

The Mathematics Placement Test

Saint Mary's University
(Winter 2018)

Why is there a Placement Test?

Students come to our university with a very wide range of skills, and experience has shown that many are not quite ready for Math 1210. The purpose of the Placement Test is to assess your level of mathematical preparedness and ensure you are registered in a suitable course. So, while we know it is far from ideal to begin the term with a test, we believe it is in your best long-term interest. You will have to pass the online placement (a grade of 65% or higher) test by 11:59pm, Friday January 12 in order to be allowed to remain in the course.

What does it cover?

The test consists of 40 multiple choice questions covering various “pre-calculus” topics such as straight lines, solving equations, inequalities, logarithms, trigonometry, etc. These topics are summarized in the study guide (separate attachment).

How long will it take?

You will have 50 minutes to complete the test.

How do I take it?

The Placement Test will be available from January 1 to January 12. Log into Brightspace (accessible also through SMUport), select the course “Introductory Calculus I”, click on “Content”, select “Placement test” in the Table of Contents, and follow instructions there. In the Table of Contents you will also find study aids under “Information & Study Guides for Placement Test”.

How do I prepare?

Since the goal of the Placement Test is to ensure you are prepared for Math 1210, we strongly encourage you to brush up on your skills prior to writing the test. We are providing both a study guide and a sample test on the website <http://cs.smu.ca/math1210/> and on Brightspace in the “Information & Study Guides for Placement Test” folder in “Contents”. Please note that the sample test we have provided is similar but not identical to the test you will write. You may wish to consult additional resources of your own choosing.

What are the consequences?

A score of 65% (26/40 or higher) on the Placement Test is required to proceed in Math 1210. If your score is lower, but you have passed Math 1190 before, then you have to go see your course instructor in person to arrange for an exemption. If you have not passed Math 1190 and have not scored 65% or higher on the placement test, then you must withdraw from Math 1210. In this case we strongly encourage you to enrol in Math 1190 so that you can polish your skills and continue to Math 1210 in a later term. **If you choose to stay in the course after failing the placement test and you have not passed Math 1190, then your grade will be F.**

Who must write the test?

Everyone! If you fail the test in all four attempts, but have passed Math 1190 before, then you should see your instructor in person to arrange a permission to stay in the course.