

Study aid 3: Frequently used continuous distributions with their characteristics:

Name + parameter(s)	Density function	Sketch of the graph	$E(X)$	$var(X)$	An application
Uniform $U(a, b)$	$f(x) =$		$\frac{a + b}{2}$	$\frac{(b - a)^2}{12}$	
Exponential $Exp(\lambda)$	$f(x) =$		$\frac{1}{\lambda}$	$\frac{1}{\lambda^2}$	
Standard normal $N(0,1)$	$\varphi(z) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}z^2}$				
Normal $N(\mu, \sigma^2)$	$f(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma^2}} e^{-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$				

Relations between distributions:

Distribution of X	(approximate) distribution	Rule of thumb in case of approximation
Hypergeometric R, N, n	Binomial	
Binomial $B(n, p)$	Poisson	
	Normal	
Normal $X \sim N(\mu, \sigma^2)$	$Y = aX + b \sim$	
Normal $X \sim N(\mu_1, \sigma_1^2), Y \sim N(\mu_2, \sigma_2^2), X$ and Y ind.	$X + Y \sim$	
Not-normal X_1, \dots, X_n are independent and identically distributed with expectation μ and variance σ^2	$\sum_{i=1}^n X_i \sim$	

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Name + parameter(s)	Density function	Sketch of the graph	$E(X)$	$var(X)$	An application
Uniform $U(a, b)$	$f(x) = \frac{1}{b-a}$, if $a \leq x \leq b$		$\frac{a+b}{2}$	$\frac{(b-a)^2}{12}$	$X =$ "random number between 0 and 1" $X \sim U(0, 1)$
Exponential $Exp(\lambda)$	$f(x) = \lambda e^{-\lambda x}$, for $x \geq 0$		$\frac{1}{\lambda}$	$\frac{1}{\lambda^2}$	$X =$ "interarrival time between two consecutive customers" $E(X) = \frac{1}{\lambda}$
Standard normal $N(0,1)$	$\varphi(z) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}z^2}$		0	1	$X =$ "error for measurements with standard deviation 1" $X \sim N(0, 1)$
Normal $N(\mu, \sigma^2)$	$f(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma^2}} e^{-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$		μ	σ^2	$X =$ "IQ of an arbitrary student" $X \sim N(\mu, \sigma^2)$

Relations between distributions:

Distribution of X	(approximate) distribution	Rule of thumb in case of approximation
Hypergeometric R, N, n	Binomial $B\left(n, \frac{R}{N}\right)$	$N > 5n^2$
Binomial $B(n, p)$	Poisson $\mu = np$	$n \geq 25$ and $np < 10$ or $n(1-p) < 10$
	Normal $N(np, np(1-p))$	$n \geq 25$ and $np > 5$ and $n(1-p) > 5$
Normal $X \sim N(\mu, \sigma^2)$	Normal $Y = aX + b \sim N(a\mu + b, a^2\sigma^2)$	--
Normal $X \sim N(\mu_1, \sigma_1^2), Y \sim N(\mu_2, \sigma_2^2), X$ and Y ind.	Normal: $X + Y \sim N(\mu_1 + \mu_2, \sigma_1^2 + \sigma_2^2)$,	--
Not-normal X_1, \dots, X_n are independent and identically distributed with expectation μ and variance σ^2	$\sum_{i=1}^n X_i \stackrel{CLT}{\sim} N(n\mu, n\sigma^2)$	$n \geq 25$