

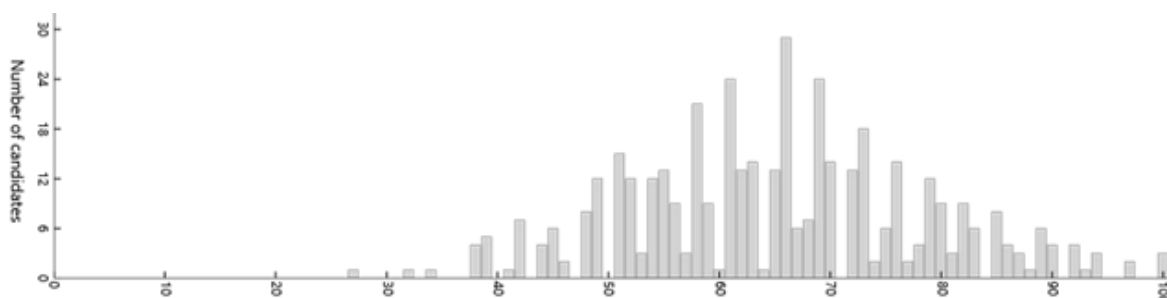


Summary report of the 2023 ATAR course examination report: Media Production and Analysis

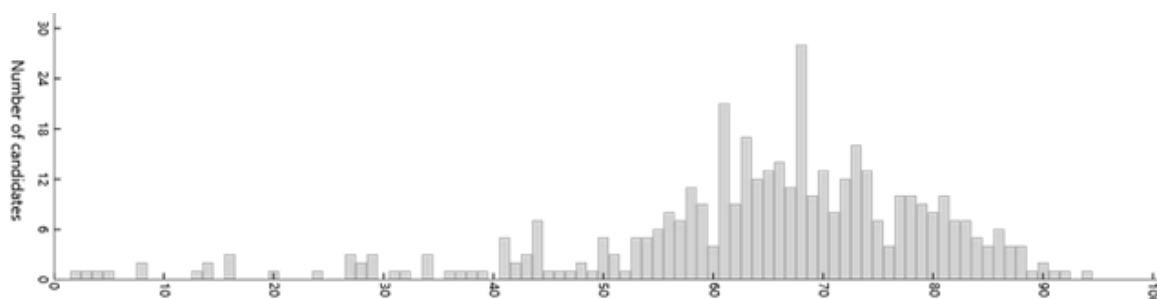
Year	Number who sat all examination components	Number of absentees from all examination components
2023	416	1
2022	395	8
2021	508	5
2020	457	4

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

In the practical examination, candidates submitted audio-visual productions supported by a written statement of up to two pages explaining their demonstration of the theme and their choices and application of production roles. Most candidates used the two page written statement well, with many able to articulate how they had tried to show a theme in their films. There were many excellent films, with candidates demonstrating their considerable abilities in the four production roles, particularly cinematography and editing. Most candidates had a grasp of theme as an underlying topic for their films. There was some outstanding cinematography, editing and at times sound design to support their narratives. Most candidates used the whole five minutes. Many candidates utilised voice over to ensure their theme was clearly understood and their narrative was effective. Candidates who were awarded higher marks produced professional-grade productions. These productions demonstrated consistent quality across style, genre, film language, and technical execution (cinematography, editing, art direction, and sound). In addition, these films were usually underpinned by mature and sophisticated thematic intent.

The collective body of work showcased diverse, informed film and auteur styles, including Film Noir, Soviet Montage, French New Wave, and Surrealism, as well as Classical Hollywood. Notably, the directorial styles of Wes Anderson and Edgar Wright were the most frequently emulated. Genres spanned Drama, Horror, Comedy, Parody, Thriller, and Experimental categories. Candidates engaged with various documentary styles, incorporating expository, participatory, and poetic modes into their works.

In the written examination, questions in Sections One and Two focused on responses based on works candidates studied throughout the year. In Section One, Questions 1, 2 and 4 were the preferred choices, with Question 3 being the least popular in this section. In Section Two, Questions 6, 9 and 10 were the most popular, with Questions 7 and 8 the least popular. Candidates exhibited versatility in media choices, using various audio-visual media, including films, documentaries, and, notably, video games. This demonstrated a comprehensive understanding and an adaptive approach to media analysis, which effectively distinguished candidates' abilities across a spectrum of media studies topics. However, some candidates were using the same media works as examples across the entire examination, while some were using the same text for all four questions, often referring to the same scene, rather than the full media work. This limited the scope of their answers. Candidates completed both sections to a high standard, demonstrating a good understanding of the syllabus content. Section Two provided greater discrimination than Section One. Stronger candidates offered relevant media works to support their statements made when answering the questions.

Practical examination

Attempted by 432 candidates	Mean 65.28%	Max 100.00%	Min 26.86%
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Section means were:

Theme	Mean 63.61%		
Attempted by 432 candidates	Mean 12.72(/20)	Max 20.00	Min 4.00
Production roles	Mean 65.70%		
Attempted by 432 candidates	Mean 52.56(/80)	Max 80.00	Min 22.86

Written examination

Attempted by 415 candidates	Mean 64.26%	Max 94.26%	Min 2.05%
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Section means were:

Section One: Short answer	Mean 66.91%		
Attempted by 413 candidates	Mean 20.07(/30)	Max 28.64	Min 0.00
Section Two: Extended answer	Mean 63.13%		
Attempted by 409 candidates	Mean 44.19(/70)	Max 65.62	Min 0.00

Practical examination

Advice for candidates

- Ensure that you spend more time researching and understanding filmic elements before committing to a theme.
- Ensure that you understand the style and genre of your film as well as the ability to develop a style and genre.
- Before settling on a particular theme, ensure that you engage with multi-modal exploration: watching relevant films, reading associated literature, and listening to thematic music, and other related media forms.
- When choosing the documentary genre, you should have a basic mastery of the conventions, such as correct framing for interviews, how to use B-roll and evidentiary editing.
- Ensure that you are very clear on the theme/s in your production.

- Do not include arbitrary shots or employ cinematographic techniques that do not substantially contribute to the narrative or thematic coherence of your film.
- Ensure that you shoot all of your own footage; found footage usually does not add to the quality of the production unless it is footage you are unable to physically acquire yourself.
- Ensure that you have an understanding of how to optimise the capabilities of your equipment, for example, advanced DSLRs or 4k and 6k cameras equipped with high-quality lenses.
- Ensure that special effects are relevant and used appropriately.
- Ensure that the audio across the production is consistent.

Advice for teachers

- Encourage students to have a strong theme and understanding of the theme they are trying to portray. Mentor students in strong theme development.
- Work with students on developing a strong narrative which supports their theme and includes a protagonist interacting with others in conflict, in a number of scenes which include different locations, and have a fitting resolution.
- Provide strong audio-visual examples for students to emulate.
- Ensure students' themes are appropriate and avoid content such as negative associations with inappropriate themes or content that pushes the limit of appropriateness for school-age students.
- Encourage students to use the best equipment available.
- Avoid appearing in student films as this identifies schools and students.

Written examination

Advice for candidates

- Answer the question/s posed in the examination.
- Use media language throughout your responses.
- Address each of the dot points in Section Two of the examination in your responses.
- Know and understand the syllabus content in context with relevant examples from media works.
- Combine content points in the syllabus to add complexity to your understanding of the media.
- Prepare for the examination by completing past examination papers.
- Practise short and extended responses.
- Understand the context in which media works are constructed.

Advice for teachers

- Ensure that students engage in close readings of specific media extracts or scenes, which will enable them to substantiate their claims more effectively.
- Cover all the content in the syllabus and relate the syllabus content to relevant media works.
- Practise past examinations so that students have an understanding of how to unpack and answer questions in the examination.
- Model relevant examples and responses for students to use in examinations.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Practical examination

Theme (15 Marks)

High-achieving candidates produced professional-grade productions. These productions demonstrated consistent quality across style, genre, film language, and technical execution (cinematography, editing). In addition, these films usually had an explicit intent and were

underpinned by mature and sophisticated writing/script/pre-production. Several films exhibited strong technical elements, but were marred by a disjointed narrative or an inadequate understanding of style and genre.

Production roles (28 Marks)

Criterion 4: Role 1			
Attempted by 432 candidates	Mean 5.46(/8)	Max 8	Min 2
Criterion 5: Role 2			
Attempted by 432 candidates	Mean 5.22(/8)	Max 8	Min 2
Criterion 6: Role 3			
Attempted by 432 candidates	Mean 3.97(/6)	Max 6	Min 2
Criterion 7: Role 4			
Attempted by 432 candidates	Mean 3.75(/6)	Max 6	Min 0

The most commonly selected role for Role 1 was Cinematography. There was a focus on the use of lighting kits and experimenting with colour. Lighting and exposure appeared to be the two weakest areas in this role. Many productions were set during night-time, or in very dark locations. As a result, the footage was too dark and grainy. Some candidates then decided to add filters and effects on top, further degrading the quality of the clips. Some candidates demonstrated sophisticated cinematography in terms of film grammar/language, control of movement, and composition. Candidates also relied heavily on handheld cinematography, often used to portray 'realism', rather than capturing clear, crisp, and sharp imagery. Overreliance on third-party home videos was evident, often used for nostalgic reasons, which in turn produced shaky footage.

The role of Editing (most commonly chosen as Role 2) proved to be both stronger and more popular with more candidates using rhythmic editing, match cuts, variations in pace, colour grading, use of special effects and filters. Candidates attempted to manipulate the colour grade during the edit to establish a 'look' or to promote a tone or theme. However, an addition of a lot of special effects over poorly shot content in order to make the production look more 'artistic' did not appear to work. Some candidates incorporated animation into live-action filmmaking, which was creative and well-executed. Most candidates were using editing software such as Premiere Pro, with a growing number using Da Vinci Resolve and Capcut. Candidates who submitted animation works also used a range of software, quite often iMovie and Premiere Pro.

In Sound design (most commonly selected for Role 3), many candidates added a music track to their film thinking that this constituted sound design, however, use of sound and sound effects have improved greatly compared to previous years. Candidates' use of accents was at times inconsistent, which created an anachronistic contrast with the Australian setting and peripheral Australian characters. A focus on foley work could have improved the quality of sound as its lack of use often resulted in sparse diegetic sound. As a result, candidates removed all diegetic sound, including dialogue, settling for music and downloaded sound effects that resulted in bypassing audio, which is a key component of filmmaking.

In Art direction (most commonly selected for Role 4), some candidates considered appropriate mise-en-scene, choosing the right setting for the purpose and intent of the production rather than choosing a location based on convenience. Many candidates' productions were not awarded full marks in this criterion due to little effort placed on art direction, instead, filming in the family home and using props already in the room and classifying this as art direction. Candidates who achieved higher marks used several

locations, even if these were within their neighbourhood. The use of different costuming and the selection of period clothing for film noir demonstrated greater effort. However, some candidates still appeared to use clothing already worn by actors, resulting in lack of creativity.

Written examination

Section One: Short answer (22 Marks)

The quality of responses varied, with notable differences in how candidates approached and completed specific questions. While candidates made appropriate observations, their evidence was often undermined by overusing general examples from feature films.

Section Two: Extended answer (20 Marks)

Overall, the examination effectively discriminated candidate abilities across a spectrum of media studies topics. Candidates exhibited versatility in media choices, using various audio-visual media, including films, documentaries, and, notably, video games. Candidates seemed unprepared for several key aspects of the examination. For example, many lacked the ability to connect their overview of a media work to the given statement, merely outlining the work without relevant correlation. Similarly, responses to 'changing distribution networks, challenges faced by independent media producers, and analysis of artistic or cultural benefits' were largely generalised. The discussion on media agendas and propaganda also lacked sufficient detail.