

Provable equivalence

Let ϕ and ψ be formulas of propositional logic. We say that ϕ and ψ are provably equivalent iff (we write ‘iff’ for ‘if, and only if’ in the sequel) the sequents $\phi \vdash \psi$ and $\psi \vdash \phi$ are valid; that is, there is a proof of ψ from ϕ and another one going the other way around. As seen earlier, we denote that ϕ and ψ are provably equivalent by $\phi \equiv \psi$.

Note that, by Remark 1.12, we could just as well have defined $\phi \equiv \psi$ to mean that the sequent $(\phi \rightarrow \psi) \wedge (\psi \rightarrow \phi)$ is valid; it defines the same concept.

Examples of provably equivalent formulas are

$$\begin{array}{ll} \neg(p \wedge q) \equiv \neg p \vee \neg q & \neg p \equiv \neg(p \vee q) \vee \neg q \wedge \neg p \\ p \rightarrow q \equiv \neg q \rightarrow \neg p & p \rightarrow q \equiv \neg p \vee q \\ p \wedge q \rightarrow r \equiv r \vee \neg r & p \wedge q \rightarrow r \equiv p \rightarrow (q \rightarrow r). \end{array}$$

The reader should prove all of these six equivalences in natural deduction.