

Solutions for Exercise 5-2

Isao Sasano

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Exercise Calculate $P_4(x)$ from the general form of Legendre polynomials.

$$P_n(x) = \frac{1}{2^n n!} \frac{d^n}{dx^n} (x^2 - 1)^n$$

Solution

(Solution 1)

$$\begin{aligned} P_4(x) &= \frac{1}{2^4 \cdot 4!} \frac{d^4}{dx^4} (x^2 - 1)^4 \\ &= \frac{1}{2^4 \cdot 4!} \frac{d^4}{dx^4} (x^4 - 2x^2 + 1)^2 \\ &= \frac{1}{2^4 \cdot 4!} \frac{d^4}{dx^4} (x^8 - 4x^6 + 6x^4 - 4x^2 + 1) \\ &= \frac{1}{2^4 \cdot 4!} \frac{d^3}{dx^3} (8x^7 - 4 \cdot 6x^5 + 6 \cdot 4x^3 - 4 \cdot 2x) \\ &= \frac{1}{2^4 \cdot 4!} \frac{d^2}{dx^2} (8 \cdot 7x^6 - 4 \cdot 6 \cdot 5x^4 + 6 \cdot 4 \cdot 3x^2 - 4 \cdot 2) \\ &= \frac{1}{2^4 \cdot 4!} \frac{d}{dx} (8 \cdot 7 \cdot 6x^5 - 4 \cdot 6 \cdot 5 \cdot 4x^3 + 6 \cdot 4 \cdot 3 \cdot 2x) \\ &= \frac{1}{2^4 \cdot 4!} (8 \cdot 7 \cdot 6 \cdot 5x^4 - 4 \cdot 6 \cdot 5 \cdot 4 \cdot 3x^2 + 6 \cdot 4 \cdot 3 \cdot 2) \\ &= \frac{1}{8} (35x^4 - 30x^2 + 3) \end{aligned}$$

(Solution 2)

$$\begin{aligned}P_4(x) &= \frac{1}{2^4 \cdot 4!} \frac{d^4}{dx^4} (x^2 - 1)^4 \\&= \frac{1}{2^4 \cdot 4!} \frac{d^3}{dx^3} (4(x^2 - 1)^3(2x)) \\&= \frac{1}{2 \cdot 4!} \frac{d^3}{dx^3} (x(x^2 - 1)^3) \\&= \frac{1}{2 \cdot 4!} \frac{d^2}{dx^2} ((x^2 - 1)^3 + x \cdot 3(x^2 - 1)^2(2x)) \\&= \frac{1}{2 \cdot 4!} \frac{d^2}{dx^2} ((x^2 - 1)^3 + 6x^2(x^2 - 1)^2) \\&= \frac{1}{2 \cdot 4!} \frac{d}{dx} (3(x^2 - 1)^2(2x) + 12x(x^2 - 1)^2 + 6x^2 \cdot 2(x^2 - 1)(2x)) \\&= \frac{6}{2 \cdot 4!} \frac{d}{dx} (x(x^2 - 1)^2 + 2x(x^2 - 1)^2 + 4x^3(x^2 - 1)) \\&= \frac{1}{8} ((x^2 - 1)^2 + x \cdot 2(x^2 - 1)(2x) \\&\quad + 2(x^2 - 1)^2 + 2x \cdot 2(x^2 - 1)(2x) + 12x^2(x^2 - 1) + 4x^3(2x)) \\&= \frac{1}{8} (35x^4 - 30x^2 + 3)\end{aligned}$$