

# Discrete Mathematics and Probability

## Lecture 21 Exam Preparation

Ian Stark

School of Informatics  
The University of Edinburgh

Thursday 26 November 2025

# Outline

- 1 Exam: Information
- 2 Exam: Preparation
- 3 Examples
- 4 Exam: Technique
- 5 Closing

# Exam: Date, Time, Place

DMP has a single two-hour written examination. This contributes 80% towards the final course grade, with weekly quizzes contributing 20%.

**Date** Tuesday 9 December 2025

**Time** 1430–1630

**Place** Paterson's Land *and other places*

**Code** INFR08031

Exam timetables: <https://exams.is.ed.ac.uk>

Picture Credit: Annie Caldwell, University of Edinburgh



This information is current at 2025-11-27; please check your personalized timetable and the exam timetables link above closer to the date to check this and to confirm all of your exams.

# Grade Calculation

From the course **Assessment** web page <https://opencourse.inf.ed.ac.uk/dmp/assessment#exam>

The exam lasts two hours and has two parts.

**Part A** contains four questions on discrete mathematics, together worth 50 marks. These are based on the first half of the course and may involve any topic listed in the study guides.

**Part B** contains four questions on probability, together worth 50 marks. These are based on the second half of the course and may involve any topic listed in the study guides.

Adding up the marks for all questions gives a total out of 100.

# Grade Calculation

From the course **Assessment** web page <https://opencourse.inf.ed.ac.uk/dmp/assessment#exam>

Component	Mark Calculation	Weighting
Online Quizzes	Best 8 out of 10	20%
Written Exam	Question total	80%

The pass mark for the course is 40/100 and there is no requirement to pass any individual component — no “Force Fail” — only the combined mark is used.

# In the Exam

From the course [Assessment](#) web page and [school web pages](#) linked there.

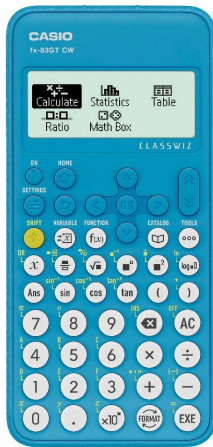
## Calculators

You may use a scientific calculator during the exam and will need to provide your own. It must not be graphing or programmable, able to retrieve text, or to communicate with any other device. The following are examples of suitable calculators.

- Casio: FX82, FX83, FX85, FX96, FX991 (all versions)
- Texas Instruments: TI30 (all versions)
- Sharp: EL-531 (all versions)
- HP: HP 10S+, HP 300S+

Exams in other courses may have different requirements, or not allow calculators at all.

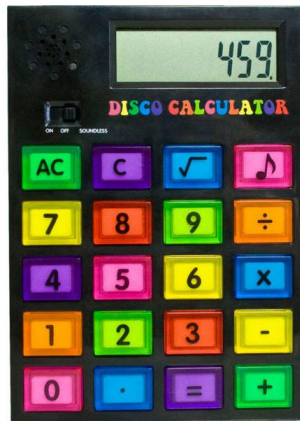
# Examples of Suitable Calculators



# Example of an Unsuitable Calculator



<https://mathsgear.co.uk>





# In the Exam

From the course [Assessment](#) web page and [school web pages](#) linked there.

## Permitted Notes

You may bring into the exam one A4 page (2 sides) of notes, printed or handwritten. There is no requirement to do so, however, and questions will not depend on such material.

## Statistical Tables

Tables of the standard normal distribution, or other numerical references, will be provided alongside any question that needs them. You do not need to bring your own.

# No Other Electronic Devices

You may take calculators in to the DMP exam but no other devices.

## Exam Hall Regulations

...

9. The use of mobile devices/personal electronic equipment is not permitted. Mobile devices must be switched off during an examination. These should be placed in your bag and should not be on your person.

Mobile devices are those which store/display data or connect to the internet, such as a mobile telephone, smart watches, smart glasses or any other communications equipment.

...

Take care with this: make sure you do not accidentally carry in any connected device.

# Exam Cover Sheet

INFR08031 DISCRETE MATHEMATICS AND PROBABILITY

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025

14:30 to 16:30

## INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. Note that ALL QUESTIONS ARE COMPULSORY.
2. DIFFERENT QUESTIONS MAY HAVE DIFFERENT NUMBERS OF TOTAL MARKS. Take note of this in allocating time to questions.
3. This is a NOTES PERMITTED, CALCULATORS PERMITTED examination.

Candidates may consult up to ONE A4 page (2 sides) of notes.

CALCULATORS MAY BE USED IN THIS EXAMINATION.

# Exam Script Booklet

INFR08031

Do not write above this line

19/12/2023

3.(c)

☐ Tick here if you have used additional pages for answering this question

# What to Write Where

## During the Exam

- Write all your working and answers in the boxes in the booklet provided.
- Use blue or black pen, with pencil only for graphs or diagrams.
- You are allowed to write on the exam paper: for example, to tick off questions completed, or note the order you plan to attempt questions.

## At the End of the Exam

- You may take away the exam paper.
- You must leave behind the booklet with your answers.

# Outline

- 1 Exam: Information
- 2 Exam: Preparation**
- 3 Examples
- 4 Exam: Technique
- 5 Closing

# Exam Preparation

- (a) Read through the lecture slides, your own notes, the homework exercises, the tutorial sheets.
- (b) Write your own notes on each topic. Summarize, organize, make lists of relevant points.  
  
(For anything you really don't understand, go back to the study guide, videos, and textbook. That's a fallback, though — where you possibly can, try to maintain understanding week by week in any course.)
- (c) Choose some exercises from the textbook for each topic. Write out your answers, in full.
- (d) Practice questions from the sample exam papers. Write out your answers, in full.
- (e) Repeat items (c)–(e).

# Sample Papers

The course *Learn* site has a set of sample papers prepared to match the format and syllabus of this year's DMP final exam. These come with solution guides. Find them at *Course Content / Assessment / Examples of Past Exam Papers*.

Along with these are past DMP exams, class tests, solution guides, as well as papers from earlier courses *Discrete Mathematics and Mathematical Reasoning* (DMMR) and *Probability with Applications* (PwA).

The University Library has past papers online for all courses.

<http://exampapers.ed.ac.uk>



# Using Sample Papers and Past Exam Questions

Sample papers and past exam questions are a good source of practice material, and I strongly recommend you attempt as many of them as you can. Solution guides are also useful.

However, please note the following.

- The key exam preparation task is to *master the course material*: understand it and be able to apply it in practice.

Conveniently, that's also the best possible outcome for you from this course

- Memorizing answers to previous questions is not a helpful way to tackle future ones.
- Attempting past exam questions yourself — to test your knowledge, and identify any gaps — is a much more effective way to learn.

Don't revise: practice

If you are puzzled by a past question or its solution then ask on *Piazza*.

# Outline

- 1 Exam: Information
- 2 Exam: Preparation
- 3 Examples**
- 4 Exam: Technique
- 5 Closing

## Example

A company regularly uses three different taxi firms: Dash, Over and Zip. Looking at their company records, they find that 40% of their hires are from Dash, 50% are from Over and 10% are from Zip.

They also find that with Dash 9% arrive late, with Over it is 6% and with Zip it is 20%.

Assume that these alternative possibilities are all random and independent.

- (a) Draw a probability tree for these possible outcomes.
- (b) Calculate the probability that the next taxi will be from Dash and will not arrive late;
- (c) Calculate the probability that the next taxi ordered will arrive late.

A call was made for a taxi and it arrived late.

- (d) Find the probability that it came from Over.

## Example

The PDF of a continuous random variable  $X$  is given as:

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{18}x^2 & \text{if } |x| \leq a \\ 0 & \text{if } |x| > a \end{cases}$$

for some value  $a$ .

Find the value of  $a$  and calculate  $P(-\frac{a}{2} < X < \frac{a}{2})$ .

# Outline

- 1 Exam: Information
- 2 Exam: Preparation
- 3 Examples
- 4 Exam: Technique**
- 5 Closing

# What Kinds of Things are Assessed?

Subject area content obviously varies dramatically between different courses and their examinations, but some factors remain steady and most exams try to assess a range of skills.

Here is one listing of different elements that questions aim to stimulate and assess:

- |                            |                                       |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ● Knowledge                | Do you know the thing?                |
| ● Understanding            | Do you know you know the thing?       |
| ● Ability to explain       | Can you tell me the thing?            |
| ● Application of knowledge | Can you use the thing?                |
| ● Judgement                | Can you tell which thing to use when? |

In most cases questions and parts of questions will call on more than one of these; and there are also many other ways to classify learning and assessment goals.

# Working through the Exam Paper

Don't start writing until you know what you are doing.

- Read all questions before beginning the paper.
- You don't need to do the questions in order.
- Don't assume a question is only using one part of the course.
- If you get stuck on one question: stop; go on to the next question; come back later. This is not giving up! It's a time management hack.

All questions give information about marks available.

Adding up the marks you achieve for each question gives your total mark for the exam.

# Answering a Question

Don't start writing until you know what you are doing.

- Read the question.
- Identify what the question is asking for.
- Work out how to answer the question.
- Write an answer to the question that shows you know what you are doing and explains how you achieved the result.
- Read the question again and make sure your answer provides all the details requested.

Look at the mark counts for an indication of how much or how little is required.

Look at the mark counts to check how you are using time.



# Exam Marking

The exam is marked by the course lecturers with support from tutors.

- Marking is anonymous: we don't see your name or UUN.
- Spelling and grammar are not part of the assessment; although it is important that the markers can read what you have written.
- Marks are not “curved” or “scaled”. You keep all the marks you get.
- There is no ranking of student performance — your mark and grade do not in any way depend on how others do in the course.

Once individual exam papers are marked and the scores combined with coursework grades, all this is passed for review to the **Board of Examiners** with oversight from an **External Examiner**. The Board meets in January after which results will be posted in EUCLID.

# Outline

- 1 Exam: Information
- 2 Exam: Preparation
- 3 Examples
- 4 Exam: Technique
- 5 Closing

# Finis

## You can do this

The DMP syllabus and exam questions are written to be achievable. Every year large numbers of students do well in the course writing straightforward correct answers about things they understand. You can do this too.

## Anything Else?

If you have further questions about any aspect of the course then please:

- Post a question on *Piazza*; *or*
- Ask your course tutor, in person or by email; *or*
- Ask me, in person or by email.

*Thank you for your attention*

**We're done here**