

Note on past papers

The exam is designed to evaluate understanding of the unit. The exam is not intended to be surprising, and past papers provide a good indication as to how this understanding will be tested, with some caveats.

First, the exam this year is open book. A open book mock of the 2019–20 exam has been produced to show the differences between closed and open book exams. They are mainly as follows.

- Definitions and theorem statements may be tested by straightforward examples (e.g. 3(a)(ii)) or explanations (e.g. 1(a)(i)).
- Seen proofs may ask for explanations or small adaptations (e.g. 1(c)).
- The closed book format typically has a coarser marking scheme.

Secondly, prior to 2017–18, the unit was delivered by a different lecturer. However, the main differences are in notation (for example actions and conjugation are on the right, not the left) and in some of the proofs (but any correct proof is admissible!). Also the previous lecturer introduced semidirect products, discussed congruences in detail, and used slightly different terminology for direct sums and products, and the Sylow theorems. Most of these differences have little effect due to the open book format.

Finally, the inclusion or exclusion of material in past papers does not indicate whether it will or will not appear this year!