

**Module Description, available in: EN**

## Approximation Algorithms

### General Information

**Number of ECTS Credits**

3

**Module code**

FTP\_ApprAlg

**Valid for academic year**

2024-25

**Last modification**

2019-12-08

**Coordinator of the module**

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**Explanations regarding the language definitions for each location:**

- Instruction is given in the language defined below for each location/each time the module is held.
- Documentation is available in the languages defined below. Where documents are in several languages, the percentage distribution is shown (100% = all the documentation).
- The examination is available 100% in the languages shown for each location/each time it is held.

	Lausanne			Lugano	Zurich		
<b>Instruction</b>				X E 100%			
<b>Documentation</b>				X E 100%			
<b>Examination</b>				X E 100%			

**Module Category**

FTP Fundamental theoretical principles

**Lessons**

2 lecture periods and 1 tutorial period per week

### Entry level competences

**Prerequisites, previous knowledge**

Basics of theoretical analysis of algorithms.

### Brief course description of module objectives and content

An algorithm is typically called efficient if its worst-case running time is polynomial in the size of the input. This course will focus on a huge and practically relevant family of problems, namely NP-hard ones, for which (most likely) no efficient algorithm exists. This family includes fundamental problems in computational biology, network design, systems, computer vision, data mining, online markets, etc.

The first goal of this course is to learn how to identify NP-hard problems.

For a given NP-hard optimization problem it might still be possible to compute efficiently a feasible solution whose cost is (in the worst-case) within a

small multiplicative factor (approximation factor) from the optimum: this is the aim of approximation algorithms. The second goal of this course is to learn how to design accurate approximation algorithms, and how to (theoretically) bound their approximation factor.

## Aims, content, methods

### Learning objectives and acquired competencies

The main goal of this course is to learn how to identify NP-hard problems, and how to design and (theoretically) analyze approximation algorithms for fundamental NP-hard optimization problems.

### Contents of module with emphasis on teaching content

A. Complexity Classes: polynomial Reductions; NP-completeness and NP-hardness.

B. NP-hard problems: SAT and Max-SAT; Vertex/Set Cover; Steiner Tree and generalizations; TSP; Max Cut; Knapsack and Bin Packing; k-Center and clustering; Scheduling; Facility Location; Item Pricing; etc.

C. Approximation Algorithms:

1. Basic notions: approximation factor; hardness of approximation.
2. Basic techniques: greedy; local search; randomization; dynamic programming.

LP-based techniques: randomized rounding; primal-dual; iterative rounding.

### Teaching and learning methods

Interactive lectures both for theory and exercises.

### Literature

- V. V. Vazirani. Approximation Algorithms. Springer.

- D. P. Williamson, D. B. Shmoys. The Design of Approximation Algorithms. Cambridge University Press.

## Assessment

### Certification requirements

Module does not use certification requirements

### Basic principle for exams

**As a rule, all the standard final exams for modules and also all resit exams are to be in written form**

### Standard final exam for a module and written resit exam

Kind of exam

written

Duration of exam

120 minutes

Permissible aids

No aids permitted

### Special case: Resit exam as oral exam

Kind of exam

oral

Duration of exam

30 minutes

Permissible aids

No aids permitted