About the ALEKS Placement Assessment

The University of Missouri-St. Louis requires an ALEKS mathematics placement assessment to determine readiness for various courses. The ALEKS placement assessment covers material from basic math through precalculus and will take approximately 90 minutes to complete. After the assessment, a targeted Prep and Learning Module is available for you to review and learn material, and to improve placement and eventual course outcomes.

The ALEKS covers a broad spectrum of pre-calculus material. The system is fully automated, and the assessment is adaptive. The first questions will be drawn from across curriculum, and may be too easy or too hard, depending on your skill level. As the assessment proceeds, your answers will be used to give the system an idea of your knowledge – it will gradually focus the questioning in an individually appropriate manner. By the end of the assessment, you should find the questions generally challenging, but also reasonable for your individual level of knowledge.

The ALEKS assessment has a maximum of thirty questions. The exact number of questions will vary due to the adaptive mechanism described above. 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 the other hand, you should do your best to answer any questions concerning topics you are familiar with. “I don’t know” is interpreted by ALEKS to mean that you do not know the topic, and this will be reflected in the assessment results.

Determine which mathematics course(s) are required for your intended major. If you are uncertain about the requirements, check with your major department or in the University Course Catalog. If you already have credits for the required course(s) and their prerequisites, you do not need to take the ALEKS assessment.

Still not sure? Check with your academic advisor to find out more, or just go ahead and take the ALEKS assessment to have a score on record. The assessment is online, and you can take it up to five times for free!

Frequently Asked Questions about the ALEKS

Is there a fee for using ALEKS? Use of ALEKS is included in your student fees. However, if an adequate score is not achieved in six weeks, a $25 resubscription will be required. Contact the Campus Testing Center if you need additional access.

Can I retake the ALEKS assessment? Yes! You may take up to five placement assessments. However, to make each attempt worthwhile, it is important that you spend time working in your ALEKS Prep and Learning Modules in between assessments so that you can improve your math skills.

Can I retake the ALEKS immediately? No. You must wait 48 hours between placement assessments. There is generally no benefit to retaking the assessment immediately after completing a prior attempt. Unlike the ACT, you cannot improve your results by simply retaking the assessment without spending time in the Prep and Learning Module to refresh material that you have forgotten – or to learn new material.

How long will the ALEKS take, and what materials will I need? Placement assessments require approximately 90 minutes to complete, but the amount of time will vary by student. You will need only a pencil
and paper to work on the problems. ALEKS has a built-in calculator available when permitted. Hand-held calculators are not permitted.

**How many questions are on the ALEKS?** There will be a maximum of 30 questions. None of the questions are multiple-choice. Since ALEKS is adaptive, students who are unable to answer many of the first questions may end up with a shorter exam.

**Once I answer a question, can I go back and change my answer?** Unfortunately, once you submit an answer you cannot change it.

**How many times can I take the ALEKS assessment?** You will be given the chance to take the ALEKS up to five times within your subscription period.

**How long are my ALEKS scores valid?** ALEKS scores are generally valid for 11 months. In particular, you need to be sure that your ALEKS scores are valid for the semester you plan to enroll in a math course.

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**Where can I get help with the ALEKS?**

- Access the ALEKS assessment: [https://www.aleks.com/umsl/ppl](https://www.aleks.com/umsl/ppl)
- ALEKS Technical Information: [https://www.aleks.com/faqs/technical](https://www.aleks.com/faqs/technical)
- UMSL Math Prerequisite Requirements: [http://www.umsl.edu/mathcs/undergraduate-studies/math-prereqs.html](http://www.umsl.edu/mathcs/undergraduate-studies/math-prereqs.html)
- UMSL Course Catalog: [http://bulletin.umsl.edu](http://bulletin.umsl.edu)