JRG: The paper was sat by 191 students who attained an overall average of 56%. Q1 is mandatory and was answered by all 191 candidates gaining an average mark of 11.8 (out of 20). Q2 was answered by 165 (average 11.1), Q3 by 134 (average 11.4) and Q4 by only 81 (average 10.0). There was evidence that Q4 was answered last by many students who did not have enough time to answer it fully; this may explain its relatively low average mark.

One major reason that marks were lost was that no answer was offered for part or all of a question.

Where an answer was offered, marks were usually lost for being imprecise, rather than getting it completely wrong (although the latter did sometimes happen). To give an example, consider Q1(c): "Briefly explain how starvation may occur in process scheduling." An ideal answer to this would say something like: "Starvation occurs when the scheduler persistently fails to provide access to the CPU for one process. Examples of situations in which it happens include: (1) a round robin scheduler which puts newly started processes at the head of the queue and which receives a continuous stream of new processes, causing the last process in the queue to never reach the head, and (2) a shortest-job-first scheduler which receives a continuous stream of short new processes, causing a long process in the queue to be persistently overlooked." Many answers instead said something more like: "Starvation occurs when a round robin scheduler continuously puts new processes at the front of the queue causing processes at the back of the queue to be starved." Such an answer not only fails to say exactly what "starvation" is, it also fails to mention that the situation described is not the only way that starvation can happen. It will thus get fewer marks. All parts of Q1 suffered from this kind of problem, and there were several similar parts in other questions for which marks were lost in the same way.

Where part of a question set a problem to be solved, marks were lost for incorrect methods and slips in the working, as appropriate. To give just one example, in Q2, many students managed to answer part c) completely correctly (and got 4 marks) and then messed up part d) by failing to show (or otherwise getting wrong) any I/O bursts happening in their diagram. Examiners' marks in the individual exam scripts explain where and how things went wrong in this kind of part.