UG Exam Performance Feedback
First Year
2013/2014 Semester 2

Comments

Section A

Q1ai – most students got the initial parts right, but half or more struggled with the algebraic manipulation. But this was to be expected as it is a hard problem at this stage. Most students did parts ii and iii correctly, although a significant portion of students struggled with the correct way to write inequalities in part iii. Q1b – The question asks specifically to prove mathematically or give counterexample, but many people didn't give a mathematical proof or counterexample as the case might be. Stating the answer alone doesn't get full marks.

Q2ai – most students got these right. Q2aii – most students got the parts right but some forgot to give the equivalence class. Q2b most got right. Q2c there were a number of students who assumed that if something is not symmetric, it is antisymmetric, which is not true. Otherwise most got this right.

Section B

A large majority of students attempted both Q3 and Q4. Overall, the students performed basic manipulations and calculations highly competently (typically the "a" parts of both questions), but most struggled with anything more complex or requiring more insight into the underlying concepts (as in the "b" parts). A good illustration of this dichotomy is part 3(b)(i): a very simple test of understanding, to which few students could give a fully correct answer and quite a number apparently attempted to reproduce the answer to a superficially similar question from last year's paper. (This is consistent with an impression I gained while teaching the course concerning the students' attitude: this year's cohort seem even more than usually intent on rote-learning methods for the exam, at the expense of true understanding.)