Lesson 15. IP Formulations Part 2

1 Convex Hull Formulation

1.1 Convex Set Review

Recall that a set is **convex** if, for any two points x and y in that set:

Problem 1. Draw an example of a convex set and a set that is not convex.

Mathematically, a set S is convex if, for any two points $x \in S$ and $y \in S$ then:

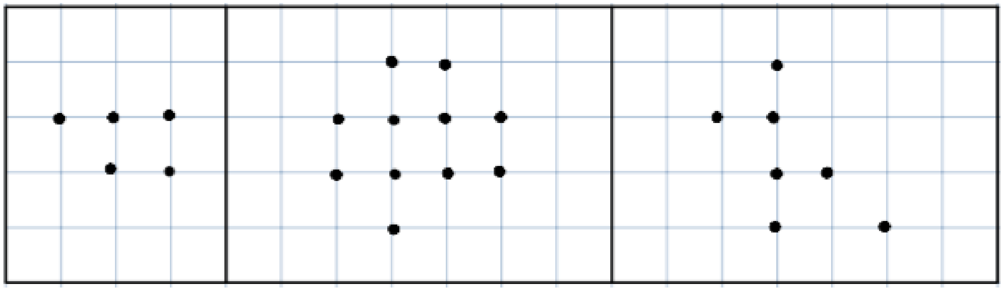
Problem 2. Is the set $S = \{(x_1, x_2) : 2x_1 + 3x_2 \leq 10\}$ convex?

> Remember that the feasible region of an LP is a convex set.

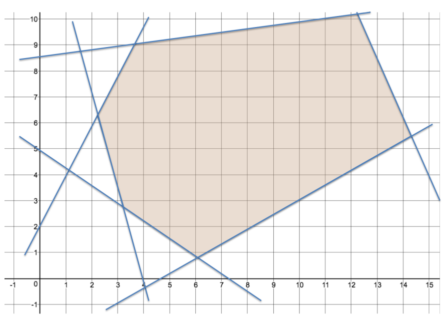
Is the feasible region of an IP a convex set?

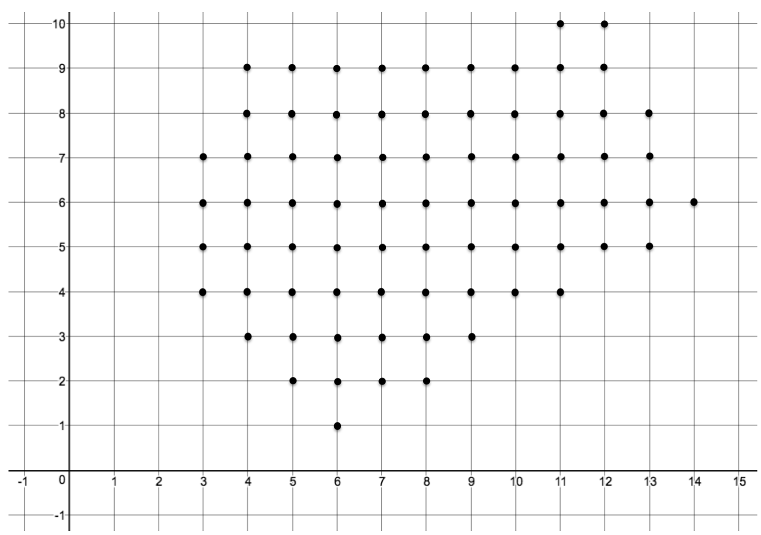
The **convex hull** of a set of integer feasible solutions is the **smallest convex set** that contains all of the points.

Problem 3. Given the following sets of integer points, sketch a convex hull formulation of these points.



Problem 4. A formulation for a set of feasible integer solutions is pictured on the left. The integer solutions are highlighted on the right. Sketch the **convex hull formulation** of this set of solutions.





The **convex hull formulation** of a finite set of integer feasible solutions is considered to be the **"ideal"** formulation.

Why?

HOWEVER, for most problems <u>we can't use the ideal, convex hull formulation</u> because the number of [ ] required to describe the convex hull is often very, very [ ], i.e., *exponential* in the number of variables.

2 Comparing Formulations

When choosing which constraints to include in an IP formulation, there is a **tradeoff**:

- use **enough** constraints to make a reasonably tight "container" for the feasible points,
- but **few enough** constraints so the resulting problem is of manageable size.

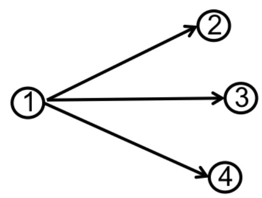
One strategy is to iteratively add constraints as we need them, to [ ] *fractional* solutions obtained by solving LP [ ]. We discussed this **separation** strategy in the context of both the

- [ ] [ ] problem, and
- [ ] [ ] problems.

2.1 Example: Fixed-Charge Weak Vs. Strong Formulations

Many common IP problems have been studied extensively to determine effective modeling strategies. One such problem type is the **fixed-charge facility location problem** that we modeled earlier in the semester.

Problem 5. Suppose there is a possible warehouse at location 1 with maximum capacity C_1, and customers at locations 2, 3, and 4. The binary variable z_1 indicates whether or not facility 1 is used. Integer variables x_{12}, x_{13}, and x_{14} represent the amount of flow on the edges leaving facility 1.



We saw two different ways to enforce the requirement that if facility 1 is closed, there is no flow out of facility 1.

Weak formulation:

Strong formulation:

Why is the formulation on the left referred to as weak while the one on the right is strong?

To summarize, finding the convex hull of an integer program is the gold standard of IP formulations. That said, there are several issues with this:

1. Exponential number of constraints
2. Potential numerical issues with tons of constraints

In general, we do not look for the convex hull. We do, however, use this idea to generate **cuts** when solving IPs.

3 Bounds for IPs

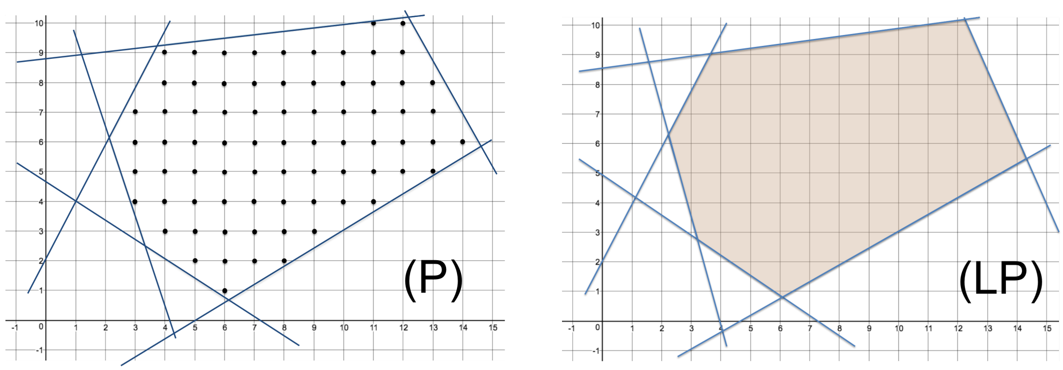
In the next few classes, we will look at "branch-and-bound", the algorithmic framework that most MIP (mixed-integer *linear* programming) solvers use. A critical component of this algorithm is producing bounds on the integer optimal solution.

3.1 Upper and lower bounds for IPs

Problem 6. Suppose (P) is an IP with a maximizing objective function,

$$\text{maximize } f(\mathbf{x}) = c_1 x_1 + c_2 x_2,$$

where c_1 and c_2 are integers. The feasible regions of (P) and (LP), the LP relaxation of (P), are pictured below.



Let z^* be the optimal objective value of (P), which we want to find upper and lower bounds for as part of the branch and bound algorithm.

(a) Suppose we solve the LP relaxation (LP) and get an optimal objective value of 83.9. What can we say about z^* relative to 83.9? Explain.

(b) We already stated that the c_1 and c_2 are integers. What does that tell us about z^*? Explain. *Hint: Suppose (x_1^*, x_2^*) is an optimal solution to (P). What do we know about x_1^* and x_2^*?*

(c) Combining parts (a) and (b), find a better bound for z^*. Explain.

(d) Now suppose that $\hat{\mathbf{x}} = (\hat{x}_1, \hat{x}_2)$, is some *feasible* solution to (P) (not necessarily optimal). What can we say about $f(\hat{x}) = c_1\hat{x}_1 + c_2\hat{x}_2$ relative to z^*? Explain.

3.2 Better formulation leads to better (LP) bounds

The quality of the bound obtained by solving the LP relaxation depends on the formulation:

A **tighter** formulation provides a $\boxed{}$ bound via its LP relaxation.

3.3 Summary of IP bounds

If (P) is a **maximizing** IP with integer objective coefficients and optimal objective value z^*,

- If z^*_{LP} is the optimal objective value to the LP relaxation of (P), then $\boxed{}$ is a/an $\boxed{}$ bound on z^*.
- The objective value for *any feasible* solution to (P) provides a/an $\boxed{}$ bound on z^*.

If (P) is a **minimizing** IP with integer objective coefficients and optimal objective value z^*,

- If z^*_{LP} is the optimal objective value to the LP relaxation of (P), then $\boxed{}$ is a/an $\boxed{}$ bound on z^*.
- The objective value for *any feasible* solution to (P) provides a/an $\boxed{}$ bound on z^*.