

Problem sheet 2

SOLUTIONS

① (a) (i) Let us calculate the potential of the polarised dielectric. The dipole moment of the volume element dV' is $\vec{P}(\vec{r}') dV'$, where \vec{r}' is the position of dV' . The potential of this dipole at \vec{r} is

$$d\varphi = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{\vec{P}(\vec{r}') \cdot (\vec{r} - \vec{r}')}{| \vec{r} - \vec{r}' |^3} dV' \quad \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{see Sec.} \\ 1.8 \end{array} \right\}$$

Integrating over the volume V of the dielectric, we have:

$$\varphi(\vec{r}) = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_V \frac{\vec{P}(\vec{r}') \cdot (\vec{r} - \vec{r}')}{| \vec{r} - \vec{r}' |^3} dV'.$$

$$= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_V \vec{P}(\vec{r}') \cdot \vec{\nabla}' \frac{1}{| \vec{r} - \vec{r}' |} dV'$$

↑
gradient operator
with respect to \vec{r}' .

Using $\vec{\nabla}' \cdot (\vec{P} f) = \vec{\nabla}' \cdot \vec{P} f + \vec{P} \cdot \vec{\nabla}' f$, where $f = \frac{1}{| \vec{r} - \vec{r}' |}$

we obtain:

$$\varphi(\vec{r}) = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_V \vec{\nabla}' \cdot \left(\vec{P}(\vec{r}') \frac{1}{| \vec{r} - \vec{r}' |} \right) dV' - \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_V \frac{\vec{\nabla}' \cdot \vec{P}(\vec{r}')}{| \vec{r} - \vec{r}' |} dV'$$

Applying Gauss's theorem to this term

$$\Rightarrow \varphi(\vec{r}) = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \oint_S \frac{\vec{P}(\vec{r}') \cdot d\vec{S}'}{| \vec{r} - \vec{r}' |} - \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_V \frac{\vec{\nabla}' \cdot \vec{P}(\vec{r}')}{| \vec{r} - \vec{r}' |} dV'.$$

The first term has the form of the potential due to surface charges with surface density

$\sigma_p = \vec{P} \cdot \vec{n}$, where \vec{n} is the outer normal to the surface. $[\vec{P} \cdot d\vec{S} = \underbrace{\vec{P} \cdot \vec{n}}_{\sigma_p} dS]$

The second term is the potential due to the volume distribution of charge with density

$$\rho_p = -\vec{\nabla} \cdot \vec{P}$$

(ii) By Gauss' law,

$$\vec{\nabla} \cdot \vec{E} = \frac{1}{\epsilon_0} (\rho + \rho_p),$$

where ρ is the density of free charges and ρ_p is the density of polarisation charges.

Hence:

$$\epsilon_0 \vec{\nabla} \cdot \vec{E} = \rho - \vec{\nabla} \cdot \vec{P}$$

$$\vec{\nabla} \cdot (\epsilon_0 \vec{E} + \vec{P}) = \rho,$$

$$\text{or } \underline{\vec{\nabla} \cdot \vec{D} = \rho},$$

where $\vec{D} = \epsilon_0 \vec{E} + \vec{P}$ is the electric displacement.

iii. Isotropic means that the polarisation vector \vec{P} is in the same direction as \vec{E} , and linear means that \vec{P} is proportional to \vec{E} , i.e.

$$\vec{P} = \epsilon_0 \chi \vec{E},$$

where $\chi = \text{const}$ for a given material, is the electric susceptibility.

(b) i. The system is spherically symmetric, hence, (3)

$\vec{E} = E(r) \hat{r}$ and $\vec{D} = D(r) \hat{r}$. Let the charge of the inner sphere be Q , and outer sphere $-Q$. Applying Gauss's theorem in the integral form

$\oint_S \vec{D} \cdot d\vec{S} = Q_f$ (free charge inside S) to a spherical surface of radius r , $a < r < b$, we have:

$$4\pi r^2 D(r) = Q$$

$$\Rightarrow D(r) = \frac{Q}{4\pi r^2},$$

and since $\vec{D} = \epsilon_0 \chi \vec{E}$,

$$E(r) = \frac{D(r)}{\epsilon_0 \chi} = \frac{Q}{4\pi \epsilon_0 \chi r^2}.$$

Since $\vec{E} = -\vec{\nabla} \varphi = -\frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial r} \hat{r}$ (for $\varphi = \varphi(r)$),

we have:

$$-\frac{d\varphi}{dr} = \frac{Q}{4\pi \epsilon_0 \chi r^2}$$

$$\varphi = - \int \frac{Q}{4\pi \epsilon_0 \chi r^2} dr$$

$$\varphi(r) = \frac{Q}{4\pi \epsilon_0 \chi r} + \text{const.}$$

The potential difference between the inner and outer spheres is

$$V = \varphi(a) - \varphi(b) = \frac{Q}{4\pi \epsilon_0 \chi a} + \text{const} - \frac{Q}{4\pi \epsilon_0 \chi b} - \text{const}$$

$$\Rightarrow V = \frac{Q}{4\pi \epsilon_0 \chi} \left(\frac{1}{a} - \frac{1}{b} \right) = \frac{Q}{4\pi \epsilon_0 \chi} \frac{b-a}{ab}.$$

Hence, the capacitance $C = \frac{Q}{V} = \frac{Q}{4\pi \epsilon_0 \chi} \frac{ab}{b-a}$.

ii. For $b-a \ll a, b$, $a \approx b$ and $ab \approx a^2$ (4)

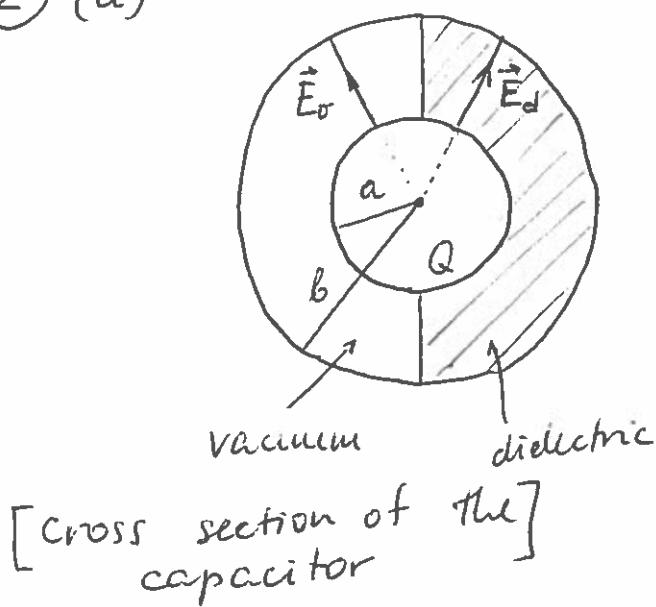
Denoting $b-a = d$, we have:

$$C = 4\pi\epsilon \frac{\epsilon a^2}{d} = \epsilon_0 \epsilon \frac{4\pi a^2}{d}$$

$$\Rightarrow C = \epsilon_0 \epsilon \frac{A}{d},$$

where $A = 4\pi a^2$ is the total area of either of the spherical plates. This formula describes the capacitance of a parallel-plate condenser with plates of area A and spacing d , filled with dielectric of constant ϵ .

② (a)



By symmetry, the electric field and displacement \vec{D} are in the radial direction. Denoting the quantities in vacuum by subscript "v" and in dielectric, by "d", we have:

$$\vec{E}_v = E_v(r) \hat{r}, \quad \vec{E}_d = E_d(r) \hat{r}$$

From the boundary condition at the interface of two dielectrics, $E_{vt} = E_{dt}$, we have

$$E_v(r) = E_d(r), \quad (1)$$

since the electric field is parallel to the interface at the interface.

Applying Gauss's law to a sphere of radius r , $a < r < b$, $\oint_S \vec{D} \cdot d\vec{S} = Q$ (charge on inner sphere),

The left-hand side is the sum of two contributions, [5
one for each hemisphere:

$$2\pi r^2 D_r(r) + 2\pi r^2 D_d(r) = Q$$

Using $\vec{D} = \epsilon_0 \chi \vec{E}$, we have:

$$2\pi r^2 \epsilon_0 E_r(r) + 2\pi r^2 \epsilon_0 \chi E_d(r) = Q,$$

and using (1),

$$2\pi r^2 \epsilon_0 (1+\chi) E_r(r) = Q$$

$$\Rightarrow E_r(r) = \frac{Q}{2\pi \epsilon_0 (1+\chi) r^2} \quad (= E_d(r)).$$

(b) From the boundary condition outside the conductor, $D_n = 0$, we have:

$$\sigma_r = D_r = \epsilon_0 E_r(a) = \frac{Q}{2\pi (1+\chi) a^2},$$

and

$$\sigma_d = D_d = \epsilon_0 \chi E_d(a) = \frac{\chi Q}{2\pi (1+\chi) a^2}.$$

[It is easy to check that the total charge on the inner sphere is $\sigma_r 2\pi a^2 + \sigma_d 2\pi a^2 = Q$.]

(c) From $\sigma_p = \vec{P} \cdot \vec{n}$, and taking into account that the outward normal \vec{n} on the inner sphere bounding the dielectric is $\vec{n} = -\hat{r}$, we have:

$$\sigma_p = -P(a).$$

$$\text{From } \vec{D} = \epsilon_0 \vec{E} + \vec{P}, \quad P(a) = D_d(a) - \epsilon_0 E_d(a),$$

(6)

$$\Rightarrow P(a) = \epsilon_0 x E_d(a) - \epsilon_0 E_d(a)$$

$$= \epsilon_0 (x-1) E_d(a)$$

$$= \frac{(x-1) Q}{2\pi (1+x) a^2} \quad \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Using the answer} \\ \text{from part (a)} \end{array} \right\}$$

$$\Rightarrow \sigma_p = - \frac{(x-1) Q}{2\pi (1+x) a^2} = \underline{\underline{\frac{(1-x) Q}{2\pi (1+x) a^2}}}.$$

Note: since $x > 1$, $\sigma_p < 0$, which makes sense, since the negative polarisation charges form near the positively charged inner sphere.

$$(d) \quad \vec{E} = -\vec{\nabla}\varphi,$$

and since the electric field is in the radial direction,

$$E_r(r) = - \frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial r},$$

so that $\frac{d\varphi}{dr} = - \frac{Q}{2\pi\epsilon_0(1+x)r^2}$

$$\varphi = - \int \frac{Q}{2\pi\epsilon_0(1+x)r^2} dr$$

$$\varphi(r) = + \frac{Q}{2\pi\epsilon_0(1+x)r} + \text{const}$$

The potential difference:

$$V = \varphi(a) - \varphi(b) = + \frac{Q}{2\pi\epsilon_0(1+x)a} - \frac{Q}{2\pi\epsilon_0(1+x)b}$$

$$= \underline{\underline{\frac{Q}{2\pi\epsilon_0(1+x)} \left(\frac{1}{a} - \frac{1}{b} \right)}}.$$

(e) The capacitance, $C = \frac{Q}{V}$, is

$$C = \frac{2\pi\epsilon_0(1+x)}{\frac{1}{a} - \frac{1}{b}} = 2\pi\epsilon_0(1+x) \underbrace{\frac{ab}{b-a}}$$

$$= 2\pi\epsilon_0 \underbrace{\frac{ab}{b-a}} + 2\pi\epsilon_0 x \underbrace{\frac{ab}{b-a}}.$$

This is $\frac{1}{2}$ of the capacitance of a capacitor consisting of two spheres of radii a and b with vacuum inside.

This is the capacitance of the same capacitor with the dielectric inside.

- ③ (a) On the cross section of the capacitor shown, we defined regions ① ($a < r < b$), ② ($b < r < c$) and ③ ($c < r < d$).

Region ② is the dielectric.

Because of the symmetry of the problem, the electric field and displacement are along the radius:

$$\vec{E} = E(r) \hat{r}, \quad \vec{D} = D(r) \hat{r}.$$

Using Gauss's law $\oint \vec{D} \cdot d\vec{s} = Q_f$ for a sphere of radius r ($a < r < d$), we have

$$4\pi r^2 D(r) = Q,$$

since the charge Q on the inner sphere is the only free charge enclosed by the surface.

$$\Rightarrow D(r) = \frac{Q}{4\pi r^2}.$$

Then using $\vec{D} = \epsilon_0 \vec{E}$ (regions ① and ③) (8)
 and $\vec{D} = \epsilon \vec{E}$ (region ②), we have:

$$E_1(r) = \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0 r^2} \quad - \text{region 1}$$

$$E_2(r) = \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon r^2} \quad - \text{region 2}$$

$$E_3(r) = \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0 r^2} \quad - \text{region 3}$$

The potential difference between the inner and outer conducting spheres is found from $\vec{E} = -\vec{\nabla}\phi$, which

for $\vec{E} = E(r) \hat{r}$ reads: $E(r) = -\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial r}$.

$$V = \phi(a) - \phi(d) = - \int_a^d d\phi = + \int_a^d E(r) dr$$

$$= \int_a^b E_1(r) dr + \int_b^c E_2(r) dr + \int_c^d E_3(r) dr$$

$$= \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_a^b \frac{dr}{r^2} + \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon} \int_b^c \frac{dr}{r^2} + \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_c^d \frac{dr}{r^2}$$

$$= \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \left(\frac{1}{a} - \frac{1}{b} \right) + \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon} \left(\frac{1}{b} - \frac{1}{c} \right) + \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \left(\frac{1}{c} - \frac{1}{d} \right)$$

$$= \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \left[\frac{1}{a} - \frac{1}{b} + \frac{\epsilon_0 - \epsilon}{\epsilon} \left(\frac{1}{b} - \frac{1}{c} \right) + \frac{1}{c} - \frac{1}{d} \right]$$

$$= \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \left[\frac{1}{a} - \frac{1}{d} + \left(\frac{\epsilon_0}{\epsilon} - 1 \right) \frac{1}{b} - \left(\frac{\epsilon_0}{\epsilon} - 1 \right) \frac{1}{c} \right]$$

$$= \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon} \left[\frac{1}{a} - \frac{1}{d} + \frac{\epsilon_0 - \epsilon}{\epsilon} \left(\frac{1}{b} - \frac{1}{c} \right) \right]$$

Multiplying by $\frac{4\pi\epsilon_0}{Q}$, we have:

$$\underline{\underline{4\pi\epsilon_0 \frac{V}{Q} = \frac{4\pi\epsilon_0}{c} = \frac{1}{a} - \frac{1}{d} + \frac{\epsilon_0 - \epsilon}{\epsilon} \left(\frac{1}{b} - \frac{1}{c} \right)}}, \text{ as required.}$$

(b) From $\vec{D} = \epsilon_0 \vec{E} + \vec{P}$, and taking into account the (radial) direction of \vec{D} and \vec{E} vectors,

$$\begin{aligned}\vec{P} &= \vec{D} - \epsilon_0 \vec{E} = D(r) \hat{r} - \epsilon_0 E_z(r) \hat{r} \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} E_z(r) \text{ is inside} \\ \text{the dielectric} \end{array} \right. \\ &= \left(\frac{Q}{4\pi r^2} - \epsilon_0 \frac{Q}{4\pi \epsilon r^2} \right) \hat{r} \\ &= \underline{\underline{\frac{\epsilon - \epsilon_0}{4\pi \epsilon} \frac{Q}{r^2} \hat{r}}}, \text{ as required.}\end{aligned}$$

(c) Polarisation charges : $\rho_p = -\vec{D} \cdot \vec{P}$ (volume)

$$\sigma_p = \vec{P} \cdot \vec{n} \quad (\text{where } \vec{n} \text{ is normal outer with respect to the dielectric}).$$

The radial component of the divergence gives :

$$\begin{aligned}\rho_p &= -\frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left(r^2 P(r) \right) \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Here we use} \\ \vec{P} = P(r) \hat{r} \end{array} \right. \\ &= -\frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left(r^2 \frac{\epsilon - \epsilon_0}{4\pi \epsilon} \frac{Q}{r^2} \right) \\ &= -\frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left(\frac{\epsilon - \epsilon_0}{4\pi \epsilon} Q \right) = 0.\end{aligned}$$

The surface charge density on the surface at $r=b$ is obtained using $\vec{n} = -\hat{r}$:

$$\sigma_p = \frac{\epsilon - \epsilon_0}{4\pi \epsilon} \frac{Q}{b^2} \hat{r} \cdot (-\hat{r}) = -\underline{\underline{\frac{\epsilon - \epsilon_0}{4\pi \epsilon} \frac{Q}{b^2}}}.$$

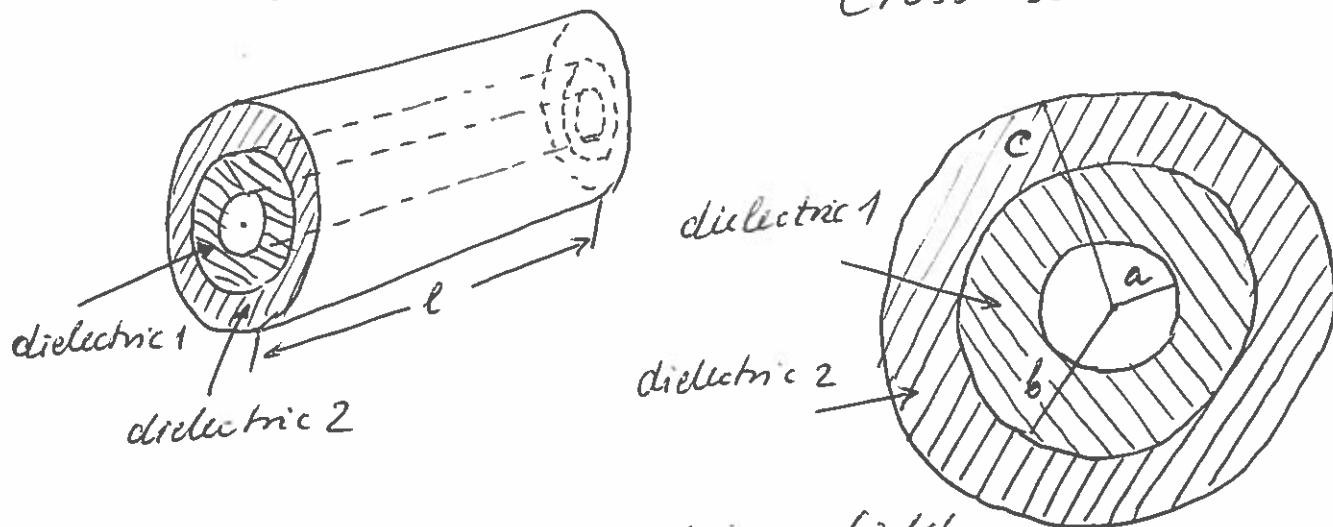
On the dielectric surface $r=c$, $\vec{n} = \hat{r}$, so that

$$\sigma_p = \frac{\epsilon - \epsilon_0}{4\pi \epsilon} \frac{Q}{c^2} \hat{r} \cdot \hat{r} = \underline{\underline{\frac{\epsilon - \epsilon_0}{4\pi \epsilon} \frac{Q}{c^2}}}.$$

Note : total polarisation charge : $-\frac{\epsilon - \epsilon_0}{4\pi \epsilon} \frac{Q}{b^2} 4\pi b^2 + \frac{\epsilon - \epsilon_0}{4\pi \epsilon} \frac{Q}{c^2} 4\pi c^2 = 0$

- (4) The diagram below shows a section of the cable of length l . (10)

Cross sectional view:



By symmetry, the electric field and displacement are in the radial direction, perpendicular to the axis of the cylinders:

$$\vec{D} = D(\rho) \hat{\rho}, \quad \vec{E} = E(\rho) \hat{\rho}, \quad (1)$$

where ρ is the distance from the axis. [We use cylindrical coordinates here with the z axis being the axis of the cylinders.]

Assuming that the length l of the inner cylinder carries charge Q we apply Gauss's law

$\oint_S \vec{D} \cdot d\vec{S} = Q$, taking S to be a cylinder of radius ρ and length l , coaxial to the other cylinders.

Since \vec{D} is \perp to the axis, there is no flux through the bases of the cylinder, so we have:

$$D(\rho) \underbrace{2\pi\rho l}_{\text{area of the cylindrical surface}} = Q$$

$$\Rightarrow D(\rho) = \frac{Q}{2\pi\rho l}. \quad (2)$$

From $\vec{D} = \epsilon_0 \chi \vec{E}$ we have inside dielectric (11)

$$1: E_1(\rho) = \frac{D(\rho)}{\epsilon_0 \chi_1} = \frac{Q}{2\pi \epsilon_0 \chi_1 \rho l} \quad , \quad (3)$$

and inside dielectric 2:

$$E_2(\rho) = \frac{D(\rho)}{\epsilon_0 \chi_2} = \frac{Q}{2\pi \epsilon_0 \chi_2 \rho l} \quad . \quad (4)$$

Using these we can find the potential difference:

$$\begin{aligned} V &= \int_a^c \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{p} = \int_a^b E_1(\rho) d\rho + \int_b^c E_2(\rho) d\rho \\ &= \frac{Q}{2\pi \epsilon_0 l} \left[\frac{1}{\chi_1} \int_a^b \frac{d\rho}{\rho} + \frac{1}{\chi_2} \int_b^c \frac{d\rho}{\rho} \right] \\ &= \frac{Q}{2\pi \epsilon_0 l} \left[\frac{1}{\chi_1} (\ln b - \ln a) + \frac{1}{\chi_2} (\ln c - \ln b) \right] \\ &= \frac{Q}{2\pi \epsilon_0 l} \left(\frac{1}{\chi_1} \ln \frac{b}{a} + \frac{1}{\chi_2} \ln \frac{c}{b} \right) \end{aligned}$$

This gives: $\frac{Q}{2\pi \epsilon_0 l} = \frac{V}{\frac{1}{\chi_1} \ln \frac{b}{a} + \frac{1}{\chi_2} \ln \frac{c}{b}} \quad ,$

so that $\vec{D} = \frac{\epsilon_0 V}{\frac{1}{\chi_1} \ln \frac{b}{a} + \frac{1}{\chi_2} \ln \frac{c}{b}} \cdot \frac{\hat{\rho}}{\rho} \quad (\text{from (1) and (2)})$

$$\vec{E}_1 = \frac{V}{\frac{1}{\chi_1} \ln \frac{b}{a} + \frac{1}{\chi_2} \ln \frac{c}{b}} \cdot \frac{\hat{\rho}}{\chi_1 \rho} \quad (\text{from (1) and (3)})$$

$$\vec{E}_2 = \frac{V}{\frac{1}{\chi_1} \ln \frac{b}{a} + \frac{1}{\chi_2} \ln \frac{c}{b}} \cdot \frac{\hat{\rho}}{\chi_2 \rho} \quad (\text{from (1) and (4)})$$

Using $\vec{D} = \epsilon_0 \vec{E} + \vec{P}$ we find

$$\vec{P} = \vec{D} - \epsilon_0 \vec{E} \quad .$$

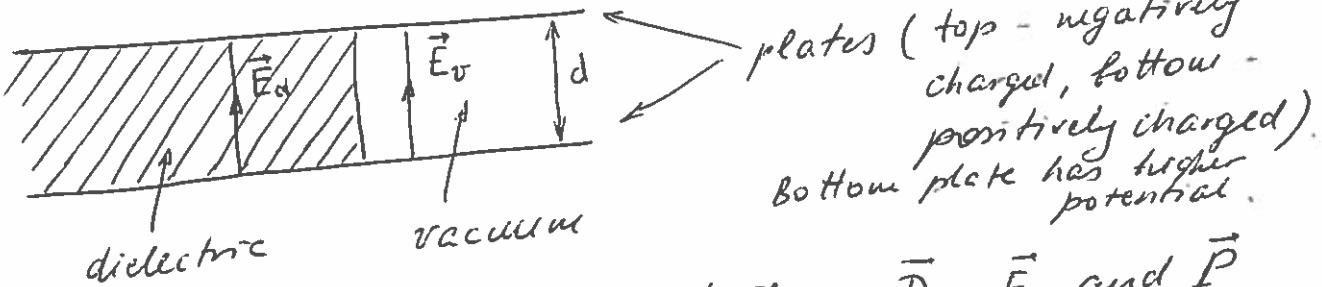
In dielectric 1:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \vec{P}_1 &= \frac{\epsilon_0 V}{\frac{1}{x_1} \ln \frac{b}{a} + \frac{1}{x_2} \ln \frac{c}{b}} \left(1 - \frac{1}{x_1}\right) \frac{\hat{P}}{P} \\
 &= \frac{\epsilon_0 (x_1 - 1) V}{\ln \frac{b}{a} + \frac{x_1}{x_2} \ln \frac{c}{b}} \frac{\hat{P}}{P} \\
 &= \underline{\underline{\frac{\epsilon_0 (x_1 - 1) x_2 V}{x_2 \ln \frac{b}{a} + x_1 \ln \frac{c}{b}} \frac{\hat{P}}{P}}}, \text{ as required.}
 \end{aligned}$$

In dielectric 2:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \vec{P}_2 &= \frac{\epsilon_0 V}{\frac{1}{x_1} \ln \frac{b}{a} + \frac{1}{x_2} \ln \frac{c}{b}} \left(1 - \frac{1}{x_2}\right) \frac{\hat{P}}{P} \\
 &= \underline{\underline{\frac{\epsilon_0 (x_2 - 1) x_1 V}{x_2 \ln \frac{b}{a} + x_1 \ln \frac{c}{b}} \frac{\hat{P}}{P}}}, \text{ as required.}
 \end{aligned}$$

(5)



By symmetry, all three vectors, \vec{D} , \vec{E} and \vec{P} are perpendicular to the plates everywhere. [Here we neglect the edge effects since d is small compared with the dimensions of the plates.]

Between the plates $\nabla \cdot \vec{D} = 0 \Rightarrow \underline{\underline{\vec{D} = \text{const}}}$

$$E_v = \frac{D_v}{\epsilon_0}, \quad E_d = \frac{D_d}{\epsilon_0 x}$$

Considering the boundary dielectric/vacuum, from (13)
 $E_{1t} - E_{2t} = 0$ we deduce that $E_v = E_d$.

This gives the potential difference $\Delta\varphi = \int \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{r}$
as $\Delta\varphi = E_v d = E_d d$.

$$\Rightarrow E_v = E_d = \frac{\Delta\varphi}{d}.$$

$$(b) D_v = \epsilon_0 E_v = \frac{\epsilon_0 \Delta\varphi}{d}$$

$$D_d = \epsilon_0 \chi E_d = \frac{\epsilon_0 \chi \Delta\varphi}{d}.$$

From $D_n = 5$, on the bottom plate in contact with the dielectric, the surface charge density σ

$$\sigma_d = D_d = \frac{\epsilon_0 \chi \Delta\varphi}{d},$$

and the part of the plate exposed to vacuum,

$$\sigma_v = D_v = \frac{\epsilon_0 \Delta\varphi}{d}.$$

(c) The polarisation surface charge density $\sigma_p = \vec{P} \cdot \vec{n}$, where \vec{n} is the outer normal to the dielectric surface.

$$\text{From } \vec{D} = \epsilon_0 \vec{E} + \vec{P}, \quad \vec{P} = \vec{D} - \epsilon_0 \vec{E},$$

$$\text{so } P = D_d - \epsilon_0 E_d = \frac{\epsilon_0 \chi \Delta\varphi}{d} - \frac{\epsilon_0 \Delta\varphi}{d} = \frac{\epsilon_0 (\chi - 1) \Delta\varphi}{d}$$

Since the outer normal \vec{n} is downwards on the diagram (near the bottom plate), $\sigma_p = - \frac{\epsilon_0 (\chi - 1) \Delta\varphi}{d}$.

$$(d) \sigma_d + \sigma_p = \frac{\epsilon_0 \chi \Delta\varphi}{d} - \frac{\epsilon_0 (\chi - 1) \Delta\varphi}{d} = \frac{\epsilon_0 \Delta\varphi}{d} = \sigma_v,$$

as required.