

3. Magnetic Barrier

Consider the quantum mechanics of a charged particle moving in the $x - y$ plane subject to a magnetic field $B_z = B_0\theta(x)\theta(d - x)$. In other words, the magnetic field is constant in a strip of width d and zero everywhere else. Including a vector potential in the Schrödinger equation is very simple: just replace ∇ in the kinetic energy by $\nabla - \frac{ie}{\hbar c}\vec{A}(\vec{x})$. We will study the problem of scattering from this ‘barrier’ of an electron incident from $x < 0$ with momentum parallel to the x -axis. Note: you must choose a gauge for the vector potential describing the B field — the gauge in which $A_x = A_z = 0$ everywhere, with only $A_y(x)$ non-vanishing is particularly convenient here.

- (a) For an incident wave $\exp(ikx)$ there will, in general, be a transmitted wave $T \exp(i\hat{k}x)$ and a reflected wave $R \exp(-ikx)$. Show how the transmitted wave vector \hat{k} is determined by k and B_0d .
- (b) For a given choice of B_0d , you will find that, below a certain critical energy E_0 , \hat{k} is imaginary. Show that a classical description of how an electron moves in the presence of a magnetic strip leads to the same critical energy.
- (c) When \hat{k} is real, there is a transmitted wave that propagates to $x = +\infty$. Calculate the transmitted probability flux and show that, despite the fact that the wave function depends only on x , the flux is *not* along the x -axis! Give a classical interpretation of this quantum fact.
- (d) Show that in the limit $d \rightarrow 0$, $B_0 \rightarrow \infty$, with B_0d fixed, this effectively one-dimensional scattering problem can be solved exactly, and find the reflection and transmission coefficients R and T .