



## 1 Decorated Programs

Doing a complete proof in Hoare Logic can feel overly verbose. The “core” of a proof consists of the preconditions and postconditions surrounding every command; with those, it’s usually possible to infer the complete shape of the proof tree.

*Decorating* programs is a way to informally write down a Hoare logic proof of correctness. The idea is to insert assertion decorations between every “line” of the program. Using this informal evidence, you can reconstruct the full formal proof.

### 1.1 Informal Rules

We’ll set out a few rules to check whether a decorated program represents a valid proof using *local consistency* checks. The rules, as you’ll see, are informal reflections of the formal inference rules for Hoare logic.

**Skip.** For **skip**, the precondition and postcondition should be the same, like this:

$$\begin{array}{c} \{P\} \\ \mathbf{skip} \\ \{P\} \end{array}$$

**Sequence.** For sequences, a new assertion  $R$  appears between the two commands. The two halves  $\{P\} \ c_1 \ \{R\}$  and  $\{R\} \ c_2 \ \{Q\}$  must be (recursively) locally consistent:

$$\begin{array}{c} \{P\} \\ c_1; \\ \{R\} \\ c_2 \\ \{Q\} \end{array}$$

**Assignment.** Assignments are locally consistent when the precondition is the same as the postcondition except that it substitutes the assigned expression in for the variable:

$$\begin{array}{c} \{P[a/x]\} \\ x := a \\ \{P\} \end{array}$$

**Conditions.** An **if** is locally consistent when both branches are locally consistent after adding the branch condition to each:

```
{P}
if b then
  {P ∧ b}
  c1
  {Q}
else
  {P ∧ ¬b}
  c2
  {Q}
{Q}
```

**Loops.** A **while** command should be decorated with a loop invariant:

```
{P}
while b do
  {P ∧ b}
  c
  {P}
{P ∧ ¬b}
```

**Implication.** To capture the CONSEQUENCE rule, you can always write a (valid) implication to connect two commands:

$$\{P\} \Rightarrow \{Q\}$$

## 1.2 Decorating a Program

These informal rules tell you how to *verify* whether a decorated program is correct, but they don't by themselves tell you how to *construct* those decorations (and thereby a proof). You can do this almost mechanically—except for loop invariants, which still require some creativity to concoct.

Here's an example program:

```
while (0 < y) do (
  x := x + 1;
  y := y - 1
)
```

The first step is to decide what we want to prove about this program. So we write a precondition and postcondition for the whole program. Intuitively, the program adds y onto the initial value of the variable x, so we'll assert that:

```

{x = m ∧ y = n ∧ 0 ≤ n}
while (0 < y) do (
  x := x + 1;
  y := y - 1
)
{x = m + n}

```

This program is a **while** command, so the next step is to come up with a loop invariant. We'll set up the structure first. We need an assertion  $I$  where we can "connect" the loop's precondition and postcondition to our overall precondition and postcondition using implications, like this:

```

{x = m ∧ y = n ∧ 0 ≤ n} ⇒
{I}
while (0 < y) do (
  {I ∧ 0 < y}
  x := x + 1;
  y := y - 1
  {I}
)
{I ∧ 0 < y} ⇒
{x = m + n}

```

On every iteration of the loop, the variable  $x$  is the sum we want,  $m + n$ , less the current value of  $y$ , which is the number of iterations remaining. So we'll define the invariant  $I$  like this:

$$I ::= (x = m + n - y) \wedge 0 \leq y$$

The top implication follows because  $n - y = 0$ , and the bottom implication is valid because  $0 \not< y$  and  $0 \leq y$  together imply  $y = 0$ .

To finish decorating the program, we need an assertion between the two lines in the body of the loop. By the rule for assignments, we know that this must be  $I[y - 1/y]$ , or:

$$P_1 ::= (x = m + n - (y - 1)) \wedge (0 \leq y - 1)$$

To make the assignment to  $x$  locally consistent, then, its precondition must be  $P_1[x + 1/x]$ , or:

$$P_2 ::= (x + 1 = m + n - (y - 1)) \wedge (0 \leq y - 1)$$

It's straightforward to see that the precondition at the top of the loop,  $I \wedge 0 < y$ , implies this new assertion  $P_2$ . Now we can write our complete decorated program using these definitions:

$$\begin{aligned}
& \{x = m \wedge y = n \wedge 0 \leq n\} \Rightarrow \\
& \{I\} \\
& \mathbf{while} (0 < y) \mathbf{do} ( \\
& \quad \{I \wedge 0 < y\} \Rightarrow \\
& \quad \{P_2\} \\
& \quad x := x + 1; \\
& \quad \{P_1\} \\
& \quad y := y - 1 \\
& \quad \{I\} \\
& ) \\
& \{I \wedge 0 \not< y\} \Rightarrow \\
& \{x = m + n\}
\end{aligned}$$