



# ALEKS®

## What is ALEKS?

The University of Mississippi has implemented 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 45-90 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.

Students wanting to place into a math course for a specific term must make the necessary score on ALEKS PPL prior to the first week of classes for that term!

ALEKS consists of three parts:

- An unproctored Initial Placement Assessment (does not count for placement)
- The Prep and Learning Module, an individualized, self-paced online review
- Access for up to 4 additional proctored Placement Assessments (count for placement)

The University of Mississippi 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 the placement assessment?** 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 see the M-Book for more information on academic policies at the following web link: [olemiss.edu/mbook](http://olemiss.edu/mbook).

## FAQs

### Preparation

**Why should 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?** Currently, only students with no math sub-score on the ACT (or equivalent SAT) are required to take ALEKS.

**When do I take the ALEKS PPL Assessment?** As soon as possible. Given that the unproctored first attempt does not count for placement, you will need to take at least a second attempt (proctored) for placement. This needs to occur prior to classes starting.

**Are ALEKS PPL Assessments proctored?** The first attempt is unproctored but does not count for placement. The remaining attempts (2, 3, 4, & 5) are proctored.

#### **Where can I take my Placement Assessment?**

You may take the ALEKS PPL remotely using Respondus Monitor. There is no additional fee for using the remote proctoring service. You will see the option to take the assessment using Respondus in your ALEKS dashboard.

In addition to using Respondus, students can schedule to take ALEKS on campus. From May 15th until August 12th, appointments can be scheduled Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at <https://www.registerblast.com/detl/Exam>. Students who would like to take the exam on campus prior to May 15th will need to set up a time with Lisa Holben, Coordinator of Testing, by phone at (662) 915-1279 or via email at [laholbee@olemiss.edu](mailto:laholbee@olemiss.edu).

Assessments will take place at the Linda Chitwood Testing Center at the Jackson Avenue Center-East (1111 W. Jackson Avenue, Oxford, MS). Plan to arrive at least 5-10 minutes early and bring a photo ID. All other testing materials will be provided.

**Is there a fee for using ALEKS PPL?** You will pay for ALEKS with a credit card before you begin. The \$25 fee includes up to 5 attempts as well as 6 months access to the Prep and Learning Modules (see page 5).

**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: [aleks.com/support/system\\_requirements](http://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 at Ole Miss. 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.

**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?** You are free to complete the initial unproctored Placement Assessment at your own pace. The system will allow you to access your Placement Assessment for 48 hours. 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. **Note that the proctored Assessments will have a 4 hour time limit.**

**What happens if I do not complete a Placement Assessment in the allotted time?** If the Placement Assessment is unproctored, 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?** Students must first apply so that eligibility can be verified. The application to take the ALEKS PPL Assessment can be found at the following link. [mathlab.olemiss.edu/aleks-application/](http://mathlab.olemiss.edu/aleks-application/)

## Placement Result

**What is my placement result?** Your placement result (overall score) is a number between 0 and 100.

Course placement is determined as follows:

**\* Note that successful completion of Math 115 or 120 does not meet the prerequisite for entrance into any other Math course!**

Course #	Course Name	ALEKS Score Range
DS 099	Intermediate Algebra	0-29
Math 115 *	Elementary Statistics	30-45
Math 120 *	Quantitative Reasoning	30-45
Math 121	College Algebra	46-60
Math 167	Business Mathematics	46-60
Math 123	Trigonometry	61-75
Math 125	Basic Mathematics for Science & Engineering (PreCalculus)	61-75
Math 267	Calculus for Business, Economics, & Accountancy I	61-75
Math 261	Unified Calculus & Analytic Geometry 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 be viewed by re-entering ALEKS using the same access link for which you took the Placement Assessment.

**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 your chosen major and/or minor in the undergraduate catalog at [catalog.olemiss.edu](http://catalog.olemiss.edu). You are strongly encouraged to talk with your advisor when determining which course you need.

**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 5 Placement Assessments, including the initial unproctored attempt. 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.

**Can I retake the ALEKS Placement Assessment immediately?** You must wait 24 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?**

You can retake the Placement assessment up to four additional times to improve your score. (The highest score will be used for math placement). Students are required to work in the Prep and Learning Modules for a specific amount of time prior to each Placement Assessment to increase success.

- 2nd attempt—the initial unproctored attempt must be taken at home prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt.
- 3rd attempt—required to complete 3 additional hours of work in the Prep and Learning Modules before attempting assessment.
- 4th attempt—required to complete 5 additional hours of work in the Prep and Learning Modules before attempting assessment.
- 5th attempt—required to complete 8 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 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?**

[www.aleks.com/faqs/technical](http://www.aleks.com/faqs/technical)

[support.aleks.com/assess\\_placement](http://support.aleks.com/assess_placement)

**Should you have any questions or concerns regarding ALEKS that aren't answered here, please do not hesitate to reach out to Victoria Hall at [vbhall@olemiss.edu](mailto:vbhall@olemiss.edu) or 662-915-7071.**