1 13.5: Lines and Planes in Space

Equation of a Line

A **vector equation of the line** passing through the point $P_0(x_0, y_0, z_0)$ in the direction of the vector $\mathbf{v} = \langle a, b, c \rangle$ is $\mathbf{r} = \mathbf{r}_0 + t\mathbf{v}$, or

$$\langle x, y, z \rangle = \langle x_0, y_0, z_0 \rangle + t\langle a, b, c \rangle, \quad \text{for} \quad -\infty < t < \infty$$

Equivalently, the corresponding **parametric equations of the line** are

$$x = x_0 + at, \quad y = y_0 + bt, \quad z = z_0 + ct, \quad \text{for} \quad -\infty < t < \infty$$

Distance Between a Point and a Line

The distance d between the point Q and the $\mathbf{r} = \mathbf{r}_0 + t\mathbf{v}$ is

$$d = \frac{\left| \mathbf{v} \times \overrightarrow{PQ} \right|}{|\mathbf{v}|},$$

where P is any point on the line and $\mathbf{v}$ is a vector parallel to the line.