



Math for the people, by the people.

extremal

Canonical name	Extremal
Date of creation	2013-03-22 19:10:29
Last modified on	2013-03-22 19:10:29
Owner	pahio (2872)
Last modified by	pahio (2872)
Numerical id	4
Author	pahio (2872)
Entry type	Definition
Classification	msc 47A60
Synonym	extremal curve
Related topic	CalculusOfVariations
Defines	extremal function

An extremum point (i.e. a maximum point or a minimum point) gives a maximum value or a minimum value for a <http://planetmath.org/RealFunction>function.

An *extremal curve* (i.e. an *extremal*, or the corresponding *extremal function*) gives a maximum value or a minimum value for a <http://planetmath.org/Functionalfunction>

For example, if the functional is the length of a curve connecting two points on a sphere, the extremals are great circle arcs between the points.