

The l Quantum Number

The quantum number m reflects the component of angular momentum about a given axis.

$$L_z = m\hbar \text{ where } m = 0, \pm 1, \pm 2, \dots$$

In the angular wave function $\psi_{lm}(\theta, \phi)$ the quantum number l tells us the total angular momentum L .

$L^2 = L_x^2 + L_y^2 + L_z^2$ is also quantized. The possible values of L^2 are:

$$L^2 = l(l+1)\hbar^2 \text{ where } l = 0, 1, 2, \dots$$

Wave functions can be eigenstates of both L^2 and L_z .

For spherically symmetric potentials, like H-atom, they can also be eigenstates of E . Such states are called “orbitals”.

Summary of quantum numbers for the H-atom orbitals:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Principal quantum number: | $n = 1, 2, 3, \dots$ |
| Orbital quantum number: | $l = 0, 1, 2, \dots, n-1$ |
| Orbital ‘magnetic’ quantum number: | $m = -l, -(l-1), \dots, 0, \dots, (l-1), l$ |