MA 22400: Online Homework Instructions

Intro

This semester, most of your homework will be completed online using a program called MathZone. There is a direct correlation between time spent on homework and success in the course, so it is highly recommended that you take the homework very seriously and spend sufficient time working on it.

A few problems are not available in MathZone. These are noted on the assignment sheet in **bold**, and you must work these problems from the text. (There are copies of the text on reserve in the Hicks Undergraduate Library, should you decide not to purchase a text.) None of these problems will be collected; however, they are covered on quizzes and exams, so be sure to work them.

Compatibility

To use MathZone, it is critical that your computer setup is compatible with the program. If you are using versions of programs that are not supported by MathZone, you will experience a great deal of frustration due to the problems that will occur. The most frequent source of problems is using an unsupported browser. An unsupported browser will cause difficulties such as no answer box appearing, correct answers being graded as incorrect, scores not being recorded correctly, etc. Further, an unsupported browser may work fine for some lessons but not for other lessons. You will suddenly experience difficulties but not realize that your browser is the source.

For this reason, **be absolutely sure to run the Plug-in Checker** before working any problems, to insure that you have all of the correct programs and settings. Once the Plug-in Checker has been run, a link is provided for any changes that need to be made to your system.

If you need any other help with the computer requirements of MathZone, you should call 800-331-5094. The hours telephone support is available are Sunday, 7 pm – 12 am (midnight); Monday through Thursday, 9 am – 12 am (midnight); Friday, 9 am – 7 pm. Note that it is not recommended that you contact MathZone by email, as it may take more than 24 hours to get a response.

If you are having problems with your computer, you cannot miss a homework deadline. Rather, you will need to use an ITaP computer (running the Plug-in Checker) to complete the homework on time. This means that you will want to be sure to attempt each homework <u>before</u> the evening it is due.

Time Zone

All online homeworks are setup using Eastern Standard Time, following daylight savings time. You will want to set your computer to local time, so the homeworks are available and due at the right times.

Registering

If you purchased MathZone previously, you do not need to purchase it again. However, due to the change in editions of the text, you will need a new registration code to register. **<u>Before the next class meeting</u>**, you must email the MathZone Coordinator (MZcoordinator@math.purdue.edu) with your name and previous MZ user name. He/she will obtain a new code for you to use. **If you fail to email him/her before the next class**, you may not receive the new code in time to complete the first assignment. You will <u>not</u> be excused from it if you fail email the MathZone Coordinator immediately. Once you have a new code, login in to MathZone (previous user name and password – call 800-331-5094 if you have forgotten either) and select the Course Management tab. On the right-hand side, select Switch Text and follow the instructions.

First time users: A powerpoint presentation, that explains how to register for MathZone, is available on the course web page (www.math.purdue.edu/MA22400). Two codes are needed to register. Your instructor will supply one code. This code is the Student Section Code. Additionally, you must purchase a registration code. If you purchase a new text, the registration code is included. If you are unable to buy a text right away, you can purchase just the registration code using the MathZone site (a credit or debit

card will be needed) or at the bookstore. Note that it will be less expensive to purchase the registration code online than at the bookstore. As you register, be sure you enter the Student Section Code exactly as given (it is case sensitive and you will need to type in the dashes). If you have any problems registering, call 800-331-5094.

Before the next class meeting, you must register for this semester's MathZone, so you will be ready for the first online assignment.

Completing an Online Homework

The first online assignment is the homework that accompanies Lesson 5. Entering answers is always an issue, but with a little persistence, students do succeed. If you need assistance in entering answers, please contact the MathZone Coordinator (MZcoordinator@math.purdue.edu) or call 800-331-5094.

In MathZone, after submitting three incorrect answers, the correct solution will be shown to you. You are then given an opportunity to work another problem, to receive credit on the homework, by clicking the Try Another button. The Lesson 5 homework is due by 7:00 pm on Monday, January 25.

Each homework is due at 7:00 pm on the evening of the next class session after the lesson. That is, the Monday homework will be due by 7:00 pm on Wednesday, the Wednesday homework will be due by 7:00 pm on Friday, and the Friday homework will be due by 7:00 pm on Monday. **This does not give you time to work the entire assignment after class**. It only gives you time to finish one or two problems that were difficult for you, which you had to ask your instructor to demonstrate in class (using the text problem that is similar to your online problem; note -- your instructor will not work your online problem).

You will have unlimited attempts, until the deadline, to earn credit for each problem in the assignment. However, after three incorrect attempts, a solution to your problem will be given and you will have to "Try another" to get credit.

To save your answers and return later to continue an assignment, do not use the Submit button. Instead, be sure to check the last answer you enter, **move to another problem (to lock in your answer)** and log out at the top of the page. You will notice that problems which are correct will turn yellow when you move to another question and those that are not correct will stay blue.

Only when you are completely finished with an assignment and move to another problem (to lock in your last answer) should you use the Submit button. Each time you re-enter an assignment, only the problems that have not been answered correctly will appear. Once you Submit an assignment, you can still re-enter the assignment. However, this time, you will get new versions of the problems that have not yet been answered correctly. At the deadline for the assignment, your assignment will automatically be submitted, in case you forget to use the Submit button.

All assignments are homework, not quizzes (as stated on the Submit button).

Viewing Results of the Assignment

Immediately after checking an answer, you will be told if your response is correct or incorrect. Shortly after the due date, your final score on the homework, along with the answers to the problems (showing both your answers and the correct answers), will be available. All homework assignments are worth 10 points, although the number of problems on each assignment will vary.

If you think you have a correct answer but MathZone is grading it as incorrect, here is what you should do. First, enter your "correct" answer and check it. Print the screen that appears, showing your answer and saying that it is wrong. Now, answer the question two more times so that the correct solution and answer appear. If the correct answer is the same as your first answer, print the screen showing the MathZone answer. Next, attach these two screen shots to an email to the MathZone Coordinator

(MZcoordinator@math.purdue.edu) so you can be given credit for the problem. **Also**, telephone 800-331-5094 and report the situation so the support team can help you fix the problem. You do not want to have to deal with this problem repeatedly.

Extended/Excused Homeworks

Online homework can only be extended or excused by the MathZone coordinator (MZcoordinator@math.purdue.edu). The reasons acceptable for extending/excusing a homework are very limited. To request an extended/excused homework, you must contact the coordinator **at the time the problem occurs**. If you have been ill, attach a pdf of your doctor's note that shows the affected dates. (Note: we do <u>not</u> need any information about your illness, only an idea of the due dates that have been affected.)   A PUSH note is acceptable for missing a single deadline, unless a note is added stating when the student may return to classes.

If you are excused from a homework, your MathZone score will not reflect this, as the system is not currently capable of allowing for excused homeworks. The coordinator will adjust your score at the end of the semester. Those students with fewer than three excused homeworks will have lowest scores dropped for the balance of the three. (**Note**: This is <u>not in addition</u> to your excused absences. It is the balance of the three not needed for excused absences.)

Help and Technical Support

<u>Do not use the Help button</u> on individual problems when you are having difficulties. It will take a couple of days to get a response to questions asked via this link and is not intended for your use. (Sorry, there is currently no way to keep it off the screen.)

Help with your MathZone questions can be divided into math questions (how do I work this type of math problem; where am I making a mistake), entering answers, and computer/program issues (I can't log in; my browser keeps locking up; the answer box does not appear, it says to enter an answer, but you already have, it says my correct answer is incorrect, etc.). You must use the appropriate resource to ask your questions. Asking the incorrect resource only delays your getting help. Note that the Course Coordinator (Devi Nichols) <u>does not</u> answer any MathZone questions. Emailing her will not receive a response.

Math Questions:
Math questions can be asked in class (the similar text problem will be worked), during your instructor's office hours, during other MA 224 instructors' office hours, in the Math Help Room (MATH 205) and at the WISP evening tutoring sessions. You can also email the MathZone Coordinator for help. Note that the use of NetTutor in MathZone is <u>no longer included</u> in your MathZone purchase.

Entering Answers:
Questions about entering answers can be asked by emailing the MathZone Coordinator or calling the support team at 800-331-5094.

Computer/Program Issues:
Computer/program issues are handled by the support team at MathZone. The support team can be contacted by calling 800-331-5094. If you are having difficulties using your own computer, remember that you must **use an ITaP computer, rather than miss a deadline**. For help in configuring your own computer, also contact the support team.

MathZone Coordinator:
The MathZone coordinator will be available "live" to answer email questions on Tuesday and Thursday nights, from 7:00-9:00 p.m., and on Sunday nights, from 8:00-10:00 p.m. The coordinator

will also answer questions during off hours, but the response will not be immediate. On the day an assignment is due, no questions submitted after 6:00 pm will be answered. Remember that the MathZone support team is still available to help you. (Note that the discussion board is no longer being used for asking questions.)

Changing Sections

If you change sections of the course, after having registered for MathZone, your new instructor will give you the Student Section code for your new section. When you go to the MathZone site, login with your previous user name and password. Next, select the Course Management tab (you are in your "old" section at this point), and enter your new Student Section code. You must also notify the MathZone Coordinator (MZcoordinator@math.purdue.edu) that you have switched into the new section, so your previous homework scores can be moved to your new section. **Be sure to include** your name, email address used to register, the section you previously attended and the section you have switched into.

Helpful Advice

If you enter an answer that is graded as incorrect, but after three attempts, the MathZone answer is the same as what you entered:

-- *what is usually happening in this case is that the connection from your session to the written memory for MathZone has been corrupted; what you are seeing on your screen is not being written to your MathZone record; MathZone is grading your previous, incorrect answer; please logout, wait a minute and log back in; a second possibility is that you are not using a supported browser (even though it may have worked on previous assignments); so, next check your browser; if this does not remedy the problem, contact the MathZone support team and email the screen shots to the MZ Coordinator for credit on the problem*

If you are having trouble entering exponents in complicated expressions:

-- *this is usually a browser issue, although it appears to be a Mac issue as well; one way around the problem (without reconfiguring your computer) is to enter all of the expressions first, then go back and enter all of the exponents using the exponent feature on the palette*

If the answer box disappears:

-- *if you logout and back in, the answer box may reappear; if it does not, contact the MathZone support team at 800-331-5094*

If, in general, MathZone has been working fine and then suddenly ceases to work appropriately (asks you to input an answer, but you already have; the palette doesn't appear but is needed; only part of the problem appears on the screen, etc.):

-- *often, you are using an unsupported browser; the browser was fine for entering simple answers, but more complicated ones are not translated correctly to MathZone; so, first check your browser to be sure you are using a supported one; if you are, contact the MathZone support team at 800-331-5094*

Keep this handout to use as a reference during the semester. (If you cannot find it, it is also available via a link on the course web page.)