Exam information

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Probabilistic Machine Learning (INFR11298)
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Autumn Semester 2026

When and where?

- Exam timetable information is here:

  `https://www.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/exams/exam-diets`

- The info (as of 17 Nov) is as follows:
  - Date: Thursday, 10th December 2026
  - Time: 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
  - Main venue: Playfair Library

  Please double check with your personalised timetable!

- For students with special arrangements, please check your personalised timetable.

One A4 page of notes is permitted

- Format: NOTES PERMITTED, CALCULATORS NOT PERMITTED examination. You may consult up to one A4 page (2 sides) of notes.
- Calculators won't be needed in the exam.
- The notes can contain whatever you like, written or printed on one or both sides of the paper.
- Magnifying devices to enlarge the contents of the sheet for viewing are not permitted.
- Adjusted for students with learning profiles (see `https://informatics.ed.ac.uk/taught-students/all-students/your-studies/assessment-coursework-exams-feedback`)

Examinable material

As listed on the course website, the following is examinable:

- the material on the slides
- the material in the tutorials
- the material in the self-study exercises

unless marked as optional or not examinable

Exam format

- All questions will be compulsory.
- There will be 6 questions worth 8 to 9 marks each (total: 50 marks).
- Sub-questions will have different numbers of marks. Take note of this when allocating your time to questions.
- Sub-questions with more marks require you to do more.
- Remember the Common Marking Scheme

  `https://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/student-services/ito/students/common-marking-scheme`

  $\geq 70\%$ is excellent $\Rightarrow$ You do not need to be able to solve everything for an A.

Past exams

- Past exam papers are available at `https://exampapers.ed.ac.uk/`
- Search for course INFR11134 (previous instances of this course were run under the name "Probabilistic Modelling and Reasoning").
- The collection goes back to 2004/2005. Don't aim to work through all of them. Focus on the most recent years and try to get as much out of each paper as possible (quality over quantity).
- Questions in past papers that are on topics not covered in this year's course are not relevant.
- Some exercises are (slightly modified) past exam questions.
- Notation may be different in past exams.
- The TA offers sessions where past exams are worked through (see EdStem for location and dates). Come prepared.

How to prepare

- My focus is on assessing how well you understand the material and how well you can use it to solve problems, not how well you can memorise formulae.
- You do have the A4 notes page that you can use for things that you can't remember by heart.
- But don't assume that you can write everything on it.
- Less common formulae will be given in the exam paper.
- My motivation for the A4 notes page is to help you spend time on understanding and practising the content rather than on memorising little details.

How to prepare

- Make a plan; plan for rest periods too.
- Identify key topics that tend to recur in the past exams and prioritise if you have to.
- Be honest with yourself about whether you understand something or not.
- Work through and practise the exercises, but don't overfit (to the exercises or slides).
- If you get stuck on an exercise, work through the relevant lecture slides and recordings; repeat.
- Do you understand everything in the "Notes" (the provided lecture summaries)?
- Can you explain the material to someone else?
- T-approach: $^{-}$ Can you explain the big picture? | Can you take deep dives and explain details?

Exam technique

- Hopefully you have figured out a good exam technique during your previous studies already.
- People have different strategies:
  - Some skim the exam first so that they have an idea of which questions they can answer well, and then answer those first.
  - Some go through linearly, doing one question at a time.
- If you get stuck somewhere, consider moving on and coming back to the question later if you have time.
- Don't forget any low-hanging fruit.
- Don't panic and do your best!

How to answer exam questions

- Read the questions carefully.
- If in doubt, explain your reasoning rather than just stating the result.
- Don't provide several conflicting answers and expect the marker to choose the correct one. We wouldn't give any marks in that situation.
- Don't brain-dump everything that you think is related to the question. Answer the question asked.
- For math formulae and diagrams, make sure to define all quantities (unless they are already defined in the question, or are standard notation from the lecture).
- Write legibly—we can only give marks for things we can read.

Look after yourself during the exam season

- Sleep enough; you consolidate the studied material during sleep.
- Take breaks during the study sessions.
- Move during the breaks, and at the end of the study day.
- Don't think caffeine is the answer to everything.
- Look after yourself!