



GENESE0

DEPARTMENT OF
Mathematics

8/17/2025

Dear Student,

The SUNY Geneseo Mathematics Department is partnering with McGraw-Hill to utilize its online assessment and learning program, **ALEKS PPL (Placement, Preparation, and Learning)**, for students enrolled in Math 110 (College Algebra), Math 112 (Precalculus), Math 213 (Applied Calculus), and Math 221 (Calculus 1). ALEKS is a powerful and adaptive tool that diagnoses prerequisite math strengths and areas of growth and provides a personalized study plan. Based on the results of an initial pilot of the program in Math 213 last semester, we believe ALEKS will be helpful in preparing you for success in the courses listed above.

Your first interaction with ALEKS PPL will be the **Placement Assessment**. The Placement Assessment enables ALEKS to develop a precise picture of your knowledge of prerequisite material, showing which topics you have mastered, and which need more attention. It consists of up to 30 questions and adapts to your demonstrated knowledge as you go along. The average completion time is 60-90 minutes, but you can take more or less time as needed. This placement test will be proctored here at Geneseo during the first week of the semester (more details to follow).

Upon completion of the Placement Assessment, you will immediately receive your results and a personalized study plan called a **Prep and Learning Module**, which you will use to review and strengthen your math skills mainly during the first half of the semester (though it is available to you for 12 months from the day you start it). You are expected to complete your recommended Prep and Learning Module. Your progress in your Prep and Learning Module will constitute part of your final course grade, as determined by your course instructor.

Within each Prep and Learning Module, your knowledge of the subject area is represented by a pie chart called the **ALEKS pie**. The pie is divided into slices, each representing a different topic. As you learn and master topics, the corresponding slice of the pie fills up, showing your progress. After you work in your Prep and Learning Module for a certain number of hours or demonstrate mastery of a certain number of new topics, ALEKS will give you an assessment called a **Knowledge Check**. This assessment usually contains 20 questions focused on the topics you have recently studied and is designed to solidify the new topics you have learned. If you do not confirm mastery of a topic during the Knowledge Check, the topic will be added back into your Prep and Learning Module so that you can review the topic again.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we doing this?

ALEKS has been used at colleges across the United States to help students **assess their preparation for college math courses** and **provide learning tools** so that students can review areas needing attention. Even students who have met the course prerequisites often forget essential skills and concepts and will benefit from the targeted review provided by ALEKS. Based on just one pilot semester here at Geneseo, student success rates improved, and students commented on the helpfulness and ease of use of the program. In response to the question, “If you had to do it all over again, what would you do differently with ALEKS,” most students answered that they would **start sooner** and **spend more time** on the learning modules!

I earned an A in high school precalculus/calculus. Why do I need to take ALEKS?

We have found that high school grades are not a reliable indicator for college math readiness. Even for well-prepared students, ALEKS PPL will diagnose areas in need of attention and will help students reinforce those skills.

Is there a fee for using ALEKS PPL?

Yes. There is an enrollment fee of \$25 that can be paid with a credit card. Students will enroll directly within their Brightspace ALEKS course. The fee includes 12 months of access to the program.

How do I take the Placement Assessment?

There are a few guidelines to make sure that you get a meaningful result.

- You must first **enroll in the Brightspace Companion Course** for your course using the appropriate link below:
 - o [MATH-110 Companion Course](#)
 - o [MATH-112 Companion Course](#)
 - o [MATH-213 Companion Course](#)
 - o [MATH-221 Companion Course](#)
- Inside the Companion Course you will find a link to enroll in ALEKS PPL. You will need a credit card to pay the \$25 enrollment fee.
- The Placement Assessment will be **proctored in person** during the first week of classes. Most students complete the assessment in 60-90 minutes. Click [here](#) to sign up for a 3-hour sitting. You do not need to sit for the full 3 hours.
- You will need a laptop or tablet, paper, and a pencil/pen. **No other items are permitted.** The assessment is designed to determine what *you know* and *are able to do on your own*. Treat it like an in-class test with one main difference - **the results won't affect your final grade.**
- ALEKS will provide an on-screen calculator if you need one to complete a particular problem. Otherwise, you are not permitted to use a calculator.

What happens after I take the Placement Assessment?

- After the Placement Assessment, you will begin one of the **Prep and Learning Modules** to review and learn the prerequisite material that is needed for your enrolled course. ALEKS will suggest where to begin.
- **All students** enrolled in Math 110 (College Algebra), Math 112 (Precalculus), Math 213 (Applied Calculus 1), and Math 221 (Calculus 1) will be expected to spend time working within their Prep and Learning Modules. The amount of time spent depends on the number of prerequisite skills needed to learn or relearn. Time spent and progress in your Prep and Learning Modules will be monitored.
- Students are strongly encouraged to complete their ALEKS learning pie during the first half of the semester (and might be required to do so, depending on your instructor), though students may continue their learning throughout the semester as needed. Remember that past students recommend **starting earlier and spending more time** on the learning modules!
- Support from Supplemental Instructors (SIs), tutors in the Math Learning Center, and professors will be available.

Please contact one of the ALEKS course coordinators if you have additional questions related to ALEKS. Their names and emails are provided below:

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Sincerely,



Aaron Heap
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