

Assessment Report

New Zealand Scholarship Drama 2023

Performance standard 93304

General commentary

In 2023, the marking approach for Scholarship Drama was revised, with candidates receiving a score for each part of the examination (text-based performance, self-devised, and impromptu). These distinct scores were derived from specific descriptors in the Scholarship Drama Performance Standard. The Assessment Schedule was updated to reflect these changes, and specific details were added to show how the distinct assessment judgements were made.

Markers found some submissions difficult to see or hear. It is strongly recommended that sound levels are checked and that performances are not recorded against bright backgrounds.

Candidates who spliced together extracts or played more than one character in Part 1 of the exam often disadvantaged themselves, as it usually made it much more difficult to demonstrate a character's journey or arc.

Candidates who did not explore the theories and intentions employed by their chosen practitioner, or could not demonstrate why this particular practitioner's methods aligned with their own work, often did not achieve a cohesive devised piece for Part 2.

Candidates who used up valuable time describing what they had just performed in Part 3, ran out of time to demonstrate their understanding of which aspects worked and which did not. Accurately identifying what did not work often demonstrated clarity and good analysis.

Report on performance standard

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

- were more consistently convincing in their communication of ideas
- showed perception and insight when introducing their performances
- identified appropriate tools and methods to prepare their performance pieces
- applied performance techniques in sophisticated ways
- reflected coherently on their Part 3 performance, identified weaknesses, and often suggested improvements.

Examples of this in Part 1 were candidates who:

- were able to speak in their introduction to the genre of their chosen play, the context of the extract they had chosen, and the subtext/journey of the character they were performing, but also articulated relevant performance supports and theories that demonstrated an understanding of what was required to embody a character in performance
- took a moment to settle in and out of performance

- understood and were able to perform with a quality / style that suited the genre of the play and extract chosen
- demonstrated a conscious pacing of an arc or journey in performance.

Examples of this in Part 2 were candidates who:

- chose subject matter that had some relevance to them and clearly conveyed their purpose for investigating this
- had matched this purpose and content with relevant practitioners, theorists and /or methodologies
- integrated their research into a sophisticated and original composition that utilised dramatic techniques to create a compelling performance.

Examples of this in Part 3 were candidates who:

- brought energy and imagination to the performance task
- were able to situate their characters and action in a clear space and time
- were able to sequence a dynamic beginning, middle, and end in response to the prompt
- dealt with transitions and shifts in story and character with dramatic interest and clear use of conventions and techniques
- reflected confidently and with sophistication on where they created dramatic interest and what they might do differently next time.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship**:

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship were able to analyse and think critically about the performances they created compared to those who did not achieve Scholarship. They demonstrated a stronger ability to integrate and apply their knowledge and skills to the performance parts of the examination. These candidates were better able to logically develop, perform, and reflect on their two-minute piece created in the examination room than those not achieving Scholarship.

Examples of this in Part 1 were candidates who:

- were able to speak in their introduction to the genre of their chosen play, the context of the extract they chose, and the subtext / journey of the character they were performing
- showed evidence of beating their performance into specific parts with clear shifts in emotional journey / rhythm.

Examples of this in Part 2 were candidates who:

- could make a composition that showed some understanding of their chosen practitioner / theorist's methodology
- expressed their intent / purpose in their introduction and evidenced this in their devised performance
- had given some thought to how transitions and use of space related to devised storytelling.

Examples of this in Part 3 were candidates who:

- could make a piece of performance that addressed all elements of the brief and had a beginning, middle, and end
- were able to offer some reflection on how they developed dramatic interest.

Candidates who were **not awarded Scholarship**:

Candidates who did not reach Scholarship level may have achieved well in one part of the exam, but not well enough across the entire exam to achieve 62.5% or a total of 15/24 in order to be awarded Scholarship.

Candidates who did not achieve high marks in Part 1 commonly:

- demonstrated a limited understanding of what kind of performance style or quality would serve the genre of the play extract they had chosen
- had not shown evidence of research into appropriate performance techniques or theorists.

Candidates who did not achieve high marks in Part 2 often:

- named a practitioner / theorist in the introduction, but did not show evidence of a thorough understanding in their performance
- used performance as a kind of confessional or revelation of 'feeling' without being conscious of how to use their impetus to create a composition for an audience.

Candidates who did not achieve high marks in Part 3 often:

- 'talked out' the story rather than employing dramatic tools to embody and /or show the story
- had an incoherent or incomplete beginning, middle, and end
- were unable to include all the elements of the brief
- spent the reflection time talking through what they had just performed, with no sense of what worked or didn't work.