

The Calculus Placement Test FAQ

Most of these questions were raised by students. If your question isn't answered here, send it to calcplacement@math.binghamton.edu

1. **Do I have to take it?**

Answer: Yes! You must take the placement test, and pass it, if you want to take Math 224, Math 223, or Math 220. The only exceptions are if you already received a grade of a "C-" or better in Math 223, have received credit for taking Math 224/220, or received a grade of a "C-" or better in Math 108 within the past year.

2. **I've never heard of the Placement Test before. Is it new?**

Answer: No. Similar tests are used at many schools across the country. The Binghamton Mathematics Department has been using this Placement Test for many years.

3. **I haven't taken (or I failed) the Placement Test. What will happen if I register online for Math 224, Math 223, or Math 220?**

Answer: The Banner system will accept your registration before the first week of classes. However, you will be dropped from the class list at the end of the first week of classes.

4. **I failed the Placement Test. Can I retake it?**

Answer: You can take the Placement Test up to two times in any three-month period, but no more than three times for any one semester. If you are having difficulty passing, we strongly recommend that you take Math 108 to improve your precalculus skills.

5. **How do I register to take the test?**

Answer: A link to register for the test will eventually be located on the Placement Test Schedule page when the schedule is ready. Click [here](#) to view the placement test schedule.

6. **When should I take a Placement Test?**

Answer: We encourage you to take the test early in the testing period before the semester in which you plan to take Calculus. This will let you know early whether you are prepared for the class. If you don't pass on your first try, or even if you pass but with a low passing score, you should consider taking a Precalculus course or getting other remediation before the semester starts. See the [Placement Test Home Page](#) for details.

7. **I have a score of X on the Self-evaluation Test. Do I need to take the Placement Test?**

Answer: All students who want to take Math 224, Math 223, or Math 220 must pass the Placement Test.

8. **I have a score of X on the AP Calculus YZ test. Do I need to take the Placement Test?**

Answer: All students who want to take Math 224, Math 223, or Math 220 must pass the Placement Test.

If your AP score satisfies the University's requirements for Math 224/225 credit then you will be given credit for Math 224/225 and you **may not** take Math 224/225 for credit, so you do not need to take the Placement Test. The University policies for AP credit are different for the different schools of the University, so you should contact your school for the policies that apply to you.

If you do not yet know your AP score then you need to make a decision: Either take the Placement Test during the summer or wait until the end of the summer and take the Placement Test only if your AP score does not meet the University's requirements for Math 224/225 credit. The advantage to taking the Placement Test during May/June or early summer is that you can register for Math 224 if you pass (it is easier to drop a course later than to add one) and you can retake the test at the end of the summer if you fail.

9. **I took Calculus I at another school. Do I need to take the Placement Test?**

Answer: All students who want to take Math 224, Math 223, or Math 220 must pass the Placement Test.

Of course, if you receive transfer credit from the University for Math 224/225 then you **may not** take Math 224/225 for credit. In this case you do not need to take the Placement Test (unless you want to retake Math 224/225 for zero credit).

The Mathematics Department is not involved in the determination of transfer credit; such decisions are made by the advising offices in the different schools of the University. Look here for details.

If you do not yet know whether you will receive transfer credit for Math 224/225 then you need to make a decision: Either take the Placement Test during the summer or wait until the end of the summer and take the Placement Test only if you do not receive transfer credit for Math 224/225. The advantage to taking the Placement Test during early summer is that you can register for Math 224 if you pass (it is easier to drop a course later than to add one) and you can retake the test at the end of the summer if you fail.

10. I have transfer credit for Math 108 for a course that I took at another school. Do I need to take the Placement Test?

Answer: Yes, you need to take the Placement Test. All students who want to take Math 224, Math 223, or Math 220 must pass the Placement Test. If you took Math 108 at Binghamton University and received a grade of a "C" or better, then you do not need to take the Placement Exam if you took our course within the past year.

11. I have transfer credit for Math 108 for a course that I took in high school or at another school, but I failed the Placement Test. What should I do?

Answer: There is wide variation in precalculus courses at other schools, and many such courses are not adequate preparation for our Calculus courses. The University cannot evaluate whether such courses are suitable as preparation for Calculus, and usually grants transfer credit for Math 108 based on very general criteria. You should talk to your academic advisor and ask to have the transfer credit for Math 108 converted to "general math" transfer credit, so you can enroll in Math 108.

12. I passed Math 108 but I failed the Placement Test. What should I do?

You can't take Math 108 again for credit, so you should make an appointment with the Coordinator for Math 224, Math 223, or Math 220 to discuss your options.

Answer: If taking a Precalculus course is not an option, one online option for reviewing Precalculus is ALEKS. This is an automated system to pinpoint your weaknesses and get appropriate review questions. Keep in mind that ALEKS is a tool for review, not a teacher. If you need help understanding the material, then you need a Precalculus class, or at least a tutor.

Even if you pass a Placement Test with a low passing grade, you might want to consider strengthening your Precalculus skills before going into Calculus. Algebra, geometry, and trigonometry get used nonstop in Calculus, and getting thoroughly comfortable with these topics will pay off enormously.

13. I failed the Placement Test. Will I be able to take Math 224, Math 223 or Math 220 in a later semester?

Answer: We will give the Placement Test before each semester; you need to pass it before you can take Math 224, Math 223, or Math 220. The best way to improve your score on the Placement Test is to take our Precalculus course, Math 108.

14. I passed the Placement Test but I will not take Math 224, Math 223, or Math 220 next semester. Do I have to take the Placement Test again if I want to take these courses in a later semester?

Answer: Mathematical skills deteriorate rapidly with disuse. Your placement test score will be accepted as prerequisite for Math 224, Math 223, or Math 220 for the semester of the test and for the following semester, but after that you must pass it again.

More precisely: If you take and pass a placement test in the May-September period then that test is for the Fall semester, and it will also be valid for the following Spring. If you take and pass a placement test in the November-February period then that test is for the Spring semester, and it will also be valid for the following Fall.

15. Is the Placement Test a prerequisite for Math 220?

Answer: Yes.

16. Is the Placement Test a prerequisite for Math 224, Math 223, or Math 220 in the Summer and Winter Session?

Answer: Yes.

17. I am retaking Math 220, Math 223, or Math 224 for a better grade. Do I need to retake the placement exam?

Answer: If your grade was C- or better in Math 220, Math 223, or Math 224, you can skip the placement exam. Otherwise, you need to retake it.

From:

<https://www2.math.binghamton.edu/> - **Binghamton University Department of Mathematics and Statistics**

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<https://www2.math.binghamton.edu/p/calculus/placementtestfaq>

Last update: **2023/07/28 18:50**

