

Worked Example

Proving Vector Differential Identities

To prove that $\nabla \cdot (\Phi \mathbf{u}) = \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla \Phi + \Phi \nabla \cdot \mathbf{u}$ where Φ is a scalar field and \mathbf{u} is a vector field:

$$\begin{aligned}\nabla \cdot (\Phi \mathbf{u}) &= \frac{\partial}{\partial x_i} (\Phi u_i) \\ &= \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x_i} u_i + \Phi \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_i} \\ &= [\nabla \Phi]_i u_i + \Phi \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_i} \\ &= \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla \Phi + \Phi \nabla \cdot \mathbf{u}.\end{aligned}$$

To prove that $\nabla \times (\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v}) = (\nabla \cdot \mathbf{v})\mathbf{u} - (\nabla \cdot \mathbf{u})\mathbf{v} + (\mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla)\mathbf{u} - (\mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla)\mathbf{v}$ where \mathbf{u} and \mathbf{v} are vector fields:

$$\begin{aligned}[\nabla \times (\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v})]_i &= \epsilon_{ijk} \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} \epsilon_{klm} u_l v_m \\ &= (\delta_{il} \delta_{jm} - \delta_{im} \delta_{jl}) \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} (u_l v_m) \\ &= \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} (u_i v_j) - \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} (u_j v_i) \\ &= u_i \frac{\partial v_j}{\partial x_j} + v_j \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_j} - v_i \frac{\partial u_j}{\partial x_j} - u_j \frac{\partial v_i}{\partial x_j} \\ &= [(\nabla \cdot \mathbf{v})\mathbf{u} + (\mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla)\mathbf{u} - (\nabla \cdot \mathbf{u})\mathbf{v} - (\mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla)\mathbf{v}]_i.\end{aligned}$$