

Mid-Semester Examination (Solutions)

March 3rd, 2017

Time: 1:00-3:00 pm

Maximum Marks: 100

(Answer all 6 questions. Calculators are not allowed. Some important constants are provided below.)

1. Stefan's-Boltzmann's constant: $\sigma = 5.67 \times 10^{-8} \text{ W/m}^2\text{-K}^4$.
2. Wein's constant = $2.898 \times 10^{-3} \text{ m-K}$
3. Planck's constant: $h = 6.626 \times 10^{-34} \text{ joule-sec}$

Problem 1:

- (a) In a nuclear reaction the temperature of the rising fireball reaches 10^7 K at some instant. What is the wavelength at which the emitted radiation is a maximum at that instant. **(3 marks)**
- (b) If the surface temperature of the Sun is 5000 K , calculate the approximate energy lost to radiation per unit time per unit area of the Sun's surface. **(3 marks)**
- (c) Write the following in the position basis: $\langle \psi_1 | \hat{\Omega} | \psi_2 \rangle$. **(3 marks)**
- (d) Find the adjoint of the equation: $|\psi\rangle = a|\psi_1\rangle + b|\psi_2\rangle\langle\psi_3|\psi_4\rangle + \sum_i |\psi_5\rangle\langle\psi_6|\hat{\Omega}|v_i\rangle\langle w_i|\psi_7\rangle$. **(3 marks)**
- (e) Show that the uncertainty in the energy ΔE of a particle in a stationary state is zero. **(3 marks)**

Solution 1:

- (a) Wein's displacement law says $\lambda_{\max}T = 2.898 \times 10^{-3} \text{ m-K}$. Therefore, we have $\lambda_{\max} = \frac{2.898 \times 10^{-3}}{10^7} \text{ m} = 2.898 \text{ \AA}$.
- (b) The energy lost to radiation per unit time per unit area of the of the Sun's surface is given by Stefan's law. The energy lost = $\sigma T^4 = 5.67 \times 10^{-8} \times (5000)^4 = 5.67 \times 625 \times 10^4 \approx 3.54 \times 10^7 \text{ W/m}^2$.
- (c)

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \psi_1 | \hat{\Omega} | \psi_2 \rangle &= \iint \langle \psi_1 | x \rangle \langle x | \hat{\Omega} | x' \rangle \langle x' | \psi_2 \rangle dx dx' = \iint \psi_1^*(x) \Omega_{xx'} \psi_2(x) dx dx' \\ &= \iint \psi_1^*(x) \delta(x - x') \Omega(x', -i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial x'}) \psi_2(x) dx dx' = \int \psi_1^*(x) \Omega \left(x, -i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \right) \psi_2(x) dx \end{aligned}$$

- (d) $\langle \psi | = \langle \psi_1 | a^* + \langle \psi_4 | \psi_3 \rangle \langle \psi_2 | b^* + \sum_i \langle \psi_7 | w_i \rangle \langle v_i | \hat{\Omega}^\dagger | \psi_6 \rangle \langle \psi_5 |$
- (e) A stationary state wave-function can be written as $\Psi(x, t) = \psi(x)e^{-iEt/\hbar}$. We can calculate the energy expectation value as follow:

$$\begin{aligned} \langle E \rangle &= \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \Psi^*(x, t) \left(i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \right) \Psi(x, t) dx = E \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \psi^*(x) \psi(x) dx = E \quad (\text{normalization condition}) \\ \langle E^2 \rangle &= \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \Psi^*(x, t) \left(i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \right)^2 \Psi(x, t) dx = E^2 \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \psi^*(x) \psi(x) dx = E^2 \\ \Delta E &= \sqrt{\langle E^2 \rangle - \langle E \rangle^2} = E^2 - E^2 = 0 \end{aligned}$$

Thus we see that the energy uncertainty of a stationary state is zero.

Problem 2:

- (a) Explicitly work out the commutator: $[\hat{X}, \hat{P}]$, where \hat{X} is the position operator and \hat{P} is the momentum operator. **(10 marks)**
- (b) Assuming no degeneracy and using Dirac notations, prove that the eigenvectors of a Hermitian operator are mutually orthogonal. **(10 marks)**

Solutions 2:

- (a) Let $|\psi\rangle$ be an arbitrary state. So, we can write

$$\begin{aligned}
[\hat{X}, \hat{P}]|\psi\rangle &= (\hat{X}\hat{P} - \hat{P}\hat{X})|\psi\rangle \\
&= \iiint \left(|x\rangle\langle x|\hat{X}|x'\rangle\langle x'|\hat{P}|x''\rangle\langle x''| - |x\rangle\langle x|\hat{P}|x'\rangle\langle x'|\hat{X}|x''\rangle\langle x''| \right) |\psi\rangle dx dx' dx'' \\
&= \iiint \left[|x\rangle\delta(x-x')x'\delta(x'-x'') \left(-i\hbar \frac{d}{dx''} \right) \langle x''| - |x\rangle\delta(x-x') \left(-i\hbar \frac{d}{dx'} \right) \delta(x'-x'')x''\langle x''| \right] |\psi\rangle dx dx' dx'' \\
&= \int \left[|x\rangle x \left(-i\hbar \frac{d}{dx} \right) \langle x| - |x\rangle \left(-i\hbar \frac{d}{dx} \right) x \langle x| \right] |\psi\rangle dx \\
&= -i\hbar \int |x\rangle\langle x| \left[x \left(\frac{d}{dx} \right) - \left(\frac{d}{dx} \right) x \right] |\psi\rangle dx
\end{aligned}$$

We have $\left(\frac{d}{dx} \right) x f(x) = f(x) + x \left(\frac{d}{dx} \right) f(x) = \left(1 + x \frac{d}{dx} \right) f(x)$. Therefore, we have that $\left(\frac{d}{dx} \right) x = \left(1 + x \frac{d}{dx} \right)$. Using this result we can now write the above commutator as

$$\begin{aligned}
[\hat{X}, \hat{P}]|\psi\rangle &= -i\hbar \int |x\rangle\langle x| \left[x \left(\frac{d}{dx} \right) - 1 - x \left(\frac{d}{dx} \right) \right] |\psi\rangle dx \\
&= i\hbar \int |x\rangle\langle x| dx |\psi\rangle \\
&= i\hbar \mathbf{I} |\psi\rangle.
\end{aligned}$$

Here we have used the completeness condition $\int |x\rangle\langle x| dx = \mathbf{I}$. Thus we have

$$[\hat{X}, \hat{P}] = i\hbar.$$

- (b) Let $|\psi_m\rangle$ and $|\psi_n\rangle$ be two eigenvectors of a Hermitian operator \hat{A} with eigenvalues a_m and a_n , respectively. Thus

$$\hat{A}|\psi_m\rangle = a_m|\psi_m\rangle \quad (1)$$

$$\hat{A}|\psi_n\rangle = a_n|\psi_n\rangle \quad (2)$$

Taking the inner product on each side of the first equation with $\langle\psi_n|$ we get

$$\langle\psi_n|\hat{A}|\psi_m\rangle = a_m\langle\psi_n|\psi_m\rangle \quad (3)$$

Now we take the adjoint of the second equation and write it as

$$\langle\psi_n|\hat{A}^\dagger = a_n^*\langle\psi_n|$$

$$\text{or, } \langle\psi_n|\hat{A} = a_n\langle\psi_n|$$

Here, we have used the fact that \hat{A} is Hermitian, that is, $\hat{A}^\dagger = \hat{A}$ and $a_n^* = a_n$, since the eigenvalues of a Hermitian

operator are real. Taking the inner product on each side of the above equation with $|\psi_m\rangle$ we get

$$\langle\psi_n|\hat{A}|\psi_m\rangle = a_n\langle\psi_n|\psi_m\rangle \quad (4)$$

Now, subtracting Eq. 3 for Eq. 4, we get

$$(a_n - a_m)\langle\psi_n|\psi_m\rangle = 0$$

Since, we have assumed that there is no degeneracy, $a_n \neq a_m$. Therefore,

$$\langle\psi_n|\psi_m\rangle = 0$$

Thus, we have that the eigenvectors of a Hermitian operator are orthogonal.

Problem 3: If $|x\rangle$ and $|p\rangle$ are the position and momentum eigekets with eigenvalues x and p , respectively.

(a) Work out the inner product $\langle x|p\rangle$. **(8 marks)**

(b) For a quantum state $|\psi\rangle$, express the momentum-basis wave function $\psi(p)$ in terms of the position-basis wave function $\psi(x)$. **(3 marks)**

(c) write the following completeness relationship in the position basis: $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} |p\rangle\langle p|dp = I$. **(4 marks)**

Solutions 3:

(a) Since $|p\rangle$ is the eigenket of the momentum operator \hat{P} , we have

$$\hat{P}|p\rangle = p|p\rangle$$

Or, $\langle x|\hat{P}|p\rangle = p\langle x|p\rangle$

Expanding in the $|x'\rangle$, we get

$$\int \langle x|\hat{P}|x'\rangle\langle x'|p\rangle dx' = p\langle x|p\rangle$$

Or, $\int (-i\hbar)\delta(x-x')\frac{d}{dx'}\langle x'|p\rangle dx' = p\langle x|p\rangle$

Or, $(-i\hbar)\frac{d}{dx}\langle x|p\rangle = p\langle x|p\rangle$

Solving the above first-order differential equation, we get

$$\langle x|p\rangle = Ae^{ipx/\hbar}$$

Or, $\langle p|x\rangle = A^*e^{-ipx/\hbar}$

Now, we need to find the constant A . Using the relation $\langle x|x'\rangle = \delta(x-x')$ and the completeness condition for the momentum basis, we write

$$\langle x|x'\rangle = \delta(x-x')$$

Or, $\int \langle x|p\rangle\langle p|x'\rangle dp = \delta(x-x')$

Or, $\int |A|^2 e^{ipx/\hbar} \times e^{-ipx'/\hbar} dp = \delta(x-x')$

Or, $|A|^2 \int e^{i(x-x')p/\hbar} dp = \delta(x-x')$

Or, $|A|^2 2\pi\hbar\delta(x-x') = \delta(x-x')$

$$\Rightarrow A = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\hbar}}$$

Thus we have the required inner product as

$$\langle x|p\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\hbar}}e^{ipx/\hbar}$$

(b) We have

$$\begin{aligned}\psi(p) &= \langle p|\psi\rangle \\ \text{Or, } \psi(p) &= \int \langle p|x\rangle \langle x|\psi\rangle dx \\ \text{Or, } \psi(p) &= \int \langle p|x\rangle \psi(x) dx \\ \text{Or, } \psi(p) &= A \int e^{-ipx/\hbar} \psi(x) dx\end{aligned}$$

(c) The completeness condition for the momentum eigenfunctions is :

$$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} |p\rangle \langle p| dp = \mathbf{I}$$

Taking the inner product of the above equation with $\langle x|$ from left and with $|x'\rangle$ from right, we get

$$\begin{aligned}\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \langle x|p\rangle \langle p|x'\rangle dp &= \langle x|\mathbf{I}|x'\rangle \\ \text{Or, } \frac{1}{2\pi\hbar} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{ip(x-x')/\hbar} dp &= \langle x|x'\rangle \\ \text{Or, } \frac{1}{2\pi\hbar} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{ip(x-x')/\hbar} dp &= \delta(x-x')\end{aligned}$$

This is the required position representation.

Problem 4: Suppose the position-basis wave function $\Psi(x, t)$ of a particle is given by $\Psi(x, t) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}[\Psi_1(x, t) + \Psi_2(x, t)]$, where $\Psi_1(x, t)$ and $\Psi_2(x, t)$ are the two normalized stationary-state solutions to the Schrödinger equation with energies E_1 and E_2 , respectively, with $\Psi_1(x, 0) = \psi_1(x)$ and $\Psi_2(x, 0) = \psi_2(x)$.

- (a) Find out the position probability density of the particle at time t in terms of ψ_1 , ψ_2 , E_1 , and E_2 . **(7 marks)**
 (b) What is the expectation value $\langle E \rangle$ for energy? **(8 marks)**

Solutions 4

- (a) $\Psi_1(x, t)$ and $\Psi_2(x, t)$ are the two normalized stationary-state solutions, we have $\Psi_1(x, t) = \psi_1(x)e^{-iE_1t/\hbar}$ and $\Psi_2(x, t) = \psi_2(x)e^{-iE_2t/\hbar}$. The required probability density is then given by

$$\begin{aligned} P(x, t) &= \Psi^*(x, t)\Psi(x, t) \\ &= \frac{1}{2} [\Psi_1^*(x, t) + \Psi_2^*(x, t)][\Psi_1(x, t) + \Psi_2(x, t)] \\ &= \frac{1}{2} [|\psi_1(x)|^2 + |\psi_2(x)|^2 + \psi_1^*(x)\psi_2(x)e^{-i(E_2-E_1)t/\hbar} + \psi_2^*(x)\psi_1(x)e^{i(E_2-E_1)t/\hbar}] \end{aligned}$$

- (b) The expectation value of energy $\langle E \rangle$ is given as

$$\begin{aligned} \langle E \rangle &= \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \Psi^*(x, t)(i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t})\Psi(x, t)dx = \frac{1}{2} \left[\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \Psi_1^*(x, t)(i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t})\Psi_1(x, t)dx + \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \Psi_2^*(x, t)(i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t})\Psi_2(x, t)dx \right. \\ &\quad \left. + \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \Psi_1^*(x, t)(i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t})\Psi_2(x, t)dx + \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \Psi_2^*(x, t)(i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t})\Psi_1(x, t)dx \right] \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \left[E_1 \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \Psi_1^*(x, t)\Psi_1(x, t)dx + E_2 \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \Psi_2^*(x, t)\Psi_2(x, t)dx \right. \\ &\quad \left. + E_2 \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \Psi_1^*(x, t)\Psi_2(x, t)dx + E_1 \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \Psi_2^*(x, t)\Psi_1(x, t)dx \right] \end{aligned}$$

The first two integrals are unity because of the fact that the wave-functions are normalized. The last two integrals are zero since they essentially are the inner products of two orthogonal functions. Thus we have

$$\langle E(t) \rangle = \frac{E_1 + E_2}{2}$$

Problem 5: The position-basis wave function $\psi(x)$ of a particle is given by

$$\psi(x) = A; \quad \text{if} \quad -\left(\frac{R+d}{2}\right) < x < -\left(\frac{R-d}{2}\right) \quad \text{and} \quad \left(\frac{R-d}{2}\right) < x < \left(\frac{R+d}{2}\right)$$

$$= 0; \quad \text{otherwise.}$$

(Take $R \gg 2d$)

- (a) Find the normalization constant A . **(2 marks)**
 (b) Calculate and plot the position probability density that a particle is found at position x . **(2 marks)**
 (c) Calculate and plot the momentum probability density that the particle is found with momentum p . **(6 marks)**

Solutions 5:

(a) Normalizing the wave function, we get,

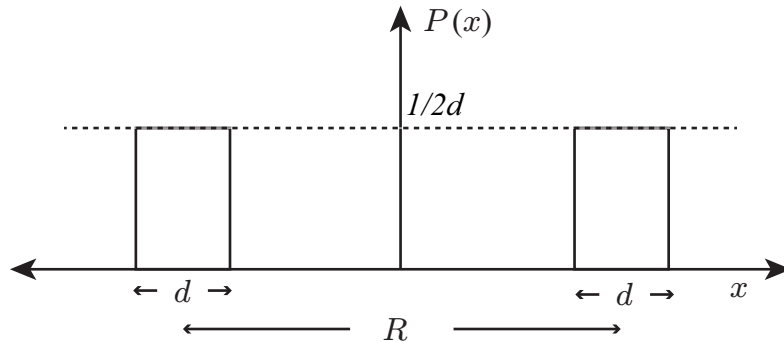
$$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \psi^*(x)\psi(x)dx = 1$$

or, $\int_{-\left(\frac{R+d}{2}\right)}^{-\left(\frac{R-d}{2}\right)} A^2 dx + \int_{\left(\frac{R-d}{2}\right)}^{\left(\frac{R+d}{2}\right)} A^2 dx = 1$

or, $A^2 \times 2d = 1$

or, $A = \sqrt{\frac{1}{2d}}$

(b) The plot of the probability density is as shown below:



(c) In order to calculate the momentum probability density, we need to first calculate the momentum-space wave-function $\psi(p)$, which is:

$$\psi(p) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\hbar}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-ipx/\hbar} \psi(x) dx$$

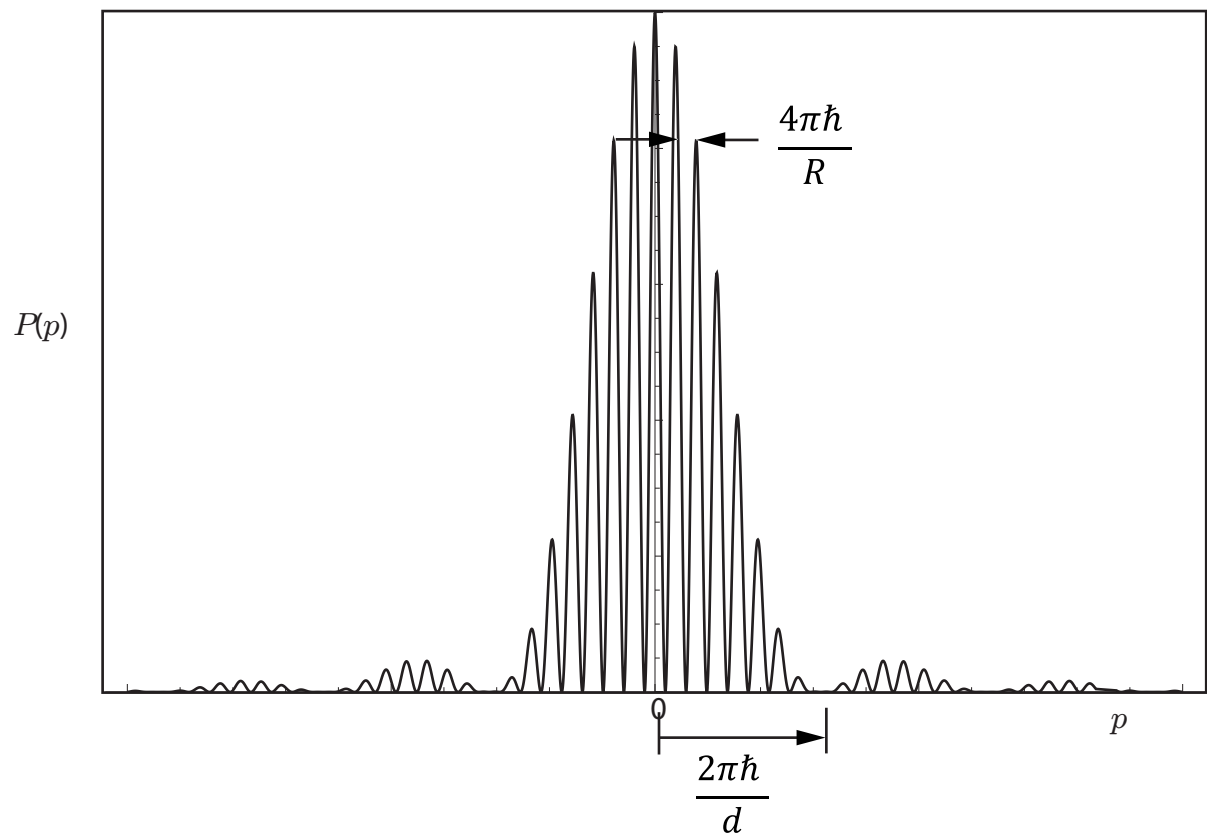
$$= \frac{A}{\sqrt{2\pi\hbar}} \left[\int_{-\left(\frac{R+d}{2}\right)}^{-\left(\frac{R-d}{2}\right)} e^{-ipx/\hbar} dx + \int_{\left(\frac{R-d}{2}\right)}^{\left(\frac{R+d}{2}\right)} e^{-ipx/\hbar} dx \right]$$

$$= \frac{A}{\sqrt{2\pi\hbar}} d \text{sinc} \left(\frac{d}{2\hbar} p \right) 2 \cos \left(\frac{R}{2\hbar} p \right)$$

Therefore, the momentum probability density is

$$P(p) = \psi^*(p)\psi(p) = \frac{d}{\pi\hbar} \text{sinc}^2 \left(\frac{d}{2\hbar} p \right) \cos^2 \left(\frac{R}{2\hbar} p \right)$$

Below is the plot for the momentum probability density as a function of p . For the plot, we have taken $R/d = 8$. The fringe period is equal to $\frac{4\pi\hbar}{R}$ and the first zero of the sinc function will appear at $x = \pm\frac{2\pi\hbar}{d}$



Problem 6: Consider an infinite potential well of width a centered at $x = 0$. The position-basis wave function of the n^{th} stationary state $\psi_n(x)$ is given by

$$\begin{aligned} \text{For } n = 1, 3, 5, \dots & \quad \psi_n(x) = \sqrt{\frac{2}{a}} \cos\left(\frac{n\pi x}{a}\right); & \quad \text{if } -\frac{a}{2} \leq x \leq \frac{a}{2} \\ & \quad = 0 & \quad \text{else.} \\ \text{For } n = 2, 4, 6, \dots & \quad \psi_n(x) = \sqrt{\frac{2}{a}} \sin\left(\frac{n\pi x}{a}\right); & \quad \text{if } -\frac{a}{2} \leq x \leq \frac{a}{2} \\ & \quad = 0 & \quad \text{else.} \end{aligned}$$

Suppose that the particle is in the ground state ($n = 1$) of the potential,

- Find the probability that the particle is found between $x = -a/4$ and $x = a/4$. **(5 marks)**
- What is the expectation value $\langle x \rangle$ for position? **(3 marks)**
- What is the expectation value $\langle p \rangle$ for momentum? **(3 marks)**
- Now, suppose that the potential well suddenly expands symmetrically to twice its size. Calculate the probability of finding the particle in the ground state of the new potential well. **(14 marks)**

Solutions 6

- The probability that the particle is found between $x = -a/4$ and $x = a/4$ is given by

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{-a/4}^{a/4} \psi^*(x)\psi(x)dx &= \frac{2}{a} \int_{-a/4}^{a/4} \cos^2\left(\frac{\pi x}{a}\right) dx \\ &= \frac{1}{a} \int_{-a/4}^{a/4} 1 + \cos\left(\frac{2\pi x}{a}\right) dx \\ &= \frac{1}{a} \left[x + \frac{a}{2\pi} \sin\left(\frac{2\pi x}{a}\right) \right]_{-a/4}^{a/4} \\ &= \frac{1}{a} \left[\frac{a}{2} + \frac{a}{\pi} \right] \\ &= \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{\pi} \end{aligned}$$

- The position expectation value is $\langle x \rangle$ is

$$\begin{aligned} \langle x \rangle &= \int_{-a/2}^{a/2} \psi^*(x)x\psi(x)dx \\ &= \frac{2}{a} \int_{-a/2}^{a/2} x \cos^2\left(\frac{\pi x}{a}\right) dx \\ &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

In evaluating the integral we have used the fact that the integrand is an odd function.

(c) The momentum expectation value is $\langle p \rangle$ is

$$\begin{aligned}\langle p \rangle &= \int_{-a/2}^{a/2} \psi^*(x) \left(-i\hbar \frac{d}{dx} \right) \psi(x) dx \\ &= \frac{2}{a} \int_{-a/2}^{a/2} \cos\left(\frac{\pi x}{a}\right) \left(-i\hbar \frac{d}{dx} \right) \cos\left(\frac{\pi x}{a}\right) dx \\ &= \frac{2}{a} (i\hbar) \int_{-a/2}^{a/2} \cos\left(\frac{\pi x}{a}\right) \sin\left(\frac{\pi x}{a}\right) \frac{\pi}{a} dx \\ &= 0\end{aligned}$$

In evaluating the integral we have again used the fact that the integrand is an odd function.

(d) The state of the particle before the expansion of the well is $|\psi\rangle = |\psi_1^{(\text{old})}\rangle$, where $|\psi_1^{(\text{old})}\rangle$ is the ground state solution of the infinite-potential well of width a . The position-space wave-function of the ground state is given by

$$\begin{aligned}\langle x|\psi_1^{(\text{old})}\rangle &= \psi_1^{(\text{old})}(x) = \sqrt{\frac{2}{a}} \cos\left(\frac{\pi x}{a}\right) \quad \text{if } \frac{-a}{2} < x < \frac{a}{2} \\ &= 0 \quad \text{otherwise}\end{aligned}$$

The width of the well then expands to $2a$. We write the new stationary state solutions as $|\psi_n^{(\text{new})}\rangle$. The position-space wave-function of the ground state can therefore be written as

$$\begin{aligned}\langle x|\psi_1^{(\text{new})}\rangle &= \psi_1^{(\text{new})}(x) = \sqrt{\frac{2}{2a}} \cos\left(\frac{\pi x}{2a}\right) \quad \text{if } -a < x < a \\ &= 0 \quad \text{otherwise}\end{aligned}$$

In order to calculate the required probability, we need to write our state in the new basis:

$$|\psi\rangle = |\psi_1^{(\text{old})}\rangle = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} c_n |\psi_n^{(\text{new})}\rangle,$$

where $c_n = \langle \psi_n^{(\text{new})} | \psi \rangle = \langle \psi_n^{(\text{new})} | \psi_1^{(\text{old})} \rangle$. The required probability is $|c_1|^2$, which we calculate as follows:

$$c_1 = \langle \psi_1^{(\text{new})} | \psi_1^{(\text{old})} \rangle = \int_{-a}^a \psi_1^{(\text{new})}(x) \psi_1^{(\text{old})}(x) dx$$

However, the wave-function $\psi_1^{(\text{old})}(x)$ is defined only over the range $(-a/2) < x < (a/2)$. Thus we effectively have,

$$\begin{aligned}c_1 &= \int_{-a/2}^{a/2} \psi_1^{(\text{new})}(x) \psi_1^{(\text{old})}(x) dx \\ &= \int_{-a/2}^{a/2} \sqrt{\frac{2}{2a}} \cos\left(\frac{\pi x}{2a}\right) \sqrt{\frac{2}{a}} \cos\left(\frac{\pi x}{a}\right) dx \\ &= \frac{\sqrt{2}}{a} \int_{-a/2}^{a/2} \cos\left(\frac{\pi x}{2a}\right) \cos\left(\frac{\pi x}{a}\right) dx \\ &= \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2a} \int_{-a/2}^{a/2} \left[\cos\left(\frac{\pi x}{2a}\right) + \cos\left(\frac{3\pi x}{2a}\right) \right] dx \\ &= \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2a} \left[\frac{2}{\sqrt{2}} \times \frac{2a}{\pi} + \frac{2}{\sqrt{2}} \times \frac{2a}{3\pi} \right] = \frac{2}{\pi} \times \frac{4}{3} = \frac{8}{3\pi}\end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the required probability is $|c_1|^2 = \left(\frac{8}{3\pi}\right)^2$