Examiners Comments:

The exam scripts that I reviewed as part of the marking process were acceptable, with many scripts presenting reasonable responses to most questions and evidencing some degree of prior preparation. There were a number of scripts that did not show sufficient preparation, with short answers usually focused on more obvious aspects of the theoretical material engaged. The outcome saw a reasonable spread of marks: while no students who sat the exam failed it, none received a High-Distinction either, with many of the papers clustering at around the Credit range.

Perhaps the most important factor impacting on those who did do well in the exam was the lack of effort put in to responding to the questions. While it would be ridiculous to say, a priori, how long a response ought to be, students cannot be expecting to do well when their response to a question amounts to a page or two. It is near impossible to communicate the relevant information in written prose in that space. One of the most important factors impacting on a student’s overall mark for the exam was lack of consistency across all questions attempted, with some of the scripts showing two or three very well developed responses, but then presenting meagre offerings for at least one answer. It is important to understand that in order to achieve a high grade in this exam they need to achieve consistent results. Achieving the highest possible grades is difficult under exam condition, but it is impossible without consistency. There were, however, a number of papers that showed remarkable consistency in their responses, with thoughtful, well-developed responses to each question. Again many of the papers were focused on exposition or description, with students seldom pausing to critically reflect on the issues that they exposited. Students seemed reticent to evaluate the material they discussed. But some of the better papers moved off from that descriptive, expository level of engagement to include moments of evaluation. Students need to develop their capacity to reflect on the material, which means they need to evaluate the ideas discussed and show that they understand the significance its weaknesses.

Legibility was, as expected, an issue, there were a few scripts that were very difficult to read. Here my advice is that it is probably better to say less and produce a paper that is completely legible than to strive to say everything that could possibly be said but leave substantial portions of it illegible. This issue is, however, one that is expected in an exam of this sort.

Philip Andrew Quadrio
Examiner.