

28.1 LU factorisation and nullity of composed maps

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 10 marks

KEY WORDS forward substitution • nullity

Objective

Solve a factored linear system by forward and backward substitution; Apply row permutations consistently when pivoting is required; Bound the kernel dimension of a composition using image-kernel intersections.

Original public practice. Marking guidance is authored locally. Use the topic reference for prerequisites and full theorem statements.

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

forward substitution : Solving a lower triangular system from its first equation downward.

nullity : The dimension of the kernel of a linear map.

A factorisation $A=LU$ expresses a square matrix as lower triangular L and upper triangular U . With unit diagonal L , forward substitution is especially simple. An invertible matrix need not admit this form without row exchanges: a zero leading pivot can require a permutation. For $PA=LU$, solve $Ly=Pb$, then $Ux=y$. The permutation acts on the right side as well as the coefficient matrix. Nonzero leading principal pivots justify the usual no-exchange elimination, not invertibility alone.

Let $L=\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 2 & 1 & 0 \\ -1 & 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$, $U=\begin{bmatrix} 2 & 1 & -1 \\ 0 & 3 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 & 4 \end{bmatrix}$, and $b=(-1,-1,12)$. Forward substitution gives $y=(-1,1,8)$. Back substitution gives $x_3=2$, $x_2=(1-4)/3=-1$, and $x_1=(-1-(-1)+2)/2=1$. Therefore $x=(1,-1,2)$. Multiplying Ux gives y and multiplying Ly gives b , independently checking the factor order.

LU solve: forward through L, then backward through U

Stage	Known right side	Result
$Ly = b$	$b = (-1, -1, 12)$	$y = (-1, 1, 8)$
$Ux = y$	$y = (-1, 1, 8)$	$x = (1, -1, 2)$

Solve with LU by forward substitution through L, then back substitution through U

2 Practice

2.1 For the stated unit-diagonal L and $b = (-1, -1, 12)$, what is the second coordinate of y solving $Ly = b$? [1]

- A -3
- B -1
- C 0
- D 1
- E 12

2.2 A, B are maps $\mathbb{R}^6 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^6$ with nullity A=2 and nullity B=3. What range is possible for nullity of $A \circ B$? [1]

- A 0 to 2
- B 2 to 3
- C 3 to 5
- D 5 to 6
- E Always 5

