

Computing Resources and Policies for Mathematics Graduate Students

Noel Brady Fall 2008.

In your various roles at the University of Oklahoma, you will need to become familiar with a range of computing facilities and electronic communication systems. As a mathematics graduate student, you receive storage space and an email account on the mathematics department server. You can use the storage space for storing email, file storage, and for maintaining a web page. As a student of the University of Oklahoma, you receive an OU-email address (associated with your OU 4+4 ID) and an OU web page. Among your duties as an instructor, you may need to use spreadsheet software (or the university's Desire2Learn system) to record/post student grades. In your studies, you may need to use various mathematical software, typesetting software, and to access literature databases.

The purpose of this document is to spell out the different computing facilities and online resources that are provided for you by the Mathematics department and by the University of Oklahoma. It provides a list of key personnel, so you know who to go to for help with various tasks. It also spells out important departmental policies regarding your math.ou.edu email address. University policy documents pertaining to users of OU information technology can be found on the following site.

<http://www.ou.edu/committees/itc/policy.html>

1. *Email accounts.* Every graduate student receives an account (with storage space for web pages and email) on the mathematics department servers. The email address associated with your mathematics department account is of the form *username@math.ou.edu*. This is the email address that is listed by your name on the mathematics department people web page. Please note that **email messages from Mathematics department faculty and staff will be to your math.ou.edu address.** It is *your responsibility* to check this email on a regular basis; at least once per day. You can either check your math email directly, or you may wish to automatically *forward* your math email to your preferred mail server (eg. OU email, Gmail, yahoo mail, etc). There are directions for *email forwarding* on the Mathematics Graduate Students Association (MGSA) web page. Make sure to set up mail forwarding (to a server that you check at least once per day) before the start of the semester.
2. *The mathgrads email alias.* There is an alias for emailing all current mathematics graduate students at once. This is *mathgrads AT math DOT ou DOT edu*. The email addresses listed in this alias are all of the form *username@math.ou.edu*.
3. *OU email.* University offices outside of the Mathematics department will contact students via their @ou.edu email addresses. It is your responsibility to make sure that email from ou.edu and from math.ou.edu all gets forwarded to a common server that you check on a regular basis. Be aware that neither the University nor the Mathematics Department considers "not having read email" a valid excuse for having missed out on important communications. Check the *University Email Notifications* link on <http://www.ou.edu/committees/itc/policy.html> for a complete statement of the University's policy.
4. *Your web page.* We strongly recommend that you set up your own professional web page on the mathematics server as soon as possible. A professional web page is an increasingly important tool in today's job market. One way to think of your web page is as a way of maintaining a live online CV. You can add information about your teaching, research, service, talks given,

links to preprints, articles etc on your web page as events occur. This will be invaluable when it comes time to prepare for the job market. Your department web page is a good place to post a schedule if you ever are organizing a student seminar.

The MGSA has detailed instructions on how to set up a basic web page on the mathematics department server. You may prefer to activate and use your OU web page, or you may have a professional web page on some other server. In any case, you should contact the department's WWW administrator to have your page linked from the department's people page.

5. *Security and Privacy Issues.* There are several issues that you should be aware of.
 - *Basics.* Be mindful of the physical security of the Mathematics Department hardware. Keep doors to offices and workstation rooms locked.
Remember to always **log out** at the end of a session at a workstation! If you leave yourself logged on, you are vulnerable to someone (accidentally or deliberately) deleting files from your account, reading/using your email etc.
 - *Passwords.* The department's account request form has some suggestions about password security. Take these seriously.
 - *Email Addresses.* Don't publish your complete email address on your web page, on your Facebook page etc, or it may get harvested by spam robots.
 - *Email Attachments.* Be careful about opening unfamiliar attachments to emails, especially on Windows machines.
 - *Privacy.* Students should be aware that situations may arise where the Chair or Committee A members need to access an individual's email account.
You may also wish to see the "Privacy Statement" section of the *Interim Email Policy* link on <http://www.ou.edu/committees/itc/policy.html> for a statement of the University's email privacy policy.
6. *Mathematics Department Servers.* The department maintains two servers, *Aftermath* and *Zeus*, both of which run the Linux operating system.
Aftermath: Login shells, some software.
Zeus: File server, provides NFS service to workstations throughout the department. The file system is protected by a RAID back-up system. The systems manager should be able to recover a user's lost data for up to 3 or 4 weeks.
7. *Graduate Student Computer Rooms.* There are two workstation clusters for graduate students in the department.
Fourth floor. Adjacent to the photocopier room. Access during business hours only. Workstations (running Microsoft Windows), printer, scanner (color). Note that the main office photocopier can print directly from workstations, and can scan documents directly to email (as black-and-white pdf documents).
Ninth Floor. Room 911. Students have 24-hour access (with key). Workstations (running Microsoft Windows), printers.
8. *Computers in Offices.* Department is working hard to ensure that every graduate student office has a computer which can be shared by occupants. There are networked printers in rooms 911, 419 and 421.

9. *Operating Systems.* All workstations are PCs running the Microsoft Windows operating system. The servers Aftermath and Zeus are Linux machines.

Students can logon to Aftermath via the secure shell ssh program (eg. via the Windows PUTTY program) if they need terminal access to a Linux machine.

10. *Miscellaneous Software.* The department has site licenses for the basic mathematical, typesetting, and office software. Most of these are installed on the department workstations.

The systems manager and the department Computer Committee will consider requests for additional software to be loaded on the workstations.

- *Mathematical Software.* The department has site licenses for Mathematica and MATLAB.
- *LaTeX.* The department workstations come with the mathematics typesetting package LaTeX installed. You should take the time early in your graduate career to learn LaTeX. The MGSA maintains a LaTeX resource page, and also provides annual lectures on the basics of LaTeX typesetting. The department workstations have Winedt (a general purpose text editor, works well with the version of LaTeX) and Winfig (graphics program).
- *Office Suites.* Workstations come with Microsoft Office installed.

11. *University IT Store.* <http://itstore.ou.edu/index.asp?scpt=yes>

As a student you may be able to get good deals on software (some of it is free!) from the IT store. Be sure to check this out. Use your OU 4+4 ID to log into the IT Store.

12. *Library.* <http://libraries.ou.edu/>

The library's LORA system gives you access to MathSciNet (which is the definitive database of mathematics literature reviews and bibliographical information (available in bibtex format)), JStore, etc from off campus. It is worth spending the time configuring your library homepage to have these resources readily available, for easy access from off campus.

Access to these databases is automatic from department computers, but you will need to go through the library LORA page if you wish to access these facilities from an off campus computer. You will need your OU 4+4 ID and password for this.

It is extremely important to become conversant with the various literature databases such as MathSciNet. They are an essential resource for academic research (eg. literature searches) and writing (eg. compiling bibliographies).

13. *Desire2Learn and course management.* <https://learn.ou.edu/index.asp>

Desire2Learn is the University's course management system. Some professors will require that you have a working knowledge of the gradebook and grade reporting using Desire2Learn. Most of this system is fairly intuitive to understand. There are good online tutorials for using Desire2Learn (check the D2L Help section after logging on to the D2L system). You can also ask more experienced students if you have questions. As a last resort, Beth McCoy is the College of Arts&Sciences Desire2Learn guru.

14. *Wireless access in PHSC and on campus.* OU IT supports wireless access at many places on campus, including the base of PHSC. The Mathematics Department maintains several wireless access points throughout the tower portion of PHSC. You will need to provide the Department systems manager with your MAC address, and you will need to obtain a password, in order to connect to the Department's wireless network.

15. *Online Information and Resources.* You can find a lot of information online. Here are some good sources of information for mathematics graduate students. Please let the graduate directors know if there is other information which you would like to see online.

- *Mathematics Graduate Student Handbook.* This is linked under the *Current Students* section of the Graduate Study page. It contains information about the mathematics graduate programs, about your daily life as a student and as an instructor, and provides direct links to the Grad College, and other University offices which are important for graduate students.
- *MGSA resources.* In addition to information about LaTeX, web page creation and email forwarding, the MGSA has a wealth of other resources. Check out their page at <http://math.ou.edu/~mgsa/>
- *Graduate College Forms.* The Graduate College forms which are relevant for each step of your degree program are available on their web site. So also are the forms for travel awards and for scholarships.
- *Department Forms.* The department pre-travel form, and the graduate student travel funds request form are found under the *Travel funds* link on the Graduate Study web page. This also has links to other travel funding sources.

16. *Who's who?*

- *Systems manager.* Contact this person for general computing questions regarding the Mathematics department workstations or servers.
Gavin Nipper. 325-6592. gavin AT ou DOT edu.
- *Math WWW administrator.* Contact this person if you have questions or comments regarding the main math page, and the people, events and contact sub-pages. Essentially anything that is not managed by the people listed below.
Ralf Schmidt. 325-3684 rschmidt AT math DOT ou DOT edu.
- *Math Graduate Study page administrator.* Contact this person for questions and comments regarding the page <http://math.ou.edu/grad/> and all sub-pages.
Noel Brady. 325-0833 nbrady AT math DOT ou DOT edu
- *Math Undergraduate Studies page administrator.* Contact this person for questions and comments regarding the page <http://math.ou.edu/undergrad/> and sub-pages.
Keri Kornelson. 325-7946 kkornelson AT math DOT ou DOT edu.
- *MathClub Page and Blog.* Contact this person for questions and comments regarding the undergraduate MathClub page <http://www.math.ou.edu/mathclub> and the MathClub Blog <http://oumathclub.wordpress.com/>
Jon Kujawa. 325-2390. kujawa AT math DOT ou DOT edu.
- *MGSA page administrator.* The MGSA pages are an important resource for mathematics graduate students. Contact this person for comments and questions regarding the page <http://math.ou.edu/~mgsa> and its sub-pages.
Thomas Madsen. Thomas.L.Madsen-1 AT ou DOT edu.
- *College of Arts&Sciences Desire2Learn contact.*
Beth McCoy. 325-0862. bmccoy AT ou DOT edu.
- Seminar pages are maintained by current seminar organizers.