Online Homework Use and Advice  
Math 221 – Spring 2005

Math 221, Calculus and Analytic Geometry II, will online assignments in addition to traditional written homework. While this will be the second semester we use the system in Math 221, the system has been used successfully for several years in Math 150 and Math 240. Online homework allows for you to get feedback immediately (well – usually within 60 seconds) after you submit your assignment, rather than waiting a week for a grader to return your paper. Online homework also allows you to work additional problems if you are unsatisfied with your score on the first problem set for a given assignment.

The system has been tested with Internet Explorer 5 and 6 and Netscape 4.08, 4.6, and 4.7. Most of the testing has been done with PCs. Our (limited) testing on Macs was also successful. Unix machines should work okay, but the π and θ symbols may not show up properly (you can usually figure out what is meant from context anyway). To use the online homework system, you can point your web browser to the online homework page http://www.math.ksu.edu/math221/quiz and follow the links to the online homework. You will need to sign-in with your Student ID number to obtain a problem set. Be sure to use your Student ID (usually your social security number), not your eID. Don’t bookmark the problem set page directly; if you access the page without signing in, the problem set won’t be initialized properly. Every student will get a different (but similar) set of problems. You may work on the problems at the computer or you may print them out using your browser’s Print feature and work on them elsewhere. If you leave and return, you will have the same problems when you log in again. After you enter your answers onto the web page, you can submit your answers for grading (use the button at the bottom of the page). You will need to enter your password to submit your answers for grading. If you have to leave before you get all your answers entered, you can save your work (another button at the bottom of the page). Note that your work is automatically saved when you submit your answers for grading. You will also need your password to save your work. When you log back into the assignment, the web page will automatically restore the most recent set of saved answers. The first time your answers to a particular problem set are submitted, they are marked correct or incorrect and you will have a chance to fix any wrong answers before you resubmit your work. After your answers have been submitted a second time, your work will be graded and you will be given the correct answers and links to see how to work the problems. Answers are scored either right or wrong – there is no partial credit awarded. You may then go back and sign into the assignment again to get a second problem set (or third or fourth or …). You may attempt the assignment as many times as you like. You will receive whatever your highest score is, regardless of how many attempts. From the online homework page, you can also view your grades, view your previous attempts, and change your password.

A small warning: The first time we used this system, the most common score on the second attempt on the first assignment was 0, with more 0’s on the second attempt that the first attempt. This is because students noticed that after they submitted their first attempt and got the correct answers, they could use the back button on their browsers and
go back to the problem set, correct their answers, and resubmit them. Unfortunately for them, the grading software will not accept answers to the same problems twice. Instead, it assumes the second submission is for the second set of problems, and (unless some problem has the same answer by sheer luck), gives a 0 score. This doesn’t actually hurt since you will get your high score and you can try as many times as you want. Just remember to go back and sign in again to properly initialize the problem set to the new problems once you have submitted your answers to the previous set.

Because you can submit as many problem sets as you want, you can decide what sort of score you want to get. On average “A” students submit more attempts and don’t stop till they have better scores than do “B” students (who do more than “C” students and so on). On the other hand, don’t just try the “video game approach” of submitting answers rapidly over and over hoping to have it come out right. If you don’t get a problem right, look at the correct answer and, if available, the worked problem, and try to learn how to do the problem. If you still have trouble with a particular type of problem after two or three attempts, you should go to your recitation teacher’s office hours or help session and get some help. Of course, if you just start on the assignment the day it is due, you won’t have much time to take advantage of the opportunity to try the assignment more than once.

Your initial password is a random combination of letters (every character is a letter, so you don’t have to worry about the distinction between 1 (one) and l (el) ). You can change your password to something easier to remember using the form on the online homework home page. You can also check your homework scores online and review old assignments. If you forget your password, you can bring a picture ID to either Andrew Bennett in CW 202 or Don Eisele in CW 201C and we will look it up for you.

If you think you’ve found a bug, or if there is just something about the system you find annoying (or even something nice about the system you want to praise), feel free to contact the online homework coordinator:

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