

## STEP III, 2011 Q3 EC

3. The second most popular question, attempted by 80% of the cohort, with a similar level of success to question 2. The significance of the condition  $q^2 \neq 4p^3$  was ignored by many candidates, and the fact that it does not apply in the last part of the question was often similarly overlooked. Whilst  $a$  and  $b$  were generally found correctly, the rest of the first part was often missing. Though there were frequent numerical errors, many candidates correctly found the given solution of the equation, though the other two eluded most, with a common error being to assume that the other two were  $xw$  and  $xw^2$ .



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