Examiners' Comments on Candidates' Overall Performance in QE2017 Paper A

- Almost all the candidates were aware of how the patent specification should be structured.

- Paper A seeks to test firstly, the candidates' ability to identify the invention, and then how to properly claim the identified invention. In many instances, the claims were not badly worded, but majority of candidates found it difficult to identify the invention.

- Probably the most common error (occurring in many of the failed papers) was suggesting the wheels or wheel assembly unit, retracted on retraction of the handle. The invention as set out in the paper was incapable of doing this.

- Generally, method claims were done better than the apparatus claims, suggesting that the candidates understood how the invention worked, but unable to translate the required features for the apparatus.

- The overall performance of the paper is poor despite the question involving a relatively simple invention. A large number of candidates misinterpreted how the invention worked and this was evident in the independent claims they drafted. Candidates are encouraged to read the exam question carefully to properly understand how the invention is stated to work and avoid making inappropriate assumptions.

- There are also some candidates who included a great deal of inessential features into the independent claims which resulted in marks being lost.

- Candidates are reminded that to obtain a passing mark for the claims, they are required to include at least the main essential working features in the independent claims and at the same time refrain from including too many non-essential features. Either extremes will be unlikely to attain a passing mark.

- There were some fouls where the invention was correctly understood, but too many features deemed unnecessary are included in the independent claims. This is particularly unfortunate since the prior art was not very close.

- Description was well written in general. However some candidates lost marks for not discussing advantages provided by the claims or simply stating the existence of the prior art without discussing their disadvantages.