

15.5 Directional Derivatives  
Multivariable Calculus

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJODOGq7cAY&list=PLHXZ9OQGMqxc\\_CvEy7xBKRO\\_r6I214QJcd&index=18](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJODOGq7cAY&list=PLHXZ9OQGMqxc_CvEy7xBKRO_r6I214QJcd&index=18)

**Directional Derivative** if  $\vec{u}$  is a unit vector then

$$D_{\vec{u}} f(P) = \nabla f_P \cdot \vec{u}$$

1. Find the directional derivative of  $f(x, y) = 2 - x^2 - y^2$  at  $(\frac{1}{2}, -\frac{1}{2})$  in the direction of  $\vec{u} = \langle \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}, \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \rangle$   $\|\vec{u}\| = \sqrt{\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}} = 1$

$\vec{u}$  already a unit vector

$$f_x = -2x \quad f_y = -2y$$

$$D_{\vec{u}} f(\frac{1}{2}, -\frac{1}{2}) = \langle -1, 1 \rangle \cdot \langle \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}, \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \rangle$$

$$\nabla f = \langle -2x, -2y \rangle$$

$$= -\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} + \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}$$

$$\nabla f_{(\frac{1}{2}, -\frac{1}{2})} = \langle -1, 1 \rangle$$

$$= \boxed{0}$$

Consider the angle the unit vector  $\vec{u}$  makes.  $\vec{u} = \langle \cos\theta, \sin\theta \rangle$



$$\cos\theta = \frac{x}{1}$$

$$\sin\theta = \frac{y}{1}$$

$$\vec{u} = \langle x, y \rangle$$

2. Let  $f(x, y) = xe^y$ , at the point  $(2, -1)$  find the directional derivative in the direction of  $\vec{v} = \langle 2, 3 \rangle$ .

$$f_x = e^y \quad f_y = xe^y$$

$$\vec{u} = \frac{\langle 2, 3 \rangle}{\sqrt{4+9}} = \langle \frac{2}{\sqrt{13}}, \frac{3}{\sqrt{13}} \rangle$$

$$\nabla f = \langle e^y, xe^y \rangle$$

$$D_{\vec{u}} f(2, -1) = \langle \frac{1}{e}, \frac{2}{e} \rangle \cdot \langle \frac{2}{\sqrt{13}}, \frac{3}{\sqrt{13}} \rangle$$

$$\nabla f_{(2, -1)} = \langle \frac{1}{e}, \frac{2}{e} \rangle$$

$$= \frac{2}{e\sqrt{13}} + \frac{6}{e\sqrt{13}}$$

$$= \frac{8}{e\sqrt{13}} \approx \boxed{0.82}$$

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3. Find the rate of change of  $f(x, y) = x^2 + 2xy - 3y^2$  at the point  $(1, 2)$  in the direction indicated by the angle  $\theta = \frac{\pi}{4}$ .  $\vec{u} = \left\langle \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}, \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \right\rangle$  unit vector already

$$\nabla f = \langle 2x + 2y, 2x - 6y \rangle$$

$$\nabla f(1, 2) = \langle 6, -10 \rangle$$

$$\begin{aligned} D_{\vec{u}} f(1, 2) &= \langle 6, -10 \rangle \cdot \left\langle \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}, \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \right\rangle \\ &= \frac{6}{\sqrt{2}} - \frac{10}{\sqrt{2}} = \boxed{-\frac{4}{\sqrt{2}}} \end{aligned}$$

4. Find the gradient and the directional derivative of the function  $f(x, y) = x^2 y^3 - 4y$  at the point  $(2, -1)$  in the direction of the vector  $\vec{v} = \langle 2, 5 \rangle$

$$\nabla f = \langle 2xy^3, 3x^2y^2 - 4 \rangle$$

$$\nabla f(2, -1) = \langle -4, 8 \rangle$$

$$D_{\vec{u}} f(2, -1) = \langle -4, 8 \rangle \cdot \left\langle \frac{2}{\sqrt{29}}, \frac{5}{\sqrt{29}} \right\rangle$$

$$= -\frac{8}{\sqrt{29}} + \frac{40}{\sqrt{29}} = \boxed{\frac{32}{\sqrt{29}}}$$

5. Find the directional derivative of the function  $f(x, y, z) = z^4 - x^3 y^2$  at the point  $P(1, 3, 2)$  in the direction of point  $Q(2, 4, 3)$ .

$$\nabla f = \langle -3x^2 y^2, -2x^3 y, 4z^3 \rangle$$

$$\vec{PQ} = \langle 1, 1, 1 \rangle$$

$$\nabla f(1, 3, 2) = \langle -27, -6, 32 \rangle$$

$$\vec{u} = \frac{\langle 1, 1, 1 \rangle}{\sqrt{3}}$$

$$= \left\langle \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}}, \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}}, \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \right\rangle$$

$$D_{\vec{u}} f(1, 3, 2) = \langle -27, -6, 32 \rangle \cdot \left\langle \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}}, \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}}, \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \right\rangle$$

$$= -\frac{27}{\sqrt{3}} + \frac{-6}{\sqrt{3}} + \frac{32}{\sqrt{3}}$$

$$= \boxed{-\frac{1}{\sqrt{3}}}$$