

**Dr Oliver Mathematics**  
**Further Mathematics**  
**Poisson Distribution**  
**Past Examination Questions**

This booklet consists of 35 questions across a variety of examination topics.  
 The total number of marks available is 321.

	Symbol	Expectation	Variance	Continuity Correction?
Poisson	$Po(\lambda)$	$\lambda = np$	$\lambda = np$	No
Normal	$N(\mu, \sigma^2)$	$\mu = np$	$\sigma^2 = np$	Yes

1. A botanist suggests that the number of a particular variety of weed growing in a meadow can be modelled by a Poisson distribution.

(a) Write down two conditions that must apply for this model to be applicable. (2)

**Solution**  
 Weeds grow independently, singly, randomly, and at a constant rate of weeds per m<sup>2</sup>

Assuming this model and a mean of 0.7 weeds per m<sup>2</sup>, find

(b) the probability that in a randomly chosen plot of size 4 m<sup>2</sup> there will be fewer than 3 of these weeds. (4)

**Solution**  
 Let  $X$  be the number of weeds.  
 So, in 4 m<sup>2</sup>, there will be  $4 \times 0.7 = 2.8$  of them  $\therefore X \sim Po(2.8)$ .

$$\begin{aligned}
 P(X < 3) &= P(X \leq 2) \\
 &= e^{-2.8} \left[ 1 + 2.8 + \frac{2.8^2}{2!} \right] \\
 &= 0.469\,453\,683 \text{ (FCD)} \\
 &= \underline{\underline{0.4695}} \text{ (4 dp)}.
 \end{aligned}$$

(c) Using a suitable approximation, find the probability that in a plot of 100 m<sup>2</sup> there will be more than 66 of these weeds. (6)

**Solution**

So, in  $100 \text{ m}^2$ , there will be  $100 \times 0.7 = 70$  of them  $\therefore Y \sim \text{Po}(70)$   
 $\therefore Y \approx \sim N(70, 70)$ .

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y > 66) &= P\left(Z > \frac{66.5 - 70}{\sqrt{70}}\right) \\ &= P(Z > -0.42) \\ &= P(Z < 0.42) \\ &= \underline{0.6628} \text{ (from the tables).} \end{aligned}$$

2. The number of breakdowns per day in a large fleet of hire cars has a Poisson distribution with mean  $\frac{1}{7}$ .

(a) Find the probability that on a particular day there are fewer than 2 breakdowns. (3)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of breakdowns  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(\frac{1}{7})$ .

$$\begin{aligned} P(X < 2) &= P(X \leq 1) \\ &= e^{-\frac{1}{7}} \left[1 + \frac{1}{7}\right] \\ &= 0.9907175997 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{0.9907} \text{ (4 dp).} \end{aligned}$$

(b) Find the probability that during a 14-day period there are at most 4 breakdowns. (3)

**Solution**

We have  $Y \sim \text{Po}(2)$ . Then

$$P(Y \leq 4) = \underline{0.9473} \text{ (from the tables).}$$

3. Minor defects occur in a particular make of carpet at a mean rate of  $0.05$  per  $\text{m}^2$ .

(a) Suggest a suitable model for the distribution of the number of defects in this make of carpet. Give a reason for your answer. (3)

**Solution**

The number of defects in a carpet of  $a \text{ m}^2$  is  $X \sim \text{Po}(0.05a)$ .

The defects appear independently, singly, randomly, and at a constant rate of defects per  $\text{m}^2$

A carpet fitter has a contract to fit this carpet in a small hotel. The hotel foyer requires  $30 \text{ m}^2$  of this carpet. Find the probability that the foyer carpet contains

(b) exactly 2 defects,

(3)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of defects  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(1.5)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 2) &= e^{-1.5} \frac{1.5^2}{2!} \\ &= 0.2510214302 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{0.2510 \text{ (4 dp)}}. \end{aligned}$$

(c) more than 5 defects.

(3)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(X > 5) &= 1 - P(X \leq 5) \\ &= 1 - 0.9955 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.0045}. \end{aligned}$$

The carpet fitter orders a total of  $355 \text{ m}^2$  of the carpet for the whole hotel.

(d) Using a suitable approximation, find the probability that this total area of carpet contains 22 or more defects.

(6)

**Solution**

Let  $Y$  equal the number of defects  $\therefore Y \sim \text{Po}(17.75)$

$\therefore Y \approx \sim N(17.75, 17.75)$ .

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y \geq 22) &= P\left(Z \geq \frac{21.5 - 17.75}{\sqrt{17.75}}\right) \\ &= P(Z \geq 0.89) \\ &= 1 - P(Z \leq 0.89) \\ &= 1 - 0.8133 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.1867}. \end{aligned}$$

4. The random variables  $S$  are distributed as  $S \sim \text{Po}(7.5)$ .  
Find  $P(S = 5)$ . (1)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(S = 5) &= P(S \leq 5) - P(S \leq 4) \\ &= 0.2414 - 0.1321 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.1093}. \end{aligned}$$

5. Over a long period of time, accidents happened on a stretch of road at random at a rate of 3 per month.

Find the probability that

- (a) in a randomly chosen month, more than 4 accidents occurred, (3)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of accidents in a one-month period.  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(3)$ .  
Then

$$\begin{aligned} P(X > 4) &= 1 - P(X \leq 4) \\ &= 1 - 0.8153 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.1847}. \end{aligned}$$

- (b) in a three-month period, more than 4 accidents occurred. (2)

**Solution**

Let  $Y$  equal the number of accidents in a three-month period  $\therefore Y \sim \text{Po}(9)$ .  
Then

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y > 4) &= 1 - P(Y \leq 4) \\ &= 1 - 0.0550 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.9450}. \end{aligned}$$

6. The random variable  $X$  is the number of misprints per page in the first draft of a novel.

- (a) State two conditions under which a Poisson distribution is a suitable model for  $X$ . (2)

**Solution**

Misprints are independent, single, random, and at a constant rate

The number of misprints per page has a Poisson distribution with mean 2.5. Find the probability that

- (b) a randomly chosen page has no misprints, (2)

**Solution**

$X \sim \text{Po}(2.5)$ :

$$P(X = 0) = \underline{0.0821} \text{ (from the tables).}$$

- (c) the total number of misprints on 2 randomly chosen pages is more than 7. (3)

**Solution**

$Y \sim \text{Po}(5)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(X > 7) &= 1 - P(X \leq 7) \\ &= 1 - 0.8666 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.1334}. \end{aligned}$$

The first chapter contains 20 pages.

- (d) Using a suitable approximation find, to 2 decimal places, the probability that the chapter will contain less than 40 misprints. (7)

**Solution**

$A \sim \text{Po}(50)$  and so  $A \approx \sim N(50, 50)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(A < 40) &= P\left(Z \leq \frac{39.5 - 50}{\sqrt{50}}\right) \\ &= P(Z < -1.48) \\ &= P(Z > 1.48) \\ &= 1 - \Phi(1.48) \\ &= 1 - 0.9306 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= 0.0694 \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.07}} \text{ (2 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

7. Accidents on a particular stretch of motorway occur at an average rate of 1.5 per week.

- (a) Write down a suitable model to represent the number of accidents per week on this stretch of motorway. (1)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of accidents  $\therefore X \sim \underline{\underline{\text{Po}(1.5)}}$ .

Find the probability that

- (b) there will be 2 accidents in the same week, (2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 2) &= P(X \leq 2) - P(X \leq 1) \\ &= 0.8088 - 0.5578 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.2510}}. \end{aligned}$$

- (c) there is at least one accident per week for 3 consecutive weeks, (3)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(X \geq 1) &= 1 - P(X = 0) \\ &= 1 - 0.2231 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= 0.7769 \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} P(\text{at least one accident per week for 3 weeks}) &= (0.7769)^3 \\ &= 0.468\,916\,337\,8 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.4689}} \text{ (4 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

- (d) there are more than 4 accidents in a two-week period. (3)

**Solution**

$Y \sim \text{Po}(3)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y > 4) &= 1 - P(Y \leq 4) \\ &= 1 - 0.8153 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.1847}}. \end{aligned}$$

8. An estate agent sells properties at a mean rate of 7 per week. (3)
- (a) Suggest a suitable model to represent the number of properties sold in a randomly chosen week. Give two reasons to support your model. (3)

**Solution**

$X \sim \text{Po}(7)$ .

They are sold independently, singly, randomly, and at a constant rate

- (b) Find the probability that in any randomly chosen week the estate agent sells exactly 5 properties. (2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 5) &= P(X \leq 5) - P(X \leq 4) \\ &= 0.3007 - 0.1730 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.1277}}. \end{aligned}$$

- (c) Using a suitable approximation find the probability that during a 24 week period the estate agent sells more than 181 properties. (6)

**Solution**

Let  $Y$  equal the number of sales  $\therefore Y \sim \text{Po}(168)$

$\therefore Y \approx \sim N(168, 168)$ .

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y > 181) &= P\left(Z > \frac{181.5 - 168}{\sqrt{168}}\right) \\ &= P(Z > 1.04) \\ &= 1 - P(Z < 1.04) \\ &= 1 - 0.8508 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.1492}} \end{aligned}$$

9. Breakdowns occur on a particular machine at random at a mean rate of 1.25 per week. (4)

Find the probability that fewer than 3 breakdowns occurred in a randomly chosen week.

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of breakdowns  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(1.25)$ .

$$\begin{aligned} P(X < 3) &= P(X \leq 2) \\ &= e^{-1.25} \left[ 1 + 1.25 + \frac{1.25^2}{2!} \right] \\ &= 0.8684676655 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.8685}} \text{ (4 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

10. The random variable  $J$  has a Poisson distribution with mean 4. (2)

Find  $P(J \geq 10)$ .

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(J \geq 10) &= 1 - P(J \leq 9) \\ &= 1 - 0.9919 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.0081}}. \end{aligned}$$



11. (a) State the condition under which the normal distribution may be used as an approximation to the Poisson distribution. (1)

**Solution**

$$\underline{\underline{\lambda > 10}}$$

- (b) Explain why a continuity correction must be incorporated when using the normal distribution as an approximation to the Poisson distribution. (1)

**Solution**

The Poisson distribution is discrete and the normal distribution is continuous

A company has yachts that can only be hired for a week at a time. All hiring starts on a Saturday. During the winter the mean number of yachts hired per week is 5.

- (c) Calculate the probability that fewer than 3 yachts are hired on a particular Saturday in winter. (2)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of yachts  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(5)$ .

$$\begin{aligned} P(X < 3) &= P(X \leq 2) \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.1247}} \text{ (from the tables).} \end{aligned}$$

During the summer the mean number of yachts hired per week increases to 25. The company has only 30 yachts for hire.

- (d) Using a suitable approximation find the probability that the demand for yachts cannot be met on a particular Saturday in the summer. (6)

**Solution**

Let  $Y$  equal the number of yachts  $\therefore Y \sim \text{Po}(25) \therefore Y \approx \sim N(25, 25)$ . Now,

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y > 31) &= P\left(Z > \frac{30.5 - 25}{\sqrt{25}}\right) \\ &= P(Z > 1.1) \\ &= 1 - P(Z < 1.1) \\ &= 1 - 0.8643 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.1357}}. \end{aligned}$$

In the summer there are 16 Saturdays on which a yacht can be hired.

- (e) Estimate the number of Saturdays in the summer that the company will not be able to meet the demand for yachts. (2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(\text{cannot demand for yachts}) &= 16 \times 0.1357 \\ &= 2.1712 \\ &= \underline{2 \text{ or } 3}. \end{aligned}$$

12. An engineering company manufactures an electronic component. At the end of the manufacturing process, each component is checked to see if it is faulty. Faulty components are detected at a rate of 1.5 per hour.

- (a) Suggest a suitable model for the number of faulty components detected per hour. (1)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of faulty components  $\therefore X \sim \underline{\text{Po}(1.5)}$ .

- (b) Describe, in the context of this question, two assumptions you have made in part (a) for this model to be suitable. (2)

**Solution**

They are independent, single, random, and at a constant rate.

- (c) Find the probability of 2 faulty components being detected in a 1 hour period. (2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 2) &= P(X \leq 2) - P(X \leq 1) \\ &= 0.8088 - 0.5578 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.2510}. \end{aligned}$$

- (d) Find the probability of at least one faulty component being detected in a 3 hour period. (3)

**Solution**

$Y \sim \text{Po}(4.5)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y \geq 1) &= 1 - P(Y = 0) \\ &= 1 - 0.0111 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.9889}. \end{aligned}$$

13. (a) State two conditions under which a Poisson distribution is a suitable model to use in statistical work. (2)

**Solution**

The items occur independently, singly, randomly, and at a constant rate.

The number of cars passing an observation point in a 10 minute interval is modelled by a Poisson distribution with mean 1.

- (b) Find the probability that in a randomly chosen 60 minute period there will be (i) exactly 4 cars passing the observation point, (3)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of passing the observation point  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(6)$ .

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 4) &= P(X \leq 4) - P(X \leq 3) \\ &= 0.2851 - 0.1512 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.1339}. \end{aligned}$$

- (ii) at least 5 cars passing the observation point. (2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(X \geq 5) &= 1 - P(X \leq 4) \\ &= 1 - 0.2851 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.7149}. \end{aligned}$$

The number of other vehicles, other than cars, passing the observation point in a 60 minute interval is modelled by a Poisson distribution with mean 12.

- (c) Find the probability that exactly 1 vehicle, of any type, passes the observation point in a 10 minute period. (4)

**Solution**

Let  $Y$  equal the number of other vehicles passing the observation point in 10 minutes  $\therefore Y \sim \text{Po}(2)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(\text{exactly 1}) &= P(1 \text{ car and } 0 \text{ vehicle}) + P(0 \text{ cars and } 1 \text{ vehicle}) \\ &= 1 e^{-1} \times e^{-2} + e^{-1} \times 2 e^{-2} \\ &= 3 e^{-3} \\ &= 0.149\ 361\ 205\ 1 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.1494}} \text{ (4 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

14. A call centre agent handles telephone calls at a rate of 18 per hour.

- (a) Give two reasons to support the use of a Poisson distribution as a suitable model for the number of calls per hour handled by the agent. (2)

**Solution**

They are independent, single, random, and at a constant rate.

- (b) Find the probability that in any randomly selected 15 minute interval the agent handles

- (i) exactly 5 calls, (3)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of telephone calls  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(4.5)$ .

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 5) &= P(X \leq 5) - P(X \leq 4) \\ &= 0.7029 - 0.5321 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.1703}}. \end{aligned}$$

- (ii) more than 8 calls. (2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(X > 8) &= 1 - P(X \leq 8) \\ &= 1 - 0.9597 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.0403}}. \end{aligned}$$

15. A botanist is studying the distribution of daisies in a field. The field is divided into a number of equal sized squares. The mean number of daisies per square is assumed to be 3. The daisies are distributed randomly throughout the field.

Find the probability that, in a randomly chosen square there will be

- (a) more than 2 daisies, (3)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of daisies  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(3)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} P(X > 2) &= 1 - P(X \leq 2) \\ &= 1 - 0.4232 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.5768}}. \end{aligned}$$

- (b) either 5 or 6 daisies. (2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(\text{either 5 or 6 daisies}) &= P(X \leq 6) - P(X \leq 4) \\ &= 0.9665 - 0.8153 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.1512}}. \end{aligned}$$

The botanist decides to count the number of daisies,  $x$ , in each of 80 randomly selected squares within the field. The results are summarised below:

$$\Sigma x = 295 \text{ and } \Sigma x^2 = 1386.$$

- (c) Calculate the mean and the variance of the number of daisies per square for the 80 squares. Give your answers to 2 decimal places. (3)

**Solution**

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{295}{80} = 3.6875 = \underline{\underline{3.69}} \text{ (2 dp)}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} \text{variance} &= \frac{1386}{80} - 3.6875^2 \\ &= 3.72734375 \\ &= \underline{\underline{3.73}} \text{ (2 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

- (d) Explain how the answers from part (c) support the choice of a Poisson distribution as a model. (1)

**Solution**

The mean and the variance agree to 2 decimal places.

- (e) Using your mean from part (c), estimate the probability that exactly 4 daisies will be found in a randomly selected square. (2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 4) &= e^{-3.6875} \frac{3.6875^4}{4!} \\ &= 0.192\,866\,132\,7 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{0.1929} \text{ (4 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

16. An administrator makes errors in her typing randomly at a rate of 3 errors every 1000 words.

- (a) In a document of 2000 words find the probability that the administrator makes 4 or more errors. (3)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of errors  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(6)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} P(X \geq 4) &= 1 - P(X \leq 3) \\ &= 1 - 0.1512 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.8488}. \end{aligned}$$

The administrator is given an 8000 word report to type and she is told that the report will only be accepted if there are 20 or fewer errors.

- (b) Use a suitable approximation to calculate the probability that the report is accepted. (7)

**Solution**

Let  $Y$  equal the number of errors  $\therefore Y \sim \text{Po}(24) \therefore Y \approx \sim N(24, 24)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y \leq 20) &= P\left(Z \leq \frac{20.5 - 24}{\sqrt{24}}\right) \\ &= P(Z \leq -0.71) \\ &= P(Z \geq 0.71) \\ &= 1 - \Phi(0.71) \\ &= 1 - 0.7611 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.2389}. \end{aligned}$$

17. A cloth manufacturer knows that faults occur randomly in the production process at a rate of 2 every 15 metres.

(a) Find the probability of exactly 4 faults in a 15 metre length of cloth. (2)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of faults  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(2)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 4) &= P(X \leq 4) - P(X \leq 3) \\ &= 0.9473 - 0.8571 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.0902}. \end{aligned}$$

(b) Find the probability of more than 10 faults in 60 metres of cloth. (3)

**Solution**

Let  $Y$  equal the number of faults  $\therefore Y \sim \text{Po}(8)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y > 10) &= 1 - P(Y \leq 10) \\ &= 1 - 0.8159 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.1841}. \end{aligned}$$

A retailer buys a large amount of this cloth and sells it in pieces of length  $x$  metres. He chooses  $x$  so that the probability of no faults in a piece is 0.80.

(c) Write down an equation for  $x$  and show that  $x = 1.7$  to 2 significant figures. (4)

**Solution**

Let  $A$  equal the number of faults in a piece of cloth  $\therefore A \sim \text{Po}(\frac{2}{15}x)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned}e^{-\frac{2}{15}x} = 0.80 &\Rightarrow -\frac{2}{15}x = \ln 0.80 \\&\Rightarrow x = -\frac{15}{2} \ln 0.80 \\&\Rightarrow x = 1.673\ 576\ 635 \text{ (FCD)} \\&\Rightarrow \underline{\underline{x = 1.7 \text{ (2 sf)}}}.\end{aligned}$$

The retailer sells 1200 of these pieces of cloth. He makes a profit of 60p on each piece of cloth that does not contain a fault but a loss of £1.50 on any pieces that do contain faults.

(d) Find the retailer's expected profit.

(4)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Expected profit} &= 1200 \times 0.8 \times 0.6 - 1200 \times 0.2 \times 1.5 \\&= 576 - 360 \\&= \underline{\underline{\pounds 216}}.\end{aligned}$$

18. A robot is programmed to build cars on a production line. The robot breaks down at random at a rate of once every 20 hours.

(a) Find the probability that it will work continuously for 5 hours without a breakdown.

(2)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of breakdown  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(0.25)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned}P(X = 0) &= e^{-0.25} \\&= 0.778\ 800\ 783\ 1 \text{ (FCD)} \\&= \underline{\underline{0.7788 \text{ (4 dp)}}}.\end{aligned}$$

Find the probability that, in an 8 hour period,

(b) the robot will break down at least once,

(3)



**Solution**

$Y \sim \text{Po}(0.4)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y \geq 1) &= 1 - P(Y = 0) \\ &= 1 - e^{-0.4} \\ &= 0.329\,679\,954\,1 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.3297}} \text{ (4 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

(c) there are exactly 2 breakdowns.

(2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y = 2) &= e^{-0.4} \frac{0.4^2}{2!} \\ &= 0.053\,625\,603\,68 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.0536}} \text{ (4 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

In a particular 8 hour period, the robot broke down twice.

(d) Write down the probability that the robot will break down in the following 8 hour period. Give a reason for your answer.

(2)

**Solution**

The events are independent and so 0.3297 (4 dp).

19. A cafe serves breakfast every morning. Customers arrive for breakfast at random at a rate of 1 every 6 minutes.

Find the probability that

(a) fewer than 9 customers arrive for breakfast on a Monday morning between 10 am and 11 am.

(3)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of breakfast  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(10)$ .

$$\begin{aligned} P(X < 9) &= P(X \leq 8) \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.3328}} \text{ (from the tables).} \end{aligned}$$

The cafe serves breakfast every day between 8 am and 12 noon.

- (b) Using a suitable approximation, estimate the probability that more than 50 customers arrive for breakfast next Tuesday. (6)

**Solution**

$\therefore Y \sim \text{Po}(40) \therefore Y \approx \sim N(40, 40)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y > 50) &= P\left(Z > \frac{50.5 - 40}{\sqrt{40}}\right) \\ &= P(Z > 1.66) \\ &= 1 - P(Z < 1.66) \\ &= 1 - 0.9515 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.0485}}. \end{aligned}$$

20. A company has a large number of regular users logging onto its website. On average 4 users every hour fail to connect to the company's website at their first attempt.

- (a) Explain why the Poisson distribution may be a suitable model in this case. (1)

**Solution**

It is a suitable model as it explains: independently, singly, randomly, and at a constant rate.

Find the probability that, in a randomly chosen 2 hour period,

- (b) (i) all users connect at their first attempt, (3)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of those who fail  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(8)$ .

$$P(X = 0) = \underline{\underline{0.0003}} \text{ (from the tables).}$$

- (ii) at least 4 users fail to connect at their first attempt. (2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned}P(X \geq 4) &= 1 - P(X \leq 3) \\ &= 1 - 0.0424 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.9576}.\end{aligned}$$

21. Cars arrive at a motorway toll booth at an average rate of 150 per hour.  
(a) Suggest a suitable distribution to model the number of cars arriving at the toll booth,  $X$ , per minute. (2)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of cars which arrive  $\therefore X \sim \underline{\underline{\text{Po}(2.5)}}$ .

- (b) State clearly any assumptions you have made by suggesting this model. (2)

**Solution**

It is a suitable model as it explains: independently, singly, randomly, and at a constant rate.

Using your model,

- (c) find the probability that in any given minute  
(i) no cars arrive, (1)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned}P(X = 0) &= e^{-2.5} \\ &= 0.08208499862 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{0.0820} \text{ (4 dp)}.\end{aligned}$$

- (ii) more than 3 cars arrive. (2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned}
 P(X > 3) &= 1 - P(X \leq 3) \\
 &= 1 - 0.7576 \text{ (from the tables)} \\
 &= \underline{0.2424}.
 \end{aligned}$$

- (d) In any given 4 minute period, find  $m$  such that  $P(X > m) = 0.0487$ . (3)

**Solution**

$X \sim \text{Po}(10)$ :

$$\begin{aligned}
 P(X > m) = 0.0487 &\Rightarrow P(X \leq m) = 0.9513 \\
 &\Rightarrow \underline{m = 15}.
 \end{aligned}$$

- (e) Using a suitable approximation find the probability that fewer than 15 cars arrive in any given 10 minute period. (6)

**Solution**

$Y \sim \text{Po}(25) \therefore Y \approx \sim N(25, 25)$ :

$$\begin{aligned}
 P(Y < 15) &= P\left(Z < \frac{14.5 - 25}{\sqrt{25}}\right) \\
 &= P(Z < -2.10) \\
 &= P(Z > 2.10) \\
 &= 1 - P(Z < 2.10) \\
 &= 1 - 0.9821 \text{ (from the tables)} \\
 &= \underline{0.0179}.
 \end{aligned}$$

22. Defects occur at random in planks of wood with a constant rate of 0.5 per 10 cm length. Jim buys a plank of length 100 cm.

- (a) Find the probability that Jim's plank contains at most 3 defects. (2)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of defects  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(5)$ :

$$P(X \leq 3) = \underline{\underline{0.2650}} \text{ (from the tables).}$$

Shivani buys 6 planks each of length 100 cm.

- (b) Find the probability that fewer than 2 of Shivani's planks contain at most 3 defects. (5)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(\text{fewer than 2}) &= P(X = 0) + P(X = 1) \\ &= (0.7350)^6 + \binom{6}{1}(0.2650)(0.7350)^5 \\ &= 0.498\,723\,293\,1 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.4987}} \text{ (4 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

- (c) Using a suitable approximation, estimate the probability that the total number of defects on Shivani's 6 planks is less than 18. (6)

**Solution**

$Y \sim \text{Po}(30) \therefore Y \approx \sim N(30, 30)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y < 18) &= P\left(Z < \frac{17.5 - 30}{\sqrt{30}}\right) \\ &= P(Z < -2.28) \\ &= P(Z > 2.28) \\ &= 1 - P(Z < 2.28) \\ &= 1 - 0.9887 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.0113}}. \end{aligned}$$

23. The probability of a telesales representative making a sale on a customer call is 0.15.

Find the probability that

- (a) no sales are made in 10 calls, (2)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of sales  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(1.5)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 0) &= (0.85)^{10} \\ &= 0.196\,874\,404\,3 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.1969}} \text{ (4 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

(b) more than 3 sales are made in 20 calls.

(2)

**Solution**

$X \sim \text{Po}(3)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(X > 3) &= 1 - P(X \leq 3) \\ &= 1 - 0.6472 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.3528}}. \end{aligned}$$

Representatives are required to achieve a mean of at least 5 sales each day.

(c) Find the least number of calls each day a representative should make to achieve this requirement.

(2)

**Solution**

$$0.15n = 5 \Rightarrow n = 33\frac{1}{3};$$

so  $n = \underline{\underline{33}}$  or  $\underline{\underline{34}}$ .

(d) Calculate the least number of calls that need to be made by a representative for the probability of at least 1 sale to exceed 0.95.

(3)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} 1 - P(X = 0) &> 0.95 \Rightarrow P(X = 0) < 0.05 \\ &\Rightarrow (0.85)^n < 0.05 \\ &\Rightarrow n \log 0.85 > \ln 0.05 \\ &\Rightarrow n > \frac{\ln 0.05}{\log 0.85} \\ &\Rightarrow n > 18.443 \dots; \end{aligned}$$

so,  $n = \underline{\underline{19}}$ .

24. A website receives hits at a rate of 300 per hour. (1)
- (a) State a distribution that is suitable to model the number of hits obtained during a 1 minute interval. (1)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of hits  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(5)$ .

- (b) State two reasons for your answer to part (a). (2)

**Solution**

It is a suitable model as it explains: independently, singly, randomly, and at a constant rate.

Find the probability of

- (c) 10 hits in a given minute, (3)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 10) &= P(X \leq 10) - P(X \leq 9) \\ &= 0.9863 - 0.9682 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.0181}. \end{aligned}$$

- (d) at least 15 hits in 2 minutes. (3)

**Solution**

$X \sim \text{Po}(10)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(X \geq 15) &= 1 - P(X \leq 14) \\ &= 1 - 0.9165 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.0835}. \end{aligned}$$

The website will go down if there are more than 70 hits in 10 minutes.

- (e) Using a suitable approximation, find the probability that the website will go down in a particular 10 minute interval. (7)

**Solution**

$Y \sim \text{Po}(50) \therefore Y \approx \sim N(50, 50)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y > 70) &= P\left(Z > \frac{70.5 - 50}{\sqrt{50}}\right) \\ &= P(Z > 2.90) \\ &= 1 - P(Z < 2.90) \\ &= 1 - 0.9981 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.0019}. \end{aligned}$$

25. The number of houses sold by an estate agent follows a Poisson distribution, with a mean of 2 per week.

(a) Find the probability that in the next 4 weeks the estate agent sells

(i) exactly 3 houses,

(3)

**Solution**

$X \sim \text{Po}(8)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 3) &= P(X \leq 3) - P(X \leq 2) \\ &= 0.0424 - 0.0138 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.0286}. \end{aligned}$$

(ii) more than 5 houses.

(2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(X > 5) &= 1 - P(X \leq 5) \\ &= 1 - 0.1912 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.8088}. \end{aligned}$$

The estate agent monitors sales in periods of 4 weeks.

(b) Find the probability that in the next twelve of the 4 week periods there are exactly nine periods in which more than 5 houses are sold.

(3)



**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(\text{exactly nine periods}) &= \binom{12}{9} (0.8088)^9 (0.1912)^3 \\ &= 0.227\,749\,078\,2 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.2277}} \text{ (4 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

The estate agent will receive a bonus if he sells more than 25 houses in the next 10 weeks.

- (c) Use a suitable approximation to estimate the probability that the estate agent receives a bonus. (6)

**Solution**

$Y \sim \text{Po}(20) \therefore Y \approx \sim N(20, 20)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y > 25) &= P\left(Z > \frac{25.5 - 20}{\sqrt{20}}\right) \\ &= P(Z > 1.23) \\ &= 1 - P(Z < 1.23) \\ &= 1 - 0.8907 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.1093}}. \end{aligned}$$

26. In a village, power cuts occur randomly at a rate of 3 per year.

- (a) Find the probability that in any given year there will be (i) exactly 7 power cuts, (3)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of power cuts  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(3)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 7) &= P(X \leq 7) - P(X \leq 6) \\ &= 0.9881 - 0.9665 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.0216}}. \end{aligned}$$

- (ii) at least 4 power cuts. (2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned}P(X \geq 4) &= 1 - P(X \leq 3) \\ &= 1 - 0.6472 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.3528}.\end{aligned}$$

- (b) Use a suitable approximation to find the probability that in the next 10 years the number of power cuts will be less than 20. (6)

**Solution**

$Y \sim \text{Po}(30) \therefore Y \approx \sim N(30, 30)$ :

$$\begin{aligned}P(Y < 20) &= P\left(Z > \frac{19.5 - 30}{\sqrt{30}}\right) \\ &= P(Z < -1.92) \\ &= P(Z > 1.92) \\ &= 1 - P(Z < 1.92) \\ &= 1 - 0.9726 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.0274}.\end{aligned}$$

27. The number of defects per metre in a roll of cloth has a Poisson distribution with mean 0.25.

Find the probability that

- (a) a randomly chosen metre of cloth has 1 defect, (2)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of defects  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(0.25)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned}P(X = 1) &= 0.25 e^{-0.25} \\ &= 0.194\,700\,195\,8 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{0.1947 \text{ (4 dp)}}.\end{aligned}$$

- (b) the total number of defects in a randomly chosen 6 metre length of cloth is more than 2. (3)

**Solution**

$X \sim \text{Po}(1.5)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(X > 2) &= 1 - P(X \leq 2) \\ &= 1 - 0.8088 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.1912}. \end{aligned}$$

A tailor buys 300 metres of cloth.

- (c) Using a suitable approximation find the probability that the tailor's cloth will contain less than 90 defects. (5)

**Solution**

$Y \sim \text{Po}(75) \therefore Y \approx \sim N(75, 75)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y < 90) &= P\left(Z < \frac{89.5 - 75}{\sqrt{75}}\right) \\ &= P(Z < 1.67) \\ &= \underline{0.9525} \text{ (from the tables)}. \end{aligned}$$

28. An online shop sells a computer game at an average rate of 1 per day.

- (a) Find the probability that the shop sells more than 10 games in a 7 day period. (3)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of games  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(7)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} P(X > 10) &= 1 - P(X \leq 10) \\ &= 1 - 0.9015 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.0985}. \end{aligned}$$

Once every 7 days the shop has games delivered before it opens.

- (b) Find the least number of games the shop should have in stock immediately after a delivery so that the probability of running out of the game before the next delivery is less than 0.05. (3)

**Solution**

$$P(X > d) < 0.05 \Leftrightarrow P(X \leq d) > 0.95.$$

Well,

$$P(X \leq 11) = 0.9467 \text{ and } P(X \leq 12) = 0.9730;$$

and 12 is the least number of games.

Alternatively,

$$P(X \geq d) < 0.05 \Leftrightarrow P(X < d) > 0.95.$$

Now,

$$P(X < 12) = 0.9467 \text{ and } P(X < 13) = 0.9730;$$

and 13 is the least number of games.

29. In a village shop the customers must join a queue to pay. The number of customers joining the queue in a 10 minute interval is modelled by a Poisson distribution with mean 3.

Find the probability that

- (a) exactly 4 customers join the queue in the next 10 minutes, (2)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of customers  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(3)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 4) &= P(X \leq 4) - P(X \leq 3) \\ &= 0.8153 - 0.6472 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.1681}. \end{aligned}$$

- (b) more than 10 customers join the queue in the next 20 minutes. (3)

**Solution**

$X \sim \text{Po}(6)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(X > 10) &= 1 - P(X \leq 10) \\ &= 1 - 0.9574 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.0426}. \end{aligned}$$

30. Patients arrive at a hospital accident and emergency department at random at a rate of 6 per hour.

(a) Find the probability that, during any 90 minute period, the number of patients arriving at the hospital accident and emergency department is

(i) exactly 7,

(3)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of patients  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(9)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 7) &= P(X \leq 7) - P(X \leq 6) \\ &= 0.3239 - 0.2068 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.1171}}. \end{aligned}$$

(ii) at least 10.

(2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(X \geq 10) &= 1 - P(X \leq 9) \\ &= 1 - 0.5874 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.4126}}. \end{aligned}$$

A patient arrives at 11.30a.m.

(b) Find the probability that the next patient arrives before 11.45a.m.

(3)

**Solution**

$X \sim \text{Po}(1.5)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(\text{arrives before 11.45a.m.}) &= 1 - P(X = 0) \\ &= 1 - e^{-1.5} \\ &= 0.776\ 869\ 839\ 9 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{\underline{0.7769}} \text{ (4 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

31. A company claims that it receives emails at a mean rate of 2 every 5 minutes.

(2)

Give two reasons why a Poisson distribution could be a suitable model for the number of emails received.

**Solution**

It is a suitable model as it explains: independently, singly, randomly, and at a constant rate.

32. Accidents occur randomly at a road junction at a rate of 18 every year. The random variable  $X$  represents the number of accidents at this road junction in the next 6 months.

(a) Write down the distribution of  $X$ . (2)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of accidents  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(9)$ .

(b) Find  $P(X > 7)$ . (2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(X > 7) &= 1 - P(X \leq 7) \\ &= 1 - 0.3239 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.6761}. \end{aligned}$$

(c) Show that the probability of at least one accident in a randomly selected month is 0.777 (correct to 3 decimal places). (3)

**Solution**

$X \sim \text{Po}(1.5)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(X \geq 1) &= 1 - P(X = 0) \\ &= 1 - 0.2231 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= 0.7769 \\ &= \underline{0.777} \text{ (3 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

(d) Find the probability that there is at least one accident in exactly 4 of the next 6 months. (3)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned}
 P(\text{exactly 4 of the next 6 months}) &= \binom{6}{4} (0.7769)^4 (0.2231)^2 \\
 &= 0.271\,988\,715\,1 \text{ (FCD)} \\
 &= \underline{\underline{0.2720 \text{ (4 dp)}}}.
 \end{aligned}$$

33. In a survey it is found that barn owls occur randomly at a rate of 9 per 1000 km<sup>2</sup>.

- (a) Find the probability that in a randomly selected area of 1000 km<sup>2</sup> there are at least 10 barn owls. (2)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of barn owls  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(9)$ :

$$\begin{aligned}
 P(X \geq 10) &= 1 - P(X \leq 9) \\
 &= 1 - 0.5874 \text{ (from the tables)} \\
 &= \underline{\underline{0.4126}}.
 \end{aligned}$$

- (b) Find the probability that in a randomly selected area of 200 km<sup>2</sup> there are exactly 2 barn owls. (3)

**Solution**

$X \sim \text{Po}(1.8)$ :

$$\begin{aligned}
 P(X = 2) &= e^{-1.8} \frac{1.8^2}{2!} \\
 &= 0.267\,784\,198\,9 \text{ (FCD)} \\
 &= \underline{\underline{0.2678 \text{ (4 dp)}}}.
 \end{aligned}$$

- (c) Using a suitable approximation, find the probability that in a randomly selected area of 50 000 km<sup>2</sup> there are at least 470 barn owls. (6)

**Solution**

$Y \sim \text{Po}(450) \therefore Y \approx \sim N(450, 450)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y \geq 470) &= P\left(Z \geq \frac{469.5 - 450}{\sqrt{450}}\right) \\ &= P(Z \geq 0.92) \\ &= 1 - P(Z \leq 0.92) \\ &= 1 - 0.8212 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.1788}. \end{aligned}$$

34. The number of cherries in a *Rays* fruit cake follows a Poisson distribution with mean 1.5.

A *Rays* fruit cake is to be selected at random.

Find the probability that it contains

- (a) (i) exactly 2 cherries, (2)

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of cherries  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(1.5)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(X = 2) &= P(X \leq 2) - P(X \leq 1) \\ &= 0.8088 - 0.5578 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.2510}. \end{aligned}$$

- (ii) at least 1 cherry. (2)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} P(X \geq 1) &= 1 - P(X = 0) \\ &= 1 - 0.2231 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.7769}. \end{aligned}$$

*Rays* fruit cakes are sold in packets of 5.

- (b) Show that the probability that there are more than 10 cherries, in total, in a randomly selected packet of *Rays* fruit cakes, is 0.1378 correct to 4 decimal places. (3)



**Solution**

$X \sim \text{Po}(7.5)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(X > 10) &= 1 - P(X \leq 10) \\ &= 1 - 0.8622 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.1378}. \end{aligned}$$

35. A company receives telephone calls at random at a mean rate of 2.5 per hour.

(a) Find the probability that the company receives

(5)

(i) at least 4 telephone calls in the next hour,

**Solution**

Let  $X$  equal the number of telephone calls  $\therefore X \sim \text{Po}(2.5)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(X \geq 4) &= 1 - P(X \leq 3) \\ &= 1 - 0.7576 \text{ (from the tables)} \\ &= \underline{0.2424}. \end{aligned}$$

(ii) exactly 3 telephone calls in the next 15 minutes.

**Solution**

Let  $Y$  equal the number of telephone calls  $\therefore Y \sim \text{Po}(0.625)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y = 3) &= e^{-0.625} \frac{0.625^3}{3!} \\ &= 0.021\,779\,843\,28 \text{ (FCD)} \\ &= \underline{0.0218} \text{ (4 dp)}. \end{aligned}$$

(b) Find, to the nearest minute, the maximum length of time the telephone can be left unattended so that the probability of missing a telephone call is less than 0.2.

(3)

**Solution**

$$\begin{aligned} 1 - P(X = 0) < 0.2 &\Rightarrow P(X = 0) > 0.8 \\ &\Rightarrow e^{-2.5t} > 0.8 \\ &\Rightarrow -2.5t > \ln 0.8 \\ &\Rightarrow t < -0.4 \ln 0.8 \\ &\Rightarrow t < 0.089\,257\,420\,53 \text{ hours (FCD)} \\ &\Rightarrow t < 5.355\,445\,232 \text{ minutes (FCD)} \\ &\Rightarrow \underline{\underline{t = 5 \text{ minutes (nearest minute)}}}. \end{aligned}$$

*Dr Oliver  
Mathematics*

*Dr Oliver  
Mathematics*

*Dr Oliver  
Mathematics*

*Dr Oliver  
Mathematics*