

Differential Equations Cheatsheet (JMC Year 1, 2017/2018 syllabus)

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Items not covered in this summary: phase portraits, similarity transformations.

Contents

Part I

Individual differential equations

1 Definitions

Order (of derivative) An n^{th} derivative has order n .

Order (of ODE) The order of the highest derivative present in an ODE.

Degree (of ODE) The highest power to which a term is raised in an ODE (excluding fractional powers).

Linear An ODE which has no terms raised to more than the 1^{st} power, and with no y , x or other derivative terms multiplied by each other.

2 1st order linear ODEs

Every 1st order linear ODE can be expressed as:

$$\frac{dy}{dx} + p(x)y = q(x) \quad (1)$$

These can ALL be solved by the *integrating factor* method:

1. Multiply both sides by $\exp(\int p(x)dx)$
2. Use the reverse product rule to express the LHS as a single derivative (of a function of y).
3. Integrate both sides and rearrange.

3 1st order non-linear ODEs

3.1 Exact equations

Let us say we have an ODE of the form:

$$P(x, y) + Q(x, y)\frac{dy}{dx} = 0 \quad (2)$$

(note the coefficients are multi-variable functions). This can be rewritten as:

$$P(x, y)dx + Q(x, y)dy = 0 \quad (3)$$

We can try the exact equations method. We say an equation is exact iff:

$$\frac{\partial P}{\partial y} \equiv \frac{\partial Q}{\partial x} \quad (4)$$

This simple condition implies some important results. It can be shown that an exact equation implies the LHS of equation ?? is an exact (total) differential). This means it can be written as df , where f is some function of x and y . But the equation of this total differential is:

$$df = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}dx + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}dy \quad (5)$$

Comparing to equation ?? we can note 3 things:

$$\begin{aligned} P(x, y) &= \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \\ Q(x, y) &= \frac{\partial f}{\partial y} \\ df &= 0 \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

We integrate $P(x, y)$ w.r.t x and $Q(x, y)$ w.r.t y and 'merge' the two expressions together (i.e. for any matching terms, write them down only once) to give us an expression for $f(x, y)$. Ignore constants of integration. $df = 0$ tells us that $f(x, y) = c$ by integration. Therefore the general solution is given by:

$$f(x, y) = c \quad (7)$$

for some arbitrary constant c .

3.2 Separable ODEs

Separable equations can be written in the form:

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = f(x)g(y) \quad (8)$$

These can be rearranged and integrated on both sides, with respect to the different variables.

3.3 Homogenous ODEs

Homogenous equations can be written in the form:

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = f\left(\frac{y}{x}\right) \quad (9)$$

To solve, set $v = \frac{y}{x}$, so that $y = xv$. Note that v is still a single-variable function of x , since y is a function of x . Now we can differentiate both sides to get:

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = v + x \frac{dv}{dx} \quad (10)$$

We now have simultaneous equations for $\frac{dy}{dx}$. Equate and solve for $\frac{dv}{dx}$, and then solve this 1st order linear ODE in $\frac{dv}{dx}$ to find v (and then y).

3.4 Bernoulli type ODEs

A Bernoulli type ODE is of the form:

$$\frac{dy}{dx} + p(x)y = q(x)y^n \quad (11)$$

To solve:

1. Multiply both sides by $(1 - n)y^{-n}$
2. Let $z = y^{1-n}$ and substitute into equation, including rewriting one of the terms as $\frac{dz}{dx}$
3. The resulting equation is 1st order linear in z , so solve for z (and then y).

4 2nd order ODEs

4.1 Special case - y missing

If we can write the 2nd derivative in the form:

$$\frac{d^2y}{dx^2} = f\left(x, \frac{dy}{dx}\right) \quad (12)$$

(i.e. no y terms present), then we can make a substitution. Let $P = \frac{dy}{dx}$. This means $\frac{d^2y}{dx^2} = \frac{dP}{dx}$, the refore we have:

$$\frac{dP}{dx} = f(x, P) \quad (13)$$

This is 1st order w.r.t P and can be solved by appropriate 1st order methods.

4.2 Special case - x missing

If we can write the 2^{nd} derivative as:

$$\frac{d^2y}{dx^2} = f(y, \frac{dy}{dx}) \quad (14)$$

(i.e. no x terms present), then we can make the same substitution. Let $P = \frac{dy}{dx}$. This means $\frac{d^2y}{dx^2} = \frac{dP}{dx}$, therefore we have:

$$\frac{dP}{dx} = f(y, P) \quad (15)$$

DIFFERENT TO LAST TIME: if we want a 1st order equation, we must rewrite $\frac{dP}{dx}$ as a derivative with respect to y , since the RHS contains y terms. Luckily, we can see that:

$$\frac{dP}{dx} = \frac{dP}{dy} \frac{dy}{dx} = P \frac{dP}{dy} \quad (16)$$

Therefore:

$$P \frac{dP}{dy} = f(y, P) \quad (17)$$

This is 1st order w.r.t P and can be solved by appropriate 1st order methods.

4.3 General case - finding the CF

The general solution (GS) of a 2nd order ODE can be expressed as the sum of two other functions, called the 'complementary function' (CF) and a 'particular integral' (PI).

$$y_{GS} = y_{CF} + y_{PI} \quad (18)$$

A 2nd order ODE will usually be presented to us in the form:

$$a\frac{d^2y}{dx^2} + b\frac{dy}{dx} + c = f(x) \quad (19)$$

It can be shown that the CF can be calculated from the LHS of the above equation. We write down the *auxiliary equation*, which is simply the equation:

$$a\lambda^2 + b\lambda + c = 0 \quad (20)$$

using a, b, c from above. Solving this gives us two values, λ_1 and λ_2 .

4.3.1 $\lambda_1 \neq \lambda_2$

We can express the CF as:

$$y_{CF} = A_1e^{\lambda_1x} + A_2e^{\lambda_2x} \quad (21)$$

where A_1 and A_2 are arbitrary constants.

4.3.2 $\lambda_1 = \lambda_2$

Same as above, but we stick an x in front of one of the clashing parts of the solution.

$$y_{CF} = A_1e^{\lambda_1x} + A_2xe^{\lambda_2x} \quad (22)$$

4.3.3 λ_1 and λ_2 are complex-valued

If the auxiliary equation has complex roots, λ_1 and λ_2 will be complex conjugates. The CF can be expressed as:

$$\begin{aligned} y_{CF} &= A_1e^{(a+bi)x} + A_2e^{(a-bi)x} \\ &= e^a(A_1e^{i(bx)} + A_2e^{-i(bx)}) \\ &= e^a(C_1\cos(bx) + C_2\sin(bx)) \end{aligned} \quad (23)$$

where $C_1 = A_1 + A_2$ and $C_2 = (A_1 - A_2)i$. Note that even though A_1 and A_2 may have been complex, C_1 and C_2 are necessarily real.

4.4 General case - finding the PI

The particular integral is *any function* y_{PI} that satisfies the *ENTIRE differential equation*. The particular integral can be calculated depending on the form of the RHS of equation ???. We will refer to the RHS as simply $f(x)$ and the particular integral (as before) as y_{PI} .

4.4.1 $f(x)$ is a polynomial

Try setting y_{PI} as a general polynomial of the same degree. e.g. if $f(x)$ is a quadratic, try setting $y_{PI} = ax^2 + bx + c$ and substituting into the ODE. We will solve for a, b, c, and this will give us y_{PI} .

4.4.2 $f(x)$ is a multiple of e^{bx} , e^{bx} NOT in CF

Choose $y_{PI} = Ae^{bx}$ for some real number A.

4.4.3 $f(x)$ is a multiple of e^{bx} , e^{bx} IS in CF

We now have a clash between the PI and the CF. Choose $y_{PI} = A(x)e^{bx}$ for some real FUNCTION A. At the end remove any clashing terms (i.e. terms with a component of $e^{(something)x}$ which is already present in the CF).

4.4.4 $f(x) = A(x)e^{bx}$ where $A(x)$ is a polynomial

Choose $y_{PI} = C(x)e^{bx}$ for some polynomial $C(x)$.

4.4.5 $f(x)$ is trigonometric (e.g. sin, cos, sinh etc.)

Look for a pattern in $f(x)$. A good tip for an $f(x)$ with only sines/cosines is to use $y_{PI} = A\cos(x) + B\sin(x)$ and solve for A and B. A similar story for sinh and cosh. CAUTION: sinh, cosh and tanh are actually exponential functions in disguise, so make sure they do not clash with any $e^{\lambda x}$ terms in the CF.

4.4.6 Special cases

If $f(x)$ has a term of the form $e^x \cos(x)$ or $e^x \sin(x)$ then we can rewrite it as the real/imaginary part of a complex function (in this case $e^{(1+i)x}$ would be appropriate, since it expands to $e^x(\cos(x) + i\sin(x))$).

Part II

Systems of differential equations

5 Definitions

System of diff. equations A set of simultaneous equations of derivatives, where derivatives of y, x etc. are given w.r.t. a parameter t

Order (of system) The order of the highest derivative present in the system.

Degree (of system) The highest power to which a term is raised in an ODE (excluding fractional powers).

Linear A system which has no terms raised to more than the 1st power, and with no y or other derivative terms multiplied by each other.

Homogeneous A system with no explicit functions of t (i.e. $f(t)$) present.

6 Solving systems of diff. equations

A homogeneous 1st order system of equations can be written as:

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{dx}{dt} &= F(x, y) \\ \frac{dy}{dt} &= G(x, y)\end{aligned}\tag{24}$$

Let us choose an example coupled system:

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{dx}{dt} &= ax + by \\ \frac{dy}{dt} &= cx + dy\end{aligned}\tag{25}$$

We can rewrite this in matrix form:

$$\frac{d}{dt} \begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \end{pmatrix}\tag{26}$$

The system is now of the form

$$\frac{d}{dt}v = Mv \quad (27)$$

If we set $v = Ve^{\lambda t}$, where V is a constant vector independent of x, y or t , then we get

$$\begin{aligned} \lambda V &= MV \\ (M - \lambda I_n)V &= 0_v \\ \det(M - \lambda I_n) &= 0 \end{aligned} \quad (28)$$

Predictably, we find two eigenvalues λ_1, λ_2 and (any) two eigenvectors v_1, v_2 . The solution to the system is given by:

$$\begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \end{pmatrix} = A_1 v_1 e^{\lambda_1 t} + A_2 v_2 e^{\lambda_2 t} \quad (29)$$

The dimension of the eigenvectors will always match the number of variables being dealt with, for example a possible scenario is:

$$\begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \end{pmatrix} = A_1 \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ -5 \end{pmatrix} e^{-3t} + A_2 \begin{pmatrix} 7 \\ -2 \end{pmatrix} e^{2t} \quad (30)$$

The values of the individual derivatives can be found by reading off the rows of the matrices.

$$\begin{aligned} x &= 3A_1 e^{-3t} + 7A_2 e^{2t} \\ y &= -5A_1 e^{-3t} - 2A_2 e^{2t} \end{aligned} \quad (31)$$

6.0.1 Complex eigenvalues

If the eigenvalues turn out to be complex conjugates, the solution can be written as:

$$\begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \end{pmatrix} = A_1 v_1 e^{(a+bi)t} + A_2 v_2 e^{(a-bi)t} \quad (32)$$

(Note that A_1 AND A_2 ARE COMPLEX CONSTANTS HERE). We can do some rearranging like before to tidy up the solution:

$$\begin{aligned} \begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \end{pmatrix} &= A_1 v_1 e^{(a+bi)t} + A_2 v_2 e^{(a-bi)t} \\ &= e^a (A_1 v_1 e^{i(bt)} + A_2 v_2 e^{-i(bt)}) \\ &= e^a (C_1 \cos(bt) + C_2 \sin(bt)) \end{aligned} \quad (33)$$

where $C_1 = A_1v_1 + A_2v_2$ and $C_2 = (A_1v_1 - A_2v_2)i$. Note that C_1 and C_2 are vectors.