

Placement Webpage Guide

What is ALEKS?

University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg (Pitt-Greensburg) requires an ALEKS Placement, Preparation and Learning (ALEKS PPL) Assessment to determine readiness for mathematics courses. ALEKS PPL is a web-based program that uses artificial intelligence to map a student's strengths and weaknesses. The Placement Assessment is up to 30 questions and generally takes 60-90 minutes to complete. After the Placement Assessment, an individualized Prep and Learning Module is available for students to refresh their knowledge on forgotten topics. Students then have the opportunity to reassess and improve their placement.

ALEKS consists of three parts:

- An Initial Placement Assessment
- The Prep and Learning Module, an individualized, self-paced online review
- Access to 4 additional Placement Assessments

Pitt-Greensburg encourages each student to spend time in the Prep and Learning Module, even if the desired score is achieved, because time spent in ALEKS will ultimately lead to better preparation and improved grades.

What is the purpose of placement testing? The Placement Assessment results will be used to determine the most appropriate courses for each student as they move forward with college coursework. After taking a Placement Assessment, students should meet with their advisor to review their results and enroll in the best classes based on their scores.

This is a "Placement Assessment," not a test. The difference is that a Placement Assessment is designed to determine what a student knows and what a student needs to work on. At the end of the ALEKS PPL Assessment, a student will have a much better sense of his/her strengths and weaknesses in math. Students then have a chance to brush on topics that may have been forgotten or haven't been practiced for some time.

Be honest. It is important that the Placement Assessment is taken seriously and each student gives it an honest effort so that the Placement Assessment truly reflects their current level of knowledge and math preparedness. There is no benefit to cheating on the Placement Assessment – the only result will be that a student enrolls in a class that is too difficult, or not challenging enough, potentially costing time and money. Therefore, while taking the Placement Assessment, students should not consult any outside sources for help (friends/family, internet searches, textbooks, notes etc...). The purpose of the Placement Assessment is to give an accurate measure of a student's current mathematical knowledge state so that he/she will be successful in mathematics courses. Please refer to the academic integrity policy on page 7 of the *Student Code of Conduct & Judicial Procedures* at https://www.greensburg.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/pdf_student-life/Student%20Handbook%202018-2019.pdf.

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 sent 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?

Everyone, with two exceptions.

1. *If you have already earned college math credit, either through AP credit, College in High School, or by other means, the college-level courses you have already completed will determine your math placement.*
2. *Early Childhood Education majors taking MATH 00050 and 0052 need not take the placement test.*

The academic program you have chosen determines your math requirements. Table 1 below identifies the math requirement by program. The minimum requirement is described as “Basic Competency” and can be satisfied by taking one of the following courses: CS 0098, MATH 0031, MATH 0080 or PHIL 0500. Otherwise, the numbers specify the MATH courses required for a program. A + following the list of starting MATH classes indicates that there are additional math courses required for that program.

Table 1 – Math Requirements listed by Program

Program	MATH Requirement
Accounting (Management-Accounting)	MATH 0031, 0100, 0120
American Studies	Basic Competency
Anthropology	Basic Competency
Biochemistry	MATH 0031, 0200, and 0220 +
Biological Science	MATH 0031, 0200, and 0220 +
Chemistry	MATH 0031, 0200, and 0220 +
Communication	Basic Competency
Creative and Professional Writing	Basic Competency
Criminal Justice	Basic Competency
Data Analytics	MATH 0031, 0200, and 0220 +
Education: Early Childhood	MATH 0050 and 0052
Education: Secondary Biology	MATH 0031 only
Education: Secondary Chemistry	MATH 0031, 0200, and 0220 +
Education: Secondary English	MATH 0031 only
Education: Secondary Mathematics	0031, 0200, 0220 +
Education: Secondary Social Studies	MATH 0031 only
Education: Spanish Education	MATH 0031 only
Engineering (Pre-Engineering)*	MATH 0200, 0220, 0230 +
English Literature	Basic Competency
Healthcare Management	MATH 0031, 0100, 0120
Health-Related Careers Occupational Therapy Physical Therapy Physician’s Assistant	MATH 0031, 0200, and 0220 +

Program	MATH Requirement
Other Health-Related Careers Athletic Training Clinical Dietetics Communication Disorders Emergency Medicine Health Information Management Rehabilitation Science	MATH 0031 only
History	Basic Competency
Information Technology	MATH 0031, 0100 or 0200 , 0120 or 0220
Management	MATH 0031, 0100, 0120
Management-Accounting (Accounting)	MATH 0031, 0100, 0120
Management Information Systems	MATH 0031, 0100, 0120
Mathematics	MATH 0031, 0200, and 0220 +
Nursing*	MATH 0031
Political Science	Basic Competency
Pharmacy (Pre-Pharmacy)	MATH 0031, 0200, and 0220
Pre-Medical or Pre-Dental	MATH 0031, 0200, and 0220 +
Psychology	Basic Competency
Public Policy	MATH 0031, 0200, and 0220
Spanish	Basic Competency
Visual and Performing Arts	Basic Competency

*If you fall into either of the following categories, further explanation is provided:

- If your program does not have a math requirement beyond basic competency, the ALEKS Math Placement Assessment provides you the opportunity to demonstrate basic competency and earn an exemption (see Table 2).
- If you are a pre-engineering student, you must place into MATH 0200 or above.
- If you are a nursing student, you must place out of MATH 0031 (an ALEKS score of 47% or above) or [take and pass MATH 0031 in the summer](#) prior to beginning your freshman fall term.

When do I take the ALEKS PPL Assessment? *You are required to take the placement test prior to the completion of your freshman survey, which has to be completed prior to your Summer Orientation and Registration (SOAR). SOAR sessions begins in June.*

Is there a fee for using ALEKS PPL? Yes, you will pay for ALEKS with a credit card before you begin, the cost is \$25.

Do I need to install any software or plug-ins prior to taking the ALEKS Placement Assessment? No. There are no required plug-ins or applets required with your use of ALEKS PPL. As long as you have access to the internet and are using an updated browser, you should not experience difficulties in taking your Placement Assessment. For a list of preferred browsers, please review the ALEKS system requirements on their support site:

http://www.aleks.com/support/system_requirements

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 math you have learned in high school. It is a Placement Assessment, not a preview of math courses Pitt-Greensburg. It is designed to identify if you are prepared for a particular course. After you take your first 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 you 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.

Taking the Placement Assessment

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 a paper and pencil, then enter them into ALEKS. Be sure to have scratch paper with you.

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. It is a violation of Pitt-Greensburg's academic integrity policy.

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? It is likely that you will 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 *180 minutes* (3 hours) to complete a Placement Assessment once it has begun.

What happens if I do not complete a Placement Assessment in the allotted time? Your score will be calculated and you can either use that score for placement or take the Placement Assessment again. Remember, you can take the assessment up to 5 times.

I am ready to start my ALEKS PPL Assessment. How do I begin?

1. Log on the portal at my.pitt.edu.
2. Click the Academic Resources tab at the top of the page.
3. Click the ALEKS link on the right side of the page.
4. Click “Purchase Access Online” to complete the ALEKS ecommerce process.
5. Once completed, you’ll “Continue” to finish registration and access PPL.

The assessment will take approximately 90 minutes to complete. Be honest about your skill level. There is no benefit to cheating on the placement assessment – your only reward will be that you are placed into a math class for which you do not yet have the skills to succeed. The purpose of the placement assessment is to give an accurate measure of your current mathematical skills so that you will be successful in your mathematics courses.

Placement Result

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.

Your ALEKS math placement assessment result will be a percentage score. Table 2 gives your actual math placement based on your ALEKS score and your program. Notice that for many programs, the first row suggests that you use the tutorials in ALEKS to raise your score to at least 30 before enrolling in College Algebra (MATH 0031). **Use of the tutorials is not required; however, any score below 31 will require enrollment in Algebra Recitation (MATH 0011) in addition to College Algebra (MATH 0031).** Remember that if your program only requires basic competency, you may use the ALEKS placement test to demonstrate basic quantitative competency requirement (score ≥ 47) and earn an exemption.

Where can I see my score?

- You will receive your score immediately upon completion of your Placement Assessment.
- Your ALEKS score can be viewed by re-entering ALEKS using the same access link for which you took the Placement Assessment.
- *Your scores are automatically added to your student profile, which is accessible by your advisor.*

How long is my placement result valid? Your placement result 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. 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 into the class I wanted. Can I take it anyway? No, you must achieve the minimum placement result to take each corresponding class.

Which math course is required for my program? Please refer to Table 1 above.

What if I placed into the class I wanted? Congratulations! Continue to use your Prep and Learning Module to improve your chances for success. The placement result required is the minimum preparation for your course. Take advantage of the individualized review and learning features in ALEKS to get a better grade in your class.

Can I retake the ALEKS PPL Assessment? Yes, you may take the Placement Assessments up to 5 times.

Can I retake the ALEKS Placement Assessment immediately?

No, the cool-off period between attempts is 24 hours and you must spend a minimum of 3 hours before the 2nd attempt and minimum of 5 hours between subsequent attempts in the *Prep and Learning Module*. Your highest overall score will be used to determine your placement.

Table 2 – Course Placement by Score

ALEKS Percentage	My Program Requires			
	Basic Competency	MATH 0031 only	MATH 0031 followed by MATH 0100 and MATH 0120	MATH 0031 followed by MATH 0200 and MATH 0220+
Score < 31%	Take MATH 0031 and MATH 0011 OR CS 0098, PHIL 0500, MATH 0045, or MATH 0055	Use ALEKS tutorials to raise score above 30 or enroll in both MATH 0031 and MATH 0011	Use ALEKS tutorials to raise score above 30 or enroll in both MATH 0031 and MATH 0011	Use ALEKS tutorials to raise score above 30 or enroll in both MATH 0031 and MATH 0011
31% ≤ Score ≤ 46%	Take MATH 0031 OR CS 0098, PHIL 0500, MATH 0045, or MATH 0055	Take MATH 0031	Take MATH 0031	Take MATH 0031
47% ≤ Score ≤ 60%	EXEMPT Your ALEKS satisfies basic competency	EXEMPT Your ALEKS satisfies basic competency	Take MATH 0100	Take MATH 0200
61% ≤ Score ≤ 75%			Take MATH 0120	
Score > 75%			Take MATH 0220	

Prep and Learning Modules

How long do I have access to my Prep and Learning Module? You will have six months of access to your Prep and Learning module. Access to the prep course will not begin until you select **start** on the top of your screen. DO NOT select into 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 a Prep and Learning Module is included along with the additional Placement Assessments.

Must I work in my ALEKS Prep and Learning Module between Placement Assessments? Yes. Students are required to work in the Prep and Learning Modules for at least 3 hours before the 2nd Placement Assessment attempt and 5 hours before the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Placement Assessment attempts.

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 into 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.

Technical Support

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.

Where can I get help with ALEKS?

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

http://support.aleks.com/assess_placement