The ALEKS covers a broad spectrum of pre-calculus material. The system is fully automated, and the assessment is adaptive. The first questions asked will be drawn from across the 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. If you do not do your best on the assessment, ALEKS will underestimate your knowledge.

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.

Do I Need to take the ALEKS if…?

...I have college math credits, like AP, IB, or Dual Enrollment credits?

FRESHMEN: All freshmen should take the ALEKS assessment, and can talk to an advisor at New Student Orientation. Transfer credits will still count, but students need to know whether or not they are prepared for their intended math course at UMSL. The purpose of our placement process is to determine, based on your mathematical background and current mathematical ability, which math courses are appropriate for you. If you have math transfer credits and the ALEKS places you below the level you need for a particular math course, please discuss this with your academic advisor.

TRANSFERS: All students who wish to enroll in a math course at or below the Calculus I level (MATH1100) are encouraged to take the ALEKS assessment. ALEKS will gauge how well you are prepared for your desired course. In particular, if it has been more than one year since you took your math course, you may need to spend time reviewing in the ALEKS Prep & Learning Module in order to successful in your upcoming course!

...I took the AP Calculus test? Yes – incoming freshmen must take the ALEKS assessment. AP scores are not available until mid-summer, and decisions about your eligibility for math courses may be needed prior to the receipt of these scores. It is possible that you AP score will allow you to register for a higher-level math course, so you should check with your academic advisor.

...I took College Algebra, Precalculus, or Calculus in my high school? A high school course does not count towards college credit unless it was taken as part of a dual credit program through a college or university. Students must take the ALEKS assessment in order to place into the appropriate math course at UMSL. If you took a college-level or dual credit course while in high school, you must provide appropriate documentation to the Office of Admissions.

...I just want to repeat my last math course? Regardless of whether or not you have taken a course before, you must satisfy the prerequisite requirements for the course for the upcoming semester when you plan to enroll. For example, if you did not earn a C- or above in your last math course and want to repeat it, you will need a valid ALEKS score for the upcoming semester. If your original score has expired, you will need to repeat the assessment.
...I took an ALEKS assessment through another institution – can I use this score at UMSL? No – UMSL does not accept an ALEKS assessment score taken elsewhere.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**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.

**Can I retake the ALEKS Placement 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 & 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 & Learning Module to refresh material that you have forgotten, or to learn new material.

**How long will the ALEKS assessment 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 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.

**Is there a fee for taking the ALEKS?** UMSL provides you with initial access to the ALEKS Math Placement assessment and the Prep & Learning Module. There is no fee that you are required to pay. However, if your initial subscription runs out and you require access to ALEKS at a later date, you will be required to purchase access for a fee of $25. Contact the Campus Testing Center if you need additional access.

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 mathematics course.

**Interpreting Your ALEKS Results**

Immediately after completing the ALEKS assessment, you will be shown a pie chart which indicates your percentage score. You can log back into ALEKS to view your Placement Results at any time.

If you achieve the score at or above the prerequisite level for an UMSL mathematics course, you will be able to enroll in that course through MyView within two business days. Your academic advisor will also have access to your score within two business days.

**I have earned the minimum ALEKS score for my math course.** What do I do now? Congratulations! Continue to use your Prep & Learning Module to improve your chances for success. Take advantage of the targeted review and learning features in ALEKS to get a better grade in your class.

**To enroll in your math course:**

Incoming freshmen/transfer students: There is nothing you need to do. Your academic advisor will be able to view your ALEKS score and will assist you in enrolling in your courses during New Student Orientation.
If you plan to enroll yourself in your math course: Login to MyView to complete your registration. Note that it takes one business day for your ALEKS score to be available in MyView, and another business day for the system to recognize the score as a valid prerequisite for a math course. Please contact the Math Office for assistance.

**What if I do not place into the course I wanted?** You can use the ALEKS Prep & Learning Module to review and learn. You may want to take another placement assessment to improve your result. There is a 48-hour waiting period between attempts.

**What if I only missed the minimum score by a few points?** The Math Department has strict prerequisite requirements, and lowering the minimum score for placement into any course is not permitted.

**My degree program requires that I start with a particular math course. What if I place lower than that? Does that mean I can’t graduate in four years?** Whether or not you graduate in four years depends on both your major and your particular math placement results. The most important thing is to discuss your options with your academic advisor. Also, remember that time spent in the ALEKS Prep & Learning Module may help you to improve your placement results while also preparing you for your upcoming math course.

**I earned an ALEKS score of 66% or higher when I took the assessment (non-proctored). Since my major doesn’t require me to take any higher-level math courses, have I fulfilled my Math Proficiency Requirement?** No – to earn proficiency, you must test in a proctored environment at the Campus Testing Center.

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**Helpful Links**

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