Chapter 9

Syntax Reference

This chapter summarises the syntax of Haskell 98.

9.1 Notational Conventions

These notational conventions are used for presenting syntax:

BNF-like syntax is used throughout, with productions having the form:

$$nonterm \rightarrow alt_1 \mid alt_2 \mid \ldots \mid alt_n$$

There are some families of nonterminals indexed by precedence levels (written as a superscript). Similarly, the nonterminals op, varop, and conop may have a double index: a letter l, r, or n for left-, right- or nonassociativity and a precedence level. A precedence-level variable i ranges from 0 to 9; an associativity variable a varies over $\{l, r, n\}$. Thus, for example

```
aexp 	o (exp^{i+1} qop^{(a,i)})
```

actually stands for 30 productions, with 10 substitutions for i and 3 for a.

In both the lexical and the context-free syntax, there are some ambiguities that are to be resolved by making grammatical phrases as long as possible, proceeding from left to right (in shift-reduce parsing, resolving shift/reduce conflicts by shifting). In the lexical syntax, this is the "maximal munch" rule. In the context-free syntax, this means that conditionals, let-expressions, and lambda abstractions extend to the right as far as possible.

9.2 Lexical Syntax

```
{ lexeme | whitespace }
program
lexeme
                    qvarid \mid qconid \mid qvarsym \mid qconsym
                    literal \mid special \mid reserved op \mid reserved id
                    integer \mid float \mid char \mid string
literal
special
                    (|)|,|;|[|]|`|{|}
                    whitestuff { whitestuff }
whitespace \rightarrow
white stuff
                    white char \mid comment \mid ncomment
white char
                    newline \mid vertab \mid space \mid tab \mid uniWhite
newline
                    return linefeed | return | linefeed | formfeed
return
                    a carriage return
                    a line feed
line feed
vertab
                    a vertical tab
form feed
                    a form feed
space
                    a space
tab
                    a horizontal tab
uniWhite
                    any Unicode character defined as whitespace
              \rightarrow
                    dashes [any_{\langle symbol \rangle} \{any\}] newline
comment
dashes
                    -- {-}
opencom
                    { -
closecom
                    opencom\ ANYseg\ \{ncomment\ ANYseg\}\ closecom
ncomment \rightarrow
ANYseq
                    \{ANY\}_{\langle\{ANY\}\ (opencom \mid closecom)\ \{ANY\}\rangle}
ANY
                    graphic | whitechar
                    qraphic \mid space \mid tab
any
                    small \mid large \mid symbol \mid digit \mid special \mid: \mid " \mid '
qraphic
                    ascSmall \mid uniSmall \mid \_
small
                    a | b | ... | z
ascSmall
```

```
uniSmall
                    any Unicode lowercase letter
             \rightarrow
large
                    ascLarge \mid uniLarge
ascLarge
                    A | B | ... | Z
uniLarge
                    any uppercase or titlecase Unicode letter
                    ascSymbol \mid uniSymbol_{\langle special \mid \_ \mid : \mid " \mid ' \rangle}
symbol
ascSymbol \rightarrow
                    ! | # | $ | % | & | * | + | . | / | < | = | > | ? | @
                    \ | ^ | | | - | ~
uniSymbol \rightarrow
                    any Unicode symbol or punctuation
                    ascDigit \mid uniDigit
digit
                    0 | 1 | ... | 9
ascDigit
uniDigit
                    any Unicode decimal digit
                    0 | 1 | ... | 7
octit
              \rightarrow
                    digit \mid A \mid \ldots \mid F \mid a \mid \ldots \mid f
hexit
             \rightarrow
varid
                    (small \mid large \mid digit \mid ' \})_{(reservedid)}
                    large { small | large | digit | ' }
conid
                   case | class | data | default | deriving | do | else
reservedid \rightarrow
                    if | import | in | infix | infix1 | infixr | instance
                    let | module | newtype | of | then | type | where |
varsym
                   (symbol \{symbol \mid :\})_{(reserved on \mid dashes)}
                   (: \{symbol \mid :\})_{\langle reservedop \rangle}
consym
                    ..|:|::|=|\|||<-|->|@|~|=>
reservedop \rightarrow
varid
                                                                           (variables)
conid
                                                                           (constructors)
tyvar
                    varid
                                                                           (type variables)
                    conid
                                                                           (type constructors)
tycon
tycls
                    conid
                                                                           (type classes)
modid
                    conid
                                                                           (modules)
qvarid
                    [modid .] varid
                   [modid .] conid
qconid
                   [ modid . ] tycon
qtycon
qtycls
                    [ modid . ] tycls
              \rightarrow
                    [modid .] varsym
qvarsym
              \rightarrow
qconsym
                    [modid \cdot ]consym
decimal
                    digit\{digit\}
octal
                    octit { octit }
                    hexit\{hexit\}
hexadecimal \rightarrow
```

```
integer
                     decimal
                     00 octal | 00 octal
                     Ox hexadecimal | OX hexadecimal
                     decimal • decimal [exponent]
float
                     decimal exponent
                     (e \mid E) [+ \mid -] decimal
exponent
char
                     '(graphic_{\langle , + \setminus \rangle} \mid space \mid escape_{\langle \setminus \& \rangle}) '
string
                     " \{graphic_{(" \mid \ \ )} \mid space \mid escape \mid gap\}"
escape
                     a | b | f | n | r | t | v | \ | " | ' | &
charesc
                     \hat{\ } cntrl \mid \mathtt{NUL} \mid \mathtt{SOH} \mid \mathtt{STX} \mid \mathtt{ETX} \mid \mathtt{EOT} \mid \mathtt{ENQ} \mid \mathtt{ACK}
ascii
                     BEL | BS | HT | LF | VT | FF | CR | SO | SI | DLE
                     DC1 | DC2 | DC3 | DC4 | NAK | SYN | ETB | CAN
                     EM | SUB | ESC | FS | GS | RS | US | SP | DEL
                     ascLarge \mid @ \mid [ \mid \setminus \mid ] \mid ^ \mid \_
cntrl
                     qap
```

9.3 Layout

Section 2.7 gives an informal discussion of the layout rule. This section defines it more precisely.

The meaning of a Haskell program may depend on its *layout*. The effect of layout on its meaning can be completely described by adding braces and semicolons in places determined by the layout. The meaning of this augmented program is now layout insensitive.

The effect of layout is specified in this section by describing how to add braces and semicolons to a laid-out program. The specification takes the form of a function L that performs the translation. The input to L is:

- A stream of lexemes as specified by the lexical syntax in the Haskell report, with the following additional tokens:
 - If a let, where, do, or of keyword is not followed by the lexeme {, the token {n} is inserted after the keyword, where n is the indentation of the next lexeme if there is one, or 0 if the end of file has been reached.
 - If the first lexeme of a module is not $\{$ or module, then it is preceded by $\{n\}$ where n is the indentation of the lexeme.
 - Where the start of a lexeme is preceded only by white space on the same line, this lexeme is preceded by < n > where n is the indentation of the lexeme, provided that it is not, as a consequence of the first two rules, preceded by $\{n\}$. (NB: a string literal may span multiple lines Section 2.6. So in the fragment

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There is no < n > inserted before the \Bill, because it is not the beginning of a complete lexeme; nor before the $_{I}$, because it is not preceded only by white space.)

- A stack of "layout contexts", in which each element is either:
 - Zero, indicating that the enclosing context is explicit (i.e. the programmer supplied the opening brace. If the innermost context is 0, then no layout tokens will be inserted until either the enclosing context ends or a new context is pushed.
 - A positive integer, which is the indentation column of the enclosing layout context.

The "indentation" of a lexeme is the column number of the first character of that lexeme; the indentation of a line is the indentation of its leftmost lexeme. To determine the column number, assume a fixed-width font with the following conventions:

- The characters newline, return, linefeed, and formfeed, all start a new line.
- The first column is designated column 1, not 0.
- Tab stops are 8 characters apart.
- A tab character causes the insertion of enough spaces to align the current position with the next tab stop.

For the purposes of the layout rule, Unicode characters in a source program are considered to be of the same, fixed, width as an ASCII character. However, to avoid visual confusion, programmers should avoid writing programs in which the meaning of implicit layout depends on the width of non-space characters.

The application

$$L \ tokens \ \lceil$$

delivers a layout-insensitive translation of tokens, where tokens is the result of lexically analysing a module and adding column-number indicators to it as described above. The definition of L is as follows, where we use ":" as a stream construction operator, and "[]" for the empty stream.

Note 1. A nested context must be further indented than the enclosing context (n > m). If not, L fails, and the compiler should indicate a layout error. An example is:

Here, the definition of p is indented less than the indentation of the enclosing context, which is set in this case by the definition of h.

- **Note 2.** If the first token after a where (say) is not indented more than the enclosing layout context, then the block must be empty, so empty braces are inserted. The $\{n\}$ token is replaced by $\langle n \rangle$, to mimic the situation if the empty braces had been explicit.
- **Note 3.** By matching against 0 for the current layout context, we ensure that an explicit close brace can only match an explicit open brace. A parse error results if an explicit close brace matches an implicit open brace.
- **Note 4.** This clause means that all brace pairs are treated as explicit layout contexts, including labelled construction and update (Section 3.15). This is a difference between this formulation and Haskell 1.4.
- **Note 5.** The side condition parse-error(t) is to be interpreted as follows: if the tokens generated so far by L together with the next token t represent an invalid prefix of the Haskell grammar,

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and the tokens generated so far by L followed by the token "}" represent a valid prefix of the Haskell grammar, then parse-error(t) is true.

The test m/=0 checks that an implicitly-added closing brace would match an implicit open brace.

Note 6. At the end of the input, any pending close-braces are inserted. It is an error at this point to be within a non-layout context (i.e. m = 0).

If none of the rules given above matches, then the algorithm fails. It can fail for instance when the end of the input is reached, and a non-layout context is active, since the close brace is missing. Some error conditions are not detected by the algorithm, although they could be: for example let }.

Note 1 implements the feature that layout processing can be stopped prematurely by a parse error. For example

let
$$x = e$$
; $y = x$ in e'

is valid, because it translates to

let {
$$x = e; y = x } in e'$$

The close brace is inserted due to the parse error rule above. The parse-error rule is hard to implement in its full generality, because doing so involves fixities. For example, the expression

do a
$$==$$
 b $==$ c

has a single unambiguous (albeit probably type-incorrect) parse, namely

$$(do \{ a == b \}) == c$$

because (==) is non-associative. Programmers are therefore advised to avoid writing code that requires the parser to insert a closing brace in such situations.

9.4 Literate Comments

The "literate comment" convention, first developed by Richard Bird and Philip Wadler for Orwell, and inspired in turn by Donald Knuth's "literate programming", is an alternative style for encoding Haskell source code. The literate style encourages comments by making them the default. A line in which ">" is the first character is treated as part of the program; all other lines are comment.

The program text is recovered by taking only those lines beginning with ">", and replacing the leading ">" with a space. Layout and comments apply exactly as described in Chapter 9 in the resulting text.

To capture some cases where one omits an ">" by mistake, it is an error for a program line to appear adjacent to a non-blank comment line, where a line is taken as blank if it consists only of whitespace.

By convention, the style of comment is indicated by the file extension, with ".hs" indicating a usual Haskell file and ".lhs" indicating a literate Haskell file. Using this style, a simple factorial program would be:

An alternative style of literate programming is particularly suitable for use with the LaTeX text processing system. In this convention, only those parts of the literate program that are entirely enclosed between \begin{code}...\end{code} delimiters are treated as program text; all other lines are comment. More precisely:

- Program code begins on the first line following a line that begins \begin{code}.
- Program code ends just before a subsequent line that begins \end{code} (ignoring string literals, of course).

It is not necessary to insert additional blank lines before or after these delimiters, though it may be stylistically desirable. For example,

```
\documentstyle{article}
\begin{document}
\section{Introduction}
This is a trivial program that prints the first 20 factorials.
\begin{code}
main :: IO ()
main = print [ (n, product [1..n]) | n <- [1..20]]
\end{code}
\end{document}</pre>
```

This style uses the same file extension. It is not advisable to mix these two styles in the same file.

9.5 Context-Free Syntax

```
module
                 module modid [exports] where body
                  body
body
                 { impdecls ; topdecls }
                  { impdecls }
                  { topdecls }
impdecls
            \rightarrow impdecl_1; ...; impdecl_n
                                                                  (n \geq 1)
               (export_1, \ldots, export_n[,])
exports
                                                                  (n \geq \theta)
export
                  qtycon[(..) \mid (cname_1, ..., cname_n)] \quad (n \geq 0)
                  qtycls[(..)|(qvar_1,...,qvar_n)] (n \geq 0)
                 module \ modid
impdecl
                 import [qualified] modid [as modid] [impspec]
                                                                  (empty declaration)
                  ( import_1 , ..., import_n [ , ] )
                                                                  (n \geq \theta)
impspec
                 hiding ( import_1 , ..., import_n [ , ] )
                                                                 (n \geq \theta)
import
                 tycon[(..)|(cname_1,...,cname_n)] (n \geq 0)
                  tycls[(..) \mid (var_1, ..., var_n)] (n \ge 0)
cname
            \rightarrow
                  var | con
            \rightarrow topdecl_1 ; \dots ; topdecl_n
top decls
                                                                  (n \geq \theta)
topdecl
            \rightarrow type simple type = type
                 data [context =>] simpletype = constrs [deriving]
                 newtype [context =>] simpletype = newconstr [deriving]
                 class [scontext =>] tycls tyvar [where cdecls]
                  instance [scontext =>] qtycls inst [where idecls]
                 default (type_1, ..., type_n)
                                                                  (n \geq \theta)
                  decl
decls
                  \{ decl_1 ; \ldots ; decl_n \}
                                                                  (n \geq \theta)
decl
                 gendecl
```

```
(funlhs \mid pat^{\theta}) rhs
cdecls
                    { cdecl_1; ...; cdecl_n }
                                                                        (n > \theta)
cdecl
                   gendecl
                   (funlhs \mid var) rhs
idecls
                   { idecl_1 ; ...; idecl_n }
                                                                         (n \geq \theta)
idecl
                    (funlhs \mid var) rhs
                                                                         (empty)
gendecl
                    vars :: [context =>] type
                                                                         (type signature)
                   fixity [integer] ops
                                                                         (fixity declaration)
                                                                         (empty declaration)
                                                                         (n \geq 1)
ops
                   op_1 , ... , op_n
                   var_1 , ..., var_n
                                                                         (n \geq 1)
vars
fixity
                   infix1 | infixr | infix
                   btype [-> type]
                                                                         (function type)
type
btype
                  [btype] atype
                                                                         (type application)
atype
                    gtycon
                   tyvar
                    ( type_1 , ... , type_k )
                                                                         (tuple type, k > 2)
                    [ type ]
                                                                         (list type)
                    ( type )
                                                                         (parenthesized constructor)
gtycon
                   qtycon
                                                                         (unit type)
                    ()
                    []
                                                                         (list constructor)
                    (->)
                                                                         (function constructor)
                    (, \{, \})
                                                                         (tupling constructors)
context
                   class
                    ( class_1 , ..., class_n )
                                                                        (n \geq \theta)
class
                   qtycls tyvar
                    qtycls ( tyvar\ atype_1 ... atype_n )
                                                                        (n \geq 1)
scontext
                   simple class
                    ( simple class_1 , ... , simple class_n )
                                                                        (n \geq \theta)
simple class \rightarrow
                    qtycls tyvar
simple type \rightarrow tycon tyvar_1 \dots tyvar_k
                                                                         (k \geq \theta)
```

```
constr_1 \mid \ldots \mid constr_n
constrs
                                                                               (n \geq 1)
                     con[!] atype_1 ... [!] atype_k
                                                                               (arity con = k, k \geq 0)
constr
                     (btype | ! atype) conop (btype | ! atype)
                                                                               (infix conop)
                     con \{ fielddecl_1, \dots, fielddecl_n \}
                                                                               (n \geq \theta)
newconstr
                     con atype
              \rightarrow
                     con { var :: type }
fielddecl
                     vars :: (type \mid ! atype)
deriving
               \rightarrow deriving (dclass \mid (dclass_1, \ldots, dclass_n))(n \geq 0)
dclass
                     qtycls
inst
                     qtycon
                     ( gtycon\ tyvar_1 ... tyvar_k )
                                                                               (k \geq 0, tyvars distinct)
                                                                               (k \geq 2, tyvars distinct)
                     ( tyvar_1 , ..., tyvar_k )
                     [ tyvar ]
                      ( tyvar_1 \rightarrow tyvar_2 )
                                                                               tyvar_1 and tyvar_2 distinct
funlhs
                    var apat { apat }
                     pat^{i+1} \ varop^{(a,i)} \ pat^{i+1}
                     lpat^i \ varop^{(l,i)} \ pat^{i+1}
                     pat^{i+1} \ varop^{(r,i)} \ rpat^i
                     (funlhs) apat { apat }
                     = exp [where decls]
rhs
                     gdrhs [where decls]
gdrhs
                     gd = exp [gdrhs]
                      | exp^{\theta}
gd
                     exp^{\theta} :: [context =>] type
                                                                               (expression type signature)
exp
                     exp^{i+1} [qop^{(\mathbf{n},i)} exp^{i+1}]
exp^i
                     lexp^i
                     rexp^i
                    (lexp^i \mid exp^{i+1}) \ qop^{(l,i)} \ exp^{i+1}
lexp^i
lexp^6
                     -exp^{\gamma}
                  exp^{i+1} qop^{(\mathbf{r},i)} (rexp^i \mid exp^{i+1})
rexp^i
exp^{10}
               \rightarrow \quad \setminus apat_1 \ldots apat_n \rightarrow exp
                                                                                (lambda abstraction, n \ge 1)
                     let decls in exp
                                                                                (let expression)
                     if exp then exp else exp
                                                                                (conditional)
                     case exp of { alts }
                                                                                (case expression)
```

```
(do expression)
                     do { stmts }
                     fexp
                     [fexp] aexp
                                                                               (function application)
fexp
                                                                               (variable)
aexp
                      qvar
                     qcon
                                                                               (general constructor)
                     literal
                                                                               (parenthesized expression)
                     (exp)
                      ( exp_1 , ... , exp_k )
                                                                               (tuple, k \geq 2)
                                                                               (list, k \geq 1)
                      [ exp_1 , ... , exp_k ]
                      [ exp_1 [, exp_2] .. [exp_3] ]
                                                                               (arithmetic sequence)
                      [ exp \mid qual_1 , ... , qual_n ]
                                                                               (list comprehension, n \ge 1)
                      ( exp^{i+1} qop^{(a,i)} )
                                                                               (left section)
                     ( lexp^i \ qop^{(l,i)} )
                                                                               (left section)
                     (qop_{\langle -\rangle}^{(a,i)} exp^{i+1})(qop_{\langle -\rangle}^{(r,i)} rexp^{i})
                                                                               (right section)
                                                                               (right section)
                     qcon \{ fbind_1, \dots, fbind_n \}
                                                                               (labeled construction, n \geq 0)
                     aexp_{\langle qcon \rangle} { fbind_1 , ..., fbind_n }
                                                                               (labeled update, n \geq 1)
                                                                               (generator)
qual
                     pat \leftarrow exp
                     let decls
                                                                               (local declaration)
                     exp
                                                                               (guard)
alts
                     alt_1; ...; alt_n
                                                                               (n \geq 1)
alt
               \rightarrow pat -> exp [where decls]
                     pat gdpat [where decls]
                                                                               (empty alternative)
               \rightarrow qd \rightarrow exp [ qdpat ]
qdpat
stmts
               \rightarrow stmt_1 \ldots stmt_n exp [;]
                                                                               (n \geq \theta)
stmt
                     exp;
                     pat \leftarrow exp;
                     let decls;
                                                                               (empty statement)
fbind
                     qvar = exp
pat
                     var + integer
                                                                               (successor pattern)
```

```
pat^{i+1} [qconop^{(n,i)} pat^{i+1}]
pat^i
                     lpat^i
                     rpat^i
                    (lpat^i \mid pat^{i+1}) \ qconop^{(1,i)} \ pat^{i+1}
lpat^i
lpat^6
                     - (integer | float)
                                                                              (negative literal)
                     pat^{i+1} \ qconop^{(\mathbf{r},i)} \ (rpat^i \mid pat^{i+1})
rpat^i
pat^{10}
                                                                             (arity gcon = k, k \ge 1)
                     gcon \ apat_1 \ \dots \ apat_k
apat
                     var [@apat]
                                                                             (as pattern)
                                                                              (arity gcon = \theta)
                     gcon
                     qcon \{ fpat_1, \dots, fpat_k \}
                                                                              (labeled pattern, k \geq \theta)
                     literal
                                                                              (wildcard)
                     ( pat )
                                                                              (parenthesized pattern)
                     ( pat_1 , ... , pat_k )
                                                                              (tuple pattern, k \geq 2)
                                                                              (list pattern, k \geq 1)
                     [ pat_1 , ... , pat_k ]
                                                                              (irrefutable pattern)
                     \sim apat
fpat
                     qvar = pat
                     ()
gcon
                     []
                     (, \{, \})
                     qcon
                     varid | ( varsym )
                                                                              (variable)
var
qvar
                     qvarid \mid ( qvarsym )
                                                                              (qualified variable)
                     conid | ( consym )
                                                                              (constructor)
con
                     qconid | ( gconsym )
                                                                              (qualified constructor)
qcon
                     varsym | `varid`
                                                                              (variable operator)
varop
              \rightarrow
                     qvarsym | `qvarid`
                                                                              (qualified variable operator)
qvarop
              \rightarrow
                     consym \mid `conid`
                                                                              (constructor operator)
conop
                     gconsym | `qconid`
                                                                              (qualified constructor operator)
qconop
op
              \rightarrow
                     varop | conop
                                                                              (operator)
qop
              \rightarrow
                     qvarop | qconop
                                                                              (qualified operator)
```

: | qconsym

 \rightarrow

gconsym