Examiners' Comments on Candidates' Overall Performances in QE2012 Paper A

- This year's paper required a realization that a method claim was required to cover the first embodiment, since all the apparatus elements of the first embodiment are said to be "available in any workshop" (i.e. not new). The examiners were surprised by the number of candidates who, in the specific description, described the first embodiment as such, and yet did not attempt to produce claims which read onto it! Provided that candidates realized this legal issue, and attempted to produce a method claim covering both embodiments, passing was very likely, in the absence of a major error. The most common such error was to omit any reference to the sloping surfaces and deformation – which are central to the inventive idea.

- I think the paper was hard for the candidates. Most candidates realised that they could claim a product comprising the connected having two parts. Most candidates did not realise they could have a broader method claim, directed the connector having one part and that with two parts. Many candidates did not have any method claim, which was surprisingly given the paper; because the paper made this very clear.

  Many candidates tried to draft claims that were broader that what was described in the paper. Those claims did not include any reference to "sloping" and/or to "deformation".

- A rather surprisingly large number of candidates (roughly 50%) aim the method claims. This shows that apparently the majority of the candidates did not read the paper carefully.

  From those who drafted method claims, one candidate was able to claim both embodiments. All the candidates missed out the first embodiment. In total, there are too many clear fails, whereas (not surprisingly) the only candidate that seems to have understood the invention passed notably.

- Most candidates focused on the kit and did not include the broader method claim, as specified in the marking schedule. For those who included the apparatus claims, many did not get across the idea that the surfaces are sloping relative to the axis of the shaft or imply that the connection element is deformed.

  Some candidates included wrong or no headings in the description. Most candidates did not have method claim. Few candidates do not mention sloping in independent claims