

Introduction

Prior Knowledge

Prior knowledge in mathematics (and statistics) of students of the master programme in *economics* differ heavily:

- ▶ Students with courses in mathematics with a total of 25 ECTS points (or more) in their bachelor programme.
- ▶ Students who did not attend any mathematics course at all.

Prior knowledge differ in

- ▶ Basic *skills* (like computations with “symbols”)
- ▶ *Tools* (like methods for optimization)
- ▶ Mathematical *reasoning* (proving your claim)

Knowledge Gap

The following problems cause issues for quite a few students:

- ▶ Drawing (or sketching) of graphs of functions.
- ▶ Transform equations into equivalent ones.
- ▶ Handling inequalities.
- ▶ Correct handling of fractions.
- ▶ Calculations with exponents and logarithms.
- ▶ Obstructive multiplying of factors.
- ▶ Usage of mathematical notation.

Presented “*solutions*” of such calculation subtasks are surprisingly often *wrong*.

Learning Objectives

This **bridging course** is intended to help participants to

- ▶ *close* possible knowledge gaps, and
- ▶ *raise* prior knowledge in **basic** mathematical **skills** to the *same higher* level.

Further courses:

- ▶ *Foundations of Mathematics* (Msc Economics):
Essential mathematical *tools*.
(matrix algebra, Taylor series, implicit functions, static optimization, Hessian, Lagrange multiplier, difference equations, . . .)
- ▶ *Mathematics 1 and 2* (science track only):
Advanced (new) tools and mathematical reasoning.

Learning Methods

- ▶ *Revision* of mathematical notions and concepts by the instructor.
- ▶ Solve problems *collectively* during the course.
- ▶ Solve *homework problems*.
Solutions are discussed during the next course.
- ▶ The subject matter may not be presented in a linear way.
- ▶ There will be *no exams*.
- ▶ For a positive grade (“*erfolgreich teilgenommen*”) you have to be **present** in at least **8 units**.

Solutions of Problems

- ▶ A problem is **solved** when the problem question is *answered*.
- ▶ It is *not sufficient* when you just present the computations that are *necessary* to answer the question.
- ▶ In particular, fragments of computations that start and end at some point are not considered as correct solution of a (homework) problem.
- ▶ You have to show that you can draw the right conclusions from your computations.

Maxima – Computer Algebra System (CAS)

Maxima is a so called **Computer Algebra System (CAS)**, i.e., one can

- ▶ handle algebraic expressions,
- ▶ solve (in-) equalities with parameters,
- ▶ differentiate and integrate analytically,
- ▶ handle abstract matrices,
- ▶ plot univariate and bivariate functions,
- ▶ ...

Program *wxMaxima* provides a GUI:

<http://wxmaxima.sourceforge.net/>

The manuscript *Introduction to Maxima for Economics* can be downloaded from the webpage of this course.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Motivation
Learning Methods

Sets and Maps

Sets
Basic Set Operations
Maps
Special Functions

Terms

Terms
Sigma Notation
Absolute Value
Powers and Roots
Polynomials
Rational Terms

Table of Contents / 2

Exponent and Logarithm

Equations and Inequalities

Equations
Linear Equations
Absolute Values
Equations with Exponents or Logarithms
Equations with Powers or Roots
Algebraic Equations
Inequalities

Sequences and Series

Sequences
Series
Arithmetic and Geometric Sequence
Calculation of Annuities

Real Functions

Table of Contents / 3

Real Functions
Graph of a Function
Bijectivity
Special Functions
Elementary Functions
Multivariate Functions
Indifference Curves
Paths
Generalized Real Functions

Limits

Limit of a Sequence
Limit of a Function
L'Hôpital's Rule
Continuity

Derivatives

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Introduction – 9 / 12

Table of Contents / 4

Differential Quotient
Derivative
The Differential
Elasticity
Partial Derivatives
Gradient
Hessian Matrix
Jacobian Matrix

Monotone, Convex and Extrema

Monotone Functions
Convex and Concave
Extrema

Integration

Antiderivative
Riemann Integral

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Introduction – 10 / 12

Table of Contents / 5

Fundamental Theorem of Calculus

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Introduction – 11 / 12

May you do well!