

The KKT Conditions

Lecture 11-1 - CMSE 382

Prof. Elizabeth Munch

Michigan State University

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Dept of Computational Mathematics, Science & Engineering

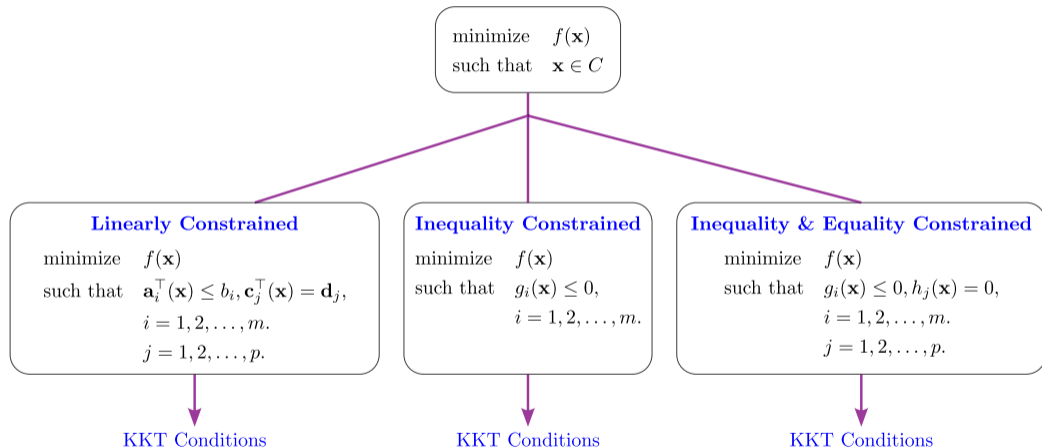
Fri, April 3, 2026

Topics:

- Feasible descent direction
- Inequality and equality constrained problems
- Example: Equality constrained
- Example KKT not satisfied

Announcements:

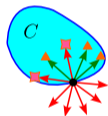
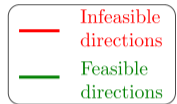
- None



Section 1

Inequality and equality constrained problems

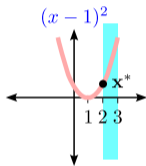
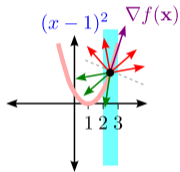
Idea: Feasible descent direction



$$f(\blacktriangle) < f(\bullet) \quad f(\blacksquare) > f(\bullet)$$

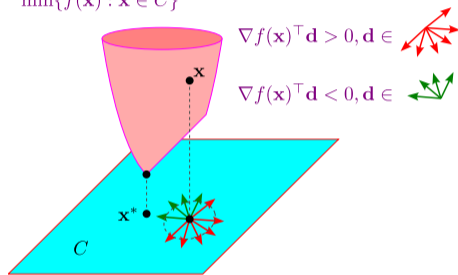
$$\mathbf{x} + t\mathbf{d} \notin C \text{ for all } t \in [0, \epsilon] \text{ and } \mathbf{d} \in \text{red arrows}$$

$$\min\{(x-1)^2 : x \in [2, 3]\}$$



No feasible descent directions

$$\min\{f(\mathbf{x}) : \mathbf{x} \in C\}$$



Theorem (Feasible descent direction)

Consider the optimization problem

$$(P) \quad \begin{array}{ll} \text{minimize} & f(\mathbf{x}) \\ \text{such that} & \mathbf{x} \in C \end{array}$$

where f is continuously differentiable function over the set $C \subseteq \mathbb{R}^n$.

Then a vector $\mathbf{d} \neq \mathbf{0}$ is called a **feasible descent direction at $\mathbf{x} \in C$** if

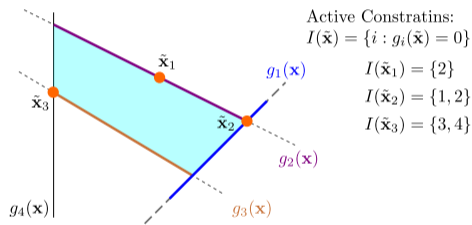
- $\nabla f(\mathbf{x})^\top \mathbf{d} < 0$, and
- there exists $\varepsilon > 0$ such that $\mathbf{x} + t\mathbf{d} \in C$ for all $t \in [0, \varepsilon]$.

Lemma

If \mathbf{x}^* is a local optimal solution, then there are no feasible descent directions at \mathbf{x}^* .

Idea: there is no direction you can move that will both decrease the function's value and stay within the problem's constraints.

Recall: Active constraints



Definition (Recall: Active constraints)

Given a set of inequalities

$$g_i(\mathbf{x}) \leq 0, \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, m,$$

where $g_i : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ are functions, and a vector $\tilde{\mathbf{x}} \in \mathbb{R}^n$, the **active constraints at $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}$** are the constraints satisfied as equalities at $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}$. The set of active constraints is denoted by

$$I(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}) = \{i : g_i(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}) = 0\}.$$

Consider the minimization problem

$$\begin{aligned} \min \quad & f(\mathbf{x}) \\ \text{such that} \quad & g_i(\mathbf{x}) \leq 0, i = 1, 2, \dots, m, \\ & h_j(\mathbf{x}) = 0, j = 1, 2, \dots, p. \end{aligned}$$

where $f, g_1, \dots, g_m, h_1, h_2, \dots, h_p$ are continuously differentiable functions over \mathbb{R}^n .

Definition

A feasible point \mathbf{x}^* is called **regular** if the gradients of the active constraints among the inequality constraints and of the equality constraints

$$\begin{aligned} & \{\nabla g_i(\mathbf{x}^*) \mid i \in I(\mathbf{x}^*)\} \\ & \cup \{\nabla h_j(\mathbf{x}^*) \mid j = 1, \dots, p\} \end{aligned}$$

are linearly independent.

- Feasible points that are not regular are called **irregular** points.

Definition

A collection of vectors

$$\{\mathbf{v}_1, \mathbf{v}_2, \dots, \mathbf{v}_k\}$$

is **linearly independent** if the only solution to the equation

$$\alpha_1 \mathbf{v}_1 + \alpha_2 \mathbf{v}_2 + \dots + \alpha_k \mathbf{v}_k = \mathbf{0}$$

is $\alpha_1 = \alpha_2 = \dots = \alpha_k = 0$.

Some methods for checking:

- Check using the definition directly.
- If there is one vector, this is linearly independent if it is nonzero.
- If there are two vectors, they are linearly independent if they are not scalar multiples of each other.
- Put the k vectors as columns in a matrix A .
 - ▶ If $k \leq n$ and $\text{rank}(A) = k$, then the vectors are linearly independent.
 - ▶ If $k = n$, then the vectors are linearly independent if $\det(A) \neq 0$.
- If $k > n$, then the vectors are linearly dependent.

Consider the minimization problem

$$\begin{aligned} \min \quad & f(\mathbf{x}) \\ \text{such that} \quad & g_i(\mathbf{x}) \leq 0, i = 1, 2, \dots, m, \\ & h_j(\mathbf{x}) = 0, j = 1, 2, \dots, p. \end{aligned}$$

where $f, g_1, \dots, g_m, h_1, h_2, \dots, h_p$ are continuously differentiable functions over \mathbb{R}^n .

Definition

A feasible point \mathbf{x}^* is called a **KKT point** if there exist $\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_m \geq 0$ and $\mu_1, \mu_2, \dots, \mu_p \in \mathbb{R}$ such that

$$\begin{aligned} \nabla f(\mathbf{x}^*) + \sum_{i=1}^m \lambda_i \nabla g_i(\mathbf{x}^*) + \sum_{j=1}^p \mu_j \nabla h_j(\mathbf{x}^*) &= \mathbf{0}, \\ \lambda_i g_i(\mathbf{x}^*) &= 0, i = 1, 2, \dots, m. \end{aligned}$$

KKT conditions for Inequality and equality constrained problems

Theorem (Inequality and equality constrained problems)

Let \mathbf{x}^* be a local minimum of the problem

$$\begin{aligned} \min \quad & f(\mathbf{x}) \\ \text{such that} \quad & g_i(\mathbf{x}) \leq 0, i = 1, 2, \dots, m, \\ & h_j(\mathbf{x}) = 0, j = 1, 2, \dots, p. \end{aligned}$$

where $f, g_1, \dots, g_m, h_1, h_2, \dots, h_p$ are continuously differentiable functions over \mathbb{R}^n . Suppose that \mathbf{x}^* is **regular**, then \mathbf{x}^* is a **KKT point**.

- A necessary condition for local optimality of a regular point is that it is a KKT point.
- Regularity is not required in the linearly constrained case.

Groups - Round 5

Group 1

Michal, Kyle, Daniel,
Purvi

Group 2

Joseph, Jack, Scott,
Breena

Group 3

Saitej, Dori, Noah,
Tianjian

Group 4

Dev, Shanze, Lowell,
Andrew

Group 5

Lora, Aidan, Arjun,
Monirul Amin

Group 6

Anthony, Abigail,
Atticus, Yousif

Group 7

Luis, Vinod, Morgan,
Dominic

Group 8

Jay, Jonid, Alice, Aaron

Group 9

Arya, Jake, K M Tausif,
Lauryn

Group 10

Maye, Ha, Zheng, Sai

Group 11

Jamie, Karen, Brandon,
Quang Minh

Group 12

Long, Sanskaar,
Braedon, Igor