

Mathematics Placement and ALEKS

Elmira College requires a mathematics placement assessment through ALEKS Placement, Preparation and Learning (ALEKS PPL) to determine readiness for quantitative courses. This online assessment is adaptive, meaning it adjusts the questions to find out what you already know. The assessment can include material from basic arithmetic through Precalculus, and will take **approximately 90 minutes** to complete. After the assessment, a Prep and Learning Module designed for you will be available for you to review and learn additional material. You have the chance to not only retake and improve your placement, but to prepare you for upcoming courses in mathematics. This transition from assessment to learning will help you build your confidence and skills.

Elmira College encourages you 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 you as you move forward with college coursework. After taking a Placement Assessment, you should meet with your academic advisor to review your results and enroll in the most appropriate classes based on your scores.

Remember that this is an assessment, not a test. It is designed to determine what you already know, and give you information about your mathematical preparedness so you and your academic advisor can get a sense of your strengths and weaknesses and choose the appropriate course for you. Please be honest about your skill level and take the assessment with your best effort. We understand that it may be tempting, but seeking help during the assessment only risks placing you in a class that is too difficult for your current level of mathematical knowledge. Therefore, while you are taking the assessment, do not consult any other source for help (friends, family, internet searches, textbooks, etc.). 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.

FAQs

Preparation

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? All incoming first-time and transfer students should complete the ALEKS PPL Assessment before arriving on campus for orientation.

When do I take the ALEKS PPL Assessment? Ideally, you should take the ALEKS PPL Assessment during June, before you arrive for summer orientation. For those few students beginning in January, you should take the assessment in December. It is important to complete before advising and registration.

Are ALEKS PPL Assessments proctored? Currently, Elmira College does not require a proctored ALEKS PPL Assessment; however, we reserve the right to require a student to take a Placement Assessment in a proctored environment if we determine it to be necessary for proper placement.

Is there a fee for using ALEKS PPL? Use of ALEKS is included in your student fees.

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 mathematics you have learned in high school. Do not worry if some of the mathematical concepts are unfamiliar, ALEKS is designed to adjust questions for your level of knowledge. It is a Placement Assessment, not a preview of mathematics courses at Elmira College. 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 that may be 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 mathematics 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 palette 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 course 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 may 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, so it is to your advantage to try, even if you are a bit unsure.

Are Placement Assessments timed? Yes, you have 2.5 hours to complete a Placement Assessment once it has begun. Most students finish within 90 minutes or so, but you are not penalized if you use more than this average time. If you need to exit the Placement Assessment for any reason, you will be able to log back in and pick up where you left off.

What happens if I do not complete a Placement Assessment in the allotted time? You will have to restart the Placement Assessment and take it again, after a "cooling off" period of 48 hours. It will count as one of your 3 assessment chances, so do pay attention to the time as you approach the 30 question/2.5 hour mark.

I am ready to start my ALEKS PPL Assessment. How do I begin? Refer to the email you received regarding assessments before orientation.

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.

Depending on your major, program, or general degree requirements, you may wish to enroll in courses that require quantitative skills. The following table will help you see which courses you are qualified to register for; it is recommended that you discuss your academic plan with your advisor who can help guide your choices to achieve your learning goals.

Course placement is determined as follows:

Course #	Course Name	ALEKS Score Range
MAT 1000 - 1001	Essential Math Skills	0-29
MAT 1030	College Algebra	30-45
MAT 2090	Statistical Methods	46 and above
MAT 2002	Mathematics for Elementary Teachers I	46 and above
MAT 1091	Pre calculus I	46-60
MAT 1092	Pre calculus II	61-75
MAT 2010	Calculus I	76-100

Where can I see my score?

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

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. Remember, ALEKS assesses for your current mathematical knowledge and places you into courses for which you are ready to learn the material.

Which mathematics course is required for my program, general education requirement, or major? Read the Elmira College Bulletin found [here](#), and be sure to check with your academic advisor or a member of the mathematics faculty if you have questions.

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 up to 3 Placement Assessments total. However, to make each attempt worthwhile, it is important that you spend time working in your ALEKS Prep and Learning Module between Placement Assessments so that you can improve your skills. You should plan to spend at least 5 hours working in your Prep and Learning Module before attempting the assessment again.

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.

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, you must work in your ALEKS Prep and Learning Module between Placement Assessments. You can retake the Placement assessment up to 2 additional times to improve your score. (The highest score will be used for mathematics placement). Students are required to work in the Prep and Learning Modules for at least 5 hours prior to each Placement Assessment to increase success.

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