PROGRAMMING IN HASKELL



Chapter 4 - Defining Functions

Conditional Expressions

As in most programming languages, functions can be defined using <u>conditional expressions</u>.

```
abs :: Int \rightarrow Int abs n = if n \ge 0 then n = lse -n
```

abs takes an integer n and returns n if it is non-negative and -n otherwise.

Conditional expressions can be nested:

```
signum :: Int \rightarrow Int signum n = if n < 0 then -1 else if n == 0 then 0 else 1
```

Note:

z In Haskell, conditional expressions must <u>always</u> have an else branch, which avoids any possible ambiguity problems with nested conditionals.

Guarded Equations

As an alternative to conditionals, functions can also be defined using guarded equations.

abs
$$n \mid n \ge 0 = n$$

 $\mid \text{ otherwise } = -n$

As previously, but using guarded equations.

Guarded equations can be used to make definitions involving multiple conditions easier to read:

```
signum n | n < 0 = -1
| n == 0 = 0
| otherwise = 1
```

Note:

The catch all condition <u>otherwise</u> is defined in the prelude by otherwise = True.

Pattern Matching

Many functions have a particularly clear definition using pattern matching on their arguments.

```
not :: Bool → Bool
not False = True
not True = False
```

not maps False to True, and True to False.

Functions can often be defined in many different ways using pattern matching. For example

```
(&&) :: Bool → Bool → Bool
True && True = True
True && False = False
False && True = False
False && False = False
```

can be defined more compactly by

```
True && True = True
_ && _ = False
```

However, the following definition is more efficient, because it avoids evaluating the second argument if the first argument is False:

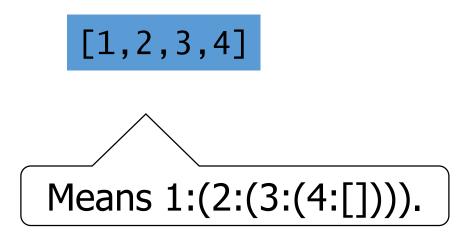
Note:

The underscore symbol _ is a <u>wildcard</u> pattern that matches any argument value. Z Patterns are matched <u>in order</u>. For example, the following definition always returns False:

Z Patterns may not <u>repeat</u> variables. For example, the following definition gives an error:

List Patterns

Internally, every non-empty list is constructed by repeated use of an operator (:) called "cons" that adds an element to the start of a list.



Functions on lists can be defined using x:xs patterns.

```
head :: [a] \rightarrow a
head (x:\_) = x
tail :: [a] \rightarrow [a]
tail (\_:xs) = xs
```

head and tail map any non-empty list to its first and remaining elements.

Note:

z x:xs patterns only match <u>non-empty</u> lists:

```
> head []
*** Exception: empty list
```

z x:xs patterns must be <u>parenthesised</u>, because application has priority over (:). For example, the following definition gives an error:

head
$$x: = x$$

Lambda Expressions

Functions can be constructed without naming the functions by using <u>lambda expressions</u>.

$$\lambda x \rightarrow x + x$$

the nameless function that takes a number x and returns the result x + x.

Note:

- **Z** The symbol λ is the Greek letter <u>lambda</u>, and is typed at the keyboard as a backslash \.
- **z** In mathematics, nameless functions are usually denoted using the \mapsto symbol, as in $x \mapsto x + x$.
- **z** In Haskell, the use of the λ symbol for nameless functions comes from the <u>lambda calculus</u>, the theory of functions on which Haskell is based.

Why Are Lambda's Useful?

Lambda expressions can be used to give a formal meaning to functions defined using <u>currying</u>.

For example:

add
$$x y = x + y$$

means

add =
$$\lambda x \rightarrow (\lambda y \rightarrow x + y)$$

Lambda expressions are also useful when defining functions that return <u>functions</u> as <u>results</u>.

For example:

const ::
$$a \rightarrow b \rightarrow a$$

const $x = x$

is more naturally defined by

const ::
$$a \rightarrow (b \rightarrow a)$$

const $x = \lambda_{-} \rightarrow x$

Lambda expressions can be used to avoid naming functions that are only <u>referenced once</u>.

For example:

odds
$$n = map f [0..n-1]$$

where
 $f x = x*2 + 1$

can be simplified to

odds n = map
$$(\lambda x \rightarrow x*2 + 1)$$
 [0..n-1]

Operator Sections

An operator written <u>between</u> its two arguments can be converted into a curried function written <u>before</u> its two arguments by using parentheses.

For example:

This convention also allows one of the arguments of the operator to be included in the parentheses.

For example:

In general, if \oplus is an operator then functions of the form (\oplus) , $(x\oplus)$ and $(\oplus y)$ are called <u>sections</u>.

Why Are Sections Useful?

Useful functions can sometimes be constructed in a simple way using sections. For example:

- (1+) successor function
- (1/) reciprocation function
- (*2) doubling function
- (/2) halving function

Exercises

- (1) Consider a function <u>safetail</u> that behaves in the same way as tail, except that safetail maps the empty list to the empty list, whereas tail gives an error in this case. Define safetail using:
 - (a) a conditional expression;
 - (b) guarded equations;
 - (c) pattern matching.

Hint: the library function null :: $[a] \rightarrow Bool$ can be used to test if a list is empty.

- (2) Give three possible definitions for the logical or operator (||) using pattern matching.
- (3) Redefine the following version of (&&) using conditionals rather than patterns:

(4) Do the same for the following version: