

Comments Q1

This question was taken by ~74% of the students. Overall, it was a slightly easy question with an average mark of ~64%, a touch above expectations, but with a high standard deviation of 25.

There were no systematic issues to comment on except for Part (a.iii), where the average quality was very low due to the fact that too many students fail to take the formal definition of a distributed system, consider the features that apply to each component in the system, then systematically argue that the system in the given scenario satisfies every one of them specifically and explicitly. The other case of higher than average loss of marks was a failure to recall the other three computation models (i.e. threaded, parallel, distributed) that the student was being asked to explain by means of their distinctive features. Many students confused this with architectural paradigms, for example.

Q2

This question was taken by ~79% of the students. Overall, it was again, an easy question with an average mark of ~65%, above expectations, but with 23 standard deviation, a bit higher than one would have liked.

Some notable mistakes were: in Part (a.i), talking about the protocol stack mechanisms (e.g., wrap/unwrap) rather than the purpose of each layer; in Part (a.ii), using vague language (e.g., secure instead of reliable, safe instead of intact); in Part (c) mixing MME and asymmetric DME, which many students swapped, and, in fewer cases, swapping P2P and MME. In Part (d), the overwhelming majority of students did well, and some noticed that, strictly, the two functions fail to return a value, which causes the sum to be ill-typed (without loss of marks).

Q3 Overall the performance is satisfactory. Marks range from under 10 to the full mark 25.

Part a): The highest marks were scored on this part.

i) The four Coffman conditions need to be clearly stated and defined. Most students did so but a small number failed to do so.

ii) You should say which Coffman conditions hold and therefore why or why not deadlock occurs. Most students did not reason from the Coffman conditions; a small number did.

iii) Most students gave the correct answer. Some students drew a sequence diagram involving only R1; you should involve both R1 and R2.

Part b): The second highest marks were scored on this part.

Most students gave the correct answer. Some students did not use the correct definition of a logical clock.

Part c): The lowest marks were scored on this part.

i) Most students did not get this one right, giving answers not directly related to Chord.

ii) Again most students did not get this one right, after giving a wrong answer to i).

Part d): The second lowest marks were scored on this part.

i) Surprisingly many students got this wrong, mixing up Doom (peer-to-peer) and Quake (client/server).

ii) Again a surprising number got this wrong, mixing up Doom and Quake.

iii) Many students got this right, after getting i) and ii) wrong!
