Questions 1, 2 and 3 were roughly equally popular with 37, 42 and 40 answers respectively (out of 42 exam scripts). Only 7 student tackled question 4. The average mark was approximately 63% but with two “outlier” very low scoring scripts removed the average was very close to 65%.

Some of the key points where marks were lost included:

For Question 1b, (GPUGPs), a number of people gave no answer, or very terse answers to a question that was, to a large extent, bookwork-based.

For 1c, (scheduling options) a number of students did not distinguish clearly between the static and dynamic options available, and very few listed dynamic options such as guided-self-scheduling.

Question 2 (cache coherence) had the strongest answers with many scoring full marks on 1d, explaining the MOESI state changes involved in an interleaving.

Question 3 (Speculation) was generally well answered though some students confused TLS with Transactions and even with basic cache coherence. Frequently, the detailed use of tag bits, along with other resources required to support TLS, and the mechanism for threads committing their changes (or aborting) were not clearly explained.

Question 4 was only attempted by 7 students but those that did attempt it generally scored well. This was a question on a previously unexamined topic which was requested by previous cohorts.