I. POLICY STATEMENT

All first-time freshmen and transfer students are required to take the ALEKS PPL placement test unless they have prior credit for an NKU general education mathematics or statistics course. Students should consult with their academic advisor to determine the best course for their program of study, based on the Placement Chart published on the Admissions Office web site. Students may enroll in courses at or below their score range.

The purpose of this policy is to improve success rates in introductory mathematics and statistics courses. ALEKS PPL is a nationally recognized placement test that also incorporates self-paced adaptive remediation through web-based Learning Modules. Students will therefore be advised to take the placement test as soon as possible after admission in order that they may have the opportunity to self-remediate and retest, if desired, before the beginning of their first semester. The test must be taken at least two weeks prior to enrollment.

Students may repeat the ALEKS PPL placement test only once in order to attain a score appropriate for enrollment in the desired course. Students must work a minimum of three hours in the Learning Modules before repeating the placement test.

Currently enrolled students will also be encouraged to obtain placement recommendations through ALEKS PPL before taking their first NKU mathematics or statistics course listed in the Placement Chart.

RATIONALE

Many students have historically been placed into mathematics courses solely on the basis of ACT or SAT scores. Yet these test scores are not well-correlated with success in the associated courses. Among the causes of this problem is the fact that these test scores do not provide enough information about students' mastery of specific mathematical concepts and skills. Additionally, the multiple-choice format of the tests fails to assess the ability to work methodically toward the solution of a problem, as opposed to simply selecting the most likely solution from several presented. Further, there is often significant time between completion of the ACT test and enrollment in the first college mathematics course and students frequently have no reinforcement of mathematical knowledge in the interim.

Because of inappropriate placement, many students do poorly in their first college mathematics course. For example, for the Fall semesters of 2013, 2014, and 2015, the 3-year average DFWI rates for MAT 109 (College Algebra), MAT 119 (Pre-calculus) and MAT 129 (Calculus I) were 43%, 40%, and 39%, respectively. This is typical of other institutions when placement is based on ACT or SAT scores. Yet, other institutions have attained dramatic reductions in DFWI rates when using ALEKS PPL. (See link to case studies in Section XII.) There is every reason to believe that NKU can do likewise.
The benefits would be increased student success, improved retention, decreased time to completion of degree, and decreased cost to students by virtue of fewer repeated courses.

II. ENTITIES AFFECTED


III. DEFINITIONS

ALEKS PPL – ALEKS, which stands for Assessment and LEarnin in Knowledge Spaces, is a web-based learning system that incorporates artificial intelligence design and methodology. It uses adaptive questioning to assess a student’s knowledge, and then instructs the student on appropriate topics while also reinforcing prior knowledge. The ALEKS Placement, Preparation, and Learning (PPL) system combines placement assessment with six months of personalized instruction.

Introductory Mathematics and Statistics Courses – These are the courses most commonly taken by entering students and for which ALEKS placement standards will be established. General Education courses are denoted by *. MAHD090 (Basic Mathematical Skills), MAHD095 (Essential Algebra), MAHD099 (Intermediate Algebra), MAT 109 (Algebra for College Students), MAT/STA 110 (Introductory Probability), MAT 112 (Applied Calculus), MAT 114* (Finite Mathematics), MAT 115* (Mathematics for Liberal Arts), MAT 119 (Pre-calculus Mathematics), MAT 128* (Calculus A), MAT 129* (Calculus I), MAT 185* (Introductory Discrete Mathematics), STA 113* (Probability and Statistics with Elementary Education Applications), STA 205* (Introduction to Statistical Methods), STA 212* (Statistics for Business Applications I).

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

Mathematics and Statistics Department and Learning PLUS – ensure accuracy of placement documents; serve as liaison with ALEKS.

Advisors – maintain knowledge of new requirements and communicate information about the requirements to students.

Admissions – provide placement information to students.

IT – interface ALEKS with SAP.

Testing Services – proctor final placement exam for students not meeting college readiness benchmarks.

Registrar – monitor and certify degree requirements for students.

Student Account Services – Responsible for student billing.

V. PROCEDURES

All entering students who do not already have credit for an NKU General Education mathematics or statistics course will take the ALEKS PPL placement test in order to determine appropriate course placement. Written information about the exam will be provided to all students upon admission to the University, and information will also be posted on the Admissions Office web site.

The ALEKS PPL placement test must be taken at least two weeks prior to enrollment. A student may repeat the placement test once, after having spent at least three hours working in the ALEKS Learning Modules. While the exam is normally not proctored, students who do not meet college readiness benchmarks will take a proctored exam to determine placement into the appropriate course.

Fee – A fee, estimated at $25 per student, will be assessed to each student taking the exam.

VI. TRAINING
Advisors will receive training on the new placement program. The training will include examples to illustrate appropriate guidance for situations in which ACT/SAT placement criteria conflict with placement recommendations based on ALEKS scores. Availability of the associated ALEKS Learning Modules will also be emphasized.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

AAPC and others as required.

VIII. REFERENCES AND RELATED MATERIALS

REFERENCES & FORMS

Link any forms or instructions needed to comply or implement this policy. If links are unavailable, attach forms to this policy as examples.


For Reference, ALEKS Case Studies: [https://www.aleks.com/highered/math/ALEKS_PPL_Case_Study_Brochure.pdf](https://www.aleks.com/highered/math/ALEKS_PPL_Case_Study_Brochure.pdf)

RELATED POLICIES

There are no existing formal NKU policies related to this proposed policy. However, the current mathematics placement chart will need to be revised as indicated in the attachment linked above.

REVISION HISTORY

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Signatures:

Idra M. Corbett, AAPC Co-Chair
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs

Kimberly Scranage, AAPC Co-Chair
Vice President for Enrollment and Degree Management

Sue Ott Rowlands
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Geoffrey S. Mearns
President

10/12/17
Date

1/2/17
Date

1/20/17
Date

1/25/17
Date