



## CSUSM Math Placement Exam Information, Fall 2020

Enrollment in Math 160, Calculus with Applications I, requires a C or better in Math 125 (Pre-Calculus) or Math 126, or a passing score on the Math Placement Exam. The test we are using is the ALEKS PPL Placement Assessment, which covers Basic Mathematics through Pre-Calculus, and typically takes 60-90 minutes to complete.

Your ALEKS license includes up to five Placement Assessments: Assessments 1, 2, and 4 are intended as practice, while Assessments 3 and 5 are designated as “proctored”. Only proctored exams will count towards placement into Math 160.

Due to COVID-19, on-campus testing sessions for Fall 2020 enrollment will depend heavily on campus availability; you are recommended to check the Testing Services website for the Math Placement Exam at

[https://www.csusm.edu/testing-services/math\\_placement\\_exam.html](https://www.csusm.edu/testing-services/math_placement_exam.html)

for any updates.

**There will be online proctoring available through ProctorU starting May 1<sup>st</sup> up through the second week of the Fall 2020 semester.** Information on ProctorU will also be available on the Testing Services website above.

**Note: If you register for ALEKS for Fall 2020 enrollment, you must complete a proctored test by Fall 2020 or you may need to re-register in a later semester at an additional cost.** What this means is that if you successfully test into Math 160 in Fall 2020 but decide to take Math 160 in Spring 2021, your test results will still be valid. But if you decide you will take Math 160 in Spring 21 and choose to take the placement test in the late Fall, you will need to re-register for the Spring 2021 ALEKS course at an additional cost.

After you complete the first Placement Assessment, you will receive access to a Prep and Learning Module, “Prep for Calculus”, which is intended to help improve your score (if needed) on the next Assessment as well as to review/learn material for Math 160 itself. The remainder of this document addresses some of the common questions about the ALEKS PPL Placement Assessment.

**First of all, RELAX.** This assessment is designed to determine what you already know. At the end of the ALEKS PPL Placement Assessment, you will have a much better sense of your strengths and weaknesses in math. You will then have a chance to work on those weaknesses. The most

important thing is that you take the assessment seriously and give it an honest effort so that the assessment truly reflects your level of knowledge and math preparedness.

**Be honest about your skill level.** There is no benefit to cheating on the placement assessment – your only reward will be that you are forced to take 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, 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.

### **Who has to take the Math Placement Exam?**

All students who wish to take Math 160, Calculus with Applications I, and who have not earned a C or better in Math 125 or Math 126. You may, of course, take Math 125 instead, but if you have taken pre-calculus (or the equivalent) in high school, then we strongly recommend that you take this Placement Exam.

### **Is there a fee for using ALEKS?**

For Fall 2020 enrollment, the cost of the ALEKS license is \$20, payable to ALEKS when you create your account. Additionally, there is a \$10 fee for each proctoring session, for either online proctoring through ProctorU or on-campus testing through Proficiency Services. *Only proctored assessments count towards course placement.*

### **Can I retake the ALEKS Placement Assessment?**

You may take up to 5 assessments in total, although only proctored assessments count towards placement into Math 160. However, to make each attempt worthwhile, it is advised that you spend time working in your ALEKS Prep and Learning Module in between placement assessments so that you can improve your skills.

### **Are ALEKS Placement Assessments proctored?**

In order to count for placement into Math 160, an assessment ***must be proctored***. You will have up to two opportunities to take a proctored assessment.

Specifically, Assessments 1, 2, and 4 are not proctored and intended as practice. **Assessments 3 and 5 are to be proctored, and are password-protected.** It is our expectation that for most students, Assessment 3 will determine placement, and Assessments 1 and 2 will serve as practice, along with work in the corresponding Prep and Learning Module. If you do not earn a passing score with Assessment 3, Assessments 4 and 5 will also be available: Assessment 4 will serve as an additional practice session, and Assessment 5 will be proctored.

While we recommend taking both Assessments 1 and 2 before the proctored Assessment 3, please also be aware that proctors will have the ability to override settings, and can turn Assessments 1 or 2 into a proctored assessment if necessary – so you don't need to have completed them in advance, but we ***strongly recommend it***.

### **Can I retake the ALEKS Placement Assessment immediately?**

We recommend waiting 24 hours between placement assessments if possible, as there is generally no benefit to re-taking the assessment immediately after completing a prior attempt. Unlike the SAT or ACT, you cannot improve your results by simply re-taking the assessment without spending time in the Prep and Learning Module to refresh material that you may have forgotten or to learn new material.

### **Must I work in my ALEKS Prep and Learning Module between placement assessments?**

We recommend that you spend at least 5 hours in the Prep for Calculus module between assessments. **In order to unlock Assessment 3 (the first proctored assessment), you must spend 5 hours in the module after completing Assessment 2.**

If you do not place into Math 160 on Assessment 3, you will again be required to spend 5 hours in your Prep and Learning Module prior to beginning (practice) Assessment 4, and then another 5 hours prior to Assessment 5. Please keep in mind that the entire point of the Prep and Learning Modules is to review the material to help you perform better – we want you to pass the placement exam!

### **Are placement assessments timed?**

Proctored assessments will have a set time limit of **2 hours** (120 minutes). Unproctored assessments have a time limit of 24 hours, but we recommend that you time yourself in the first two practice assessments if not both to keep track of time.

### **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 by ALEKS. You may not receive assistance from friends, family, other websites, textbooks, or any other resource not provided by ALEKS. Using outside resources may lead to improper placement and ultimately course failure.

### **What is my placement result?**

A score of **70** is needed for placement in to Math 160, but we have recommended courses if your score is below 70:

<b>Score Range</b>	<b>Recommended Course</b>
70-100	Math 160, Calculus I
45-70	Math 125, Pre-Calculus (Recommended)
25-45	Math 115, College Algebra (Recommended)
0-24	Math 105, Supported College Algebra (Recommended)

Note that these are recommendations based on your assessed performance; Math 160 is the only course with a placement score prerequisite.

**How long is my placement result valid?**

Your placement result will be valid for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, although you are encouraged to take Math 160 sooner so that your current knowledge remains fresh.

**Can I practice using ALEKS before I begin placement?**

The first two Placement Assessments have been designated as practice.

**How long do I have access to my Prep and Learning Module?**

You will have six months of access from the time that you start using your Prep and Learning module.

**Is there an additional fee for my Prep and Learning Module?**

Nope!

**What are ALEKS Progress Assessments?**

While working in a Prep and Learning Module, you will periodically complete progress assessments to solidify your gains in knowledge.

**Does progress in an ALEKS Prep and Learning Module count toward placement?**

At this time, no: you must complete a new proctored placement assessment to change your placement result. Only your (proctored) placement assessment results will be used for course placement.

**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.

**What if I do not place into Math 160 the first time?**

If you don't place into Math 160 the first time (on Assessment 3), then Assessment 4 is intended as practice, and you may then take Assessment 5 proctored.

**What if I do not place into Math 160 the second time?**

If you do not place into Math 160 after two proctored attempts, we strongly encourage you to take Math 125 instead. However, you may also renew your ALEKS license (at an additional cost of \$20) and try again.

**What if I do place into Math 160?**

Congratulations! Continue to use your Prep and Learning Module to improve your chances for success. The placement result above is the minimum preparation required for your course! Take advantage of the targeted review and learning features in ALEKS to get a better grade in your class.

## Where can I get help with ALEKS?

<http://www.aleks.com/faqs/technical>

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