section. More capable candidates addressed the questions posed with relevant media works to support their answers. Weaker responses tried to attach examples that are rote-learned into the questions posed, thus not adequately addressing them.