

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About ALEKS PPL

Why must I take the ALEKS PPL Assessment? The Placement Assessment is used to determine the mathematics course in which you will have the greatest success. Upon completion of the Placement Assessments, your scores are made available to your academic advisor. Your advisor will review your scores and help make appropriate recommendations for course registration.

Who has to take the ALEKS PPL Assessment? All students who come to the University without transferrable math credits must take ALEKS PPL in order to be placed into their first mathematics course here at UMES. The only exception is for students whose major does not require a College Algebra (or higher) mathematics course and a separate Statistics course.

Who can take the ALEKS PPL Assessment? ALEKS PPL is used to determine the best math course for students. It is not recommended for students who have already taken a math course here at UMES.

Where can I take my Placement Assessment? The initial Placement Assessment can be taken anywhere since it will not be used for mathematics placement here at UMES (unless you request that it be proctored for math placement), it will be used to give the student an indication about their content knowledge and preparedness in mathematics. The second Placement Assessment (and possibly the third Placement Assessment) will be used for mathematics placement. As such, the second Placement Assessment (and third Placement Assessment, if applicable) is password protected and must be taken in the Mathematics Assistance Lab with a Proctor present. Students are not allowed to use any electronic devices, other than one of the computers in the Mathematics Assistant Lab, during the proctored Assessment.

Is there a fee for using ALEKS PPL? ALEKS PPL is freely available to any undergraduate student who has not taken a mathematics course here at UMES. A low score on ALEKS PPL will not negate your SAT/ACT math score.

What topics are covered during the ALEKS PPL Assessment? ALEKS PPL is an online, adaptive system that covers a broad spectrum of mathematics topics. The length of the Placement Assessment will vary but can be up to 30 questions. You will see some, but not all, of the mathematics that you have learned in high school. It is a Placement Assessment, not a preview of mathematics courses at UMES. It is designed to identify if you are prepared for a particular course. After you take your initial Placement Assessment, you will have the opportunity to review and master additional topics to reassess and improve your placement.

Topics Covered:

- Real numbers (including fractions, integers, and percentages)
- Equations and inequalities (including linear equations, linear inequalities, systems of linear equations, and quadratic equations),
- Linear and quadratic functions (including graphs and functions, linear functions, and parabolas), exponents and polynomials (including integer exponents, polynomial arithmetic,

factoring, and polynomial equations), rational expressions (including rational equations and rational functions

- Radical expressions (including higher roots and rational exponents)
- Exponentials and logarithms (including function compositions and inverse functions, properties of logarithms, and logarithmic equations)
- Geometry and trigonometry (including perimeter, area, and volume, coordinate geometry, trigonometric functions, and identities and equations).

Can I practice using the ALEKS input tools before I begin the Placement Assessment? ALEKS will begin with a brief tutorial to make sure you are comfortable with the math palette tools before your Placement Assessment begins. The tutorial shows how to enter different types of answers, how to use the ALEKS calculator, and how to graph. If you aren't sure how to input an answer or need help while you are taking the ALEKS Placement Assessment, select the **Help** button below the answer pallet tools. Going to the tutorial during your Placement Assessment will NOT impact your Placement Assessment results.

What is the format of the questions on ALEKS? ALEKS is not a multiple-choice Placement Assessment. It is open-response and requires you to work out solutions with paper and pencil, then enter them into ALEKS. Scratch paper will be provided upon request.

May I use a calculator while using ALEKS? ALEKS will provide an on-screen calculator if you need one to complete a particular problem. Otherwise, you may not use a calculator.

May I use any other resources during a Placement Assessment? You may only use a pen or pencil, paper, and the resources provided within ALEKS. You should not receive assistance from friends, family, other websites, textbooks, or any other resource not provided by ALEKS. Using outside resources will lead to improper placement and potentially course failure.

Can I review a question after I've answered it? Because ALEKS is adaptive, once you submit an answer, you cannot change it. Be sure to carefully check your answer before submitting your response.

What if I see questions I don't know? You will likely be asked questions on material you have not yet learned. On such questions it is appropriate to answer, **I don't know**. On any question that you have familiarity with, however, it is important to do your best. **I don't know** is interpreted by ALEKS to mean that you do not know how to solve the topic, and this will be reflected in the Placement Assessment results. There is no penalty for incorrectly answering a question on the Placement Assessment, it only helps ALEKS understand what you know and don't know.

Are Placement Assessments timed? Yes, you have *90 minutes* to complete a Placement Assessment once it has begun.

What happens if I do not complete a Placement Assessment in the allotted time? If the Placement Assessment is not proctored (as in the initial Placement Assessment), you will have to restart the Placement Assessment. If the incomplete Placement Assessment is proctored and timed, you will be given a placement result, but it will not be a true reflection of your abilities.

I am ready to start my ALEKS PPL Assessment. How do I begin? To access the ALEKS PPL Assessment, go to www.umes.edu, click on “My UMES”, and click on “ALEKS Math Placement Test” under “QUICK LINKS”. Confirm that you are enrolling in the appropriate cohort (currently, “UMES Math Placement, Fall 2021, Spring 2022” cohort). If you have never used ALEKS before, click “No, I have never used ALEKS before”. Complete the registration steps to create a new ALEKS account and click on **Continue**. A confirmation email will be sent to the email address you provide (make sure that you provide your UMES email address, not a personal email address). **IMPORTANT: Be sure to save your login information!**

What is my placement result? Your placement result (overall score) is a number between 0 and 100. It represents the percentage of topics ALEKS has identified you have mastered. Course placement is determined as follows:

Course #	Course Name	ALEKS Score Range
Math 99	Intermediate Algebra	0-45
Math 102	Applications of College Mathematics	40-60
Math 103	Topics of Mathematical Literacy	N/A
Math 109	College Algebra	46-60
Math 110	Trigonometry & Analytic Geometry	61-75
Math 112	Calculus I	76-100

Where can I see my score? You will receive your score immediately upon completion of your proctored Placement Assessment.

How long is my placement result valid? Your placement result (proctored placement only) is valid for up to 12 months.

What if I do not place into the course I wanted? This is a perfect opportunity to take advantage of the Prep and Learning Modules offered within ALEKS PPL in conjunction with the free tutoring offered by the Mathematics Assistance Lab. An individualized study plan will be created based on your performance on the Initial Placement Assessment. ALEKS will identify what you know and what you are ready to learn next so you can brush up on lost knowledge.

I did not place in the class I wanted. Can I take it anyway? No, you must achieve the minimum placement result to take each corresponding class.

Can I retake the ALEKS PPL Assessment? Yes, you may take up to two (2) Placement Assessments after the initial Placement Assessment. However, to make each attempt worthwhile, you must spend time working in your ALEKS Prep and Learning Module between Placement Assessments so that you can improve your skills. You are required to spend at least five hours in the Prep and Learning Module before taking the third placement assessment. It is recommended that you spend significant time in the Prep and Learning Module before taking either Proctored Assessment.

Can I retake the ALEKS Placement Assessment immediately? You must wait 48 hours between Placement Assessments. There is generally no benefit to re-taking the Placement Assessment immediately after completing a prior attempt. You cannot improve your results by simply re-taking the Placement Assessment without spending time in the Prep and Learning Module to refresh material that you may have forgotten.

How long do I have access to my Prep and Learning Module? You will have 12 months of access to your Prep and Learning module. Access to not pre-course will not begin until you select **start** on top of your screen. **DO NOT** select the Prep and Learning Module until you are ready to start working.

Is there an additional fee for my Prep and Learning Module? Access to Prep and Learning Module is including along with the additional Placement Assessments.

Must I work in my ALEKS Prep and Learning Module between Placement Assessments? You can retake the Placement Assessment up to two additional times to improve your score. (The highest score will be used for math placement, provided the Assessment was proctored in the Mathematics Assistance Lab). Students are required to work in the Prep and Learning Modules for a specified amount of time before each Placement Assessment to increase success.

- 2nd attempt (first proctored assessment)—recommended completing at least 3 hours of work in the Prep and Learning Modules before attempting assessment.
- 3rd attempt (optional proctored assessment)—required to complete 5 additional hours of work in the Prep and Learning Modules before attempting assessment.

What are ALEKS Knowledge Checks? While working in a Prep and Learning Module, you will periodically complete a Knowledge Check to make sure you have mastered the topics you gained in Learning Mode. If you do not show mastery during the Knowledge Check, the topics will be added back to your Learning Pie so you can review them again.

Does progress in an ALEKS Prep and Learning Module count toward placement? No. You must complete a new Placement Assessment to change your placement result. Select the placement tab in the upper right corner of the ALEKS page to start a new Placement Assessment.

Can I change to a different Prep and Learning Module later? No. You may only use one Prep and Learning Module. If you are unsure which module to select, use the module recommended by ALEKS or consult with your advisor.

What do I do if my web browser gets stuck or my computer crashes while I'm taking the Placement Assessment? Simply close the browser, or log out and log back in. ALEKS will resume the Placement Assessment exactly where you left off, with no loss of your previous answers. If you are taking the second or third Placement Assessment (proctored), please alert your Proctor before logging out and logging back in.

Where can I get help with ALEKS?

<http://www.aleks.com/faqs/technical>

http://support.aleks.com/assess_placement