Calculus I Placement Test Information

Thank you for your interest in Calculus I at Duke! The Calculus I Placement Test covers the precalculus prerequisites for Math 111L and is given to ensure you are taking the Calculus I course that best meets your needs. All students interested in taking Math 111L must take the Calculus I Placement Test in lab on Tuesday, August 30, 2022. This includes students on the roster and waitlist, as well as those shopping for courses.

The first 5 minutes of your lab session will be dedicated to introductions, and you will then be given instructions and a link for the Placement Test, a timed (45 minute) online multiple choice assessment. We recommend using a laptop, but a tablet or phone will work as well.

No outside resources are permitted on the Placement Test: that is, no calculators, no internet, no textbooks, no friends, etc. We trust you to abide by these expectations and will ask you to sign the Duke Community Standard. If you wish to work out problems by hand while completing the test online, scratch paper will be provided on which you are welcome to do so.

If you receive extended-time accommodations on assessments, please register with the Student Disability Access Office at https://access.duke.edu/students and email your instructor so that we can set up your accommodations for the Placement Test.

Your score on the Placement Test has no impact whatsoever on your course grade: we administer it solely to support your success in mathematics studies here at Duke by ensuring that you are placed in the Calculus I course that best meets your needs. Departmental data shows that students who score lower on the Placement Test are far more likely to successfully complete Math 105L than they are to pass Math 111L with a grade of C- or above. Students who score below the required threshold on the Placement Test will receive an email the evening of Tuesday, August 30, 2022 with information on dropping Math 111L. Students who score near the threshold will also be notified but will not be required to drop the course.

Please feel no obligation to study or prepare for the Placement Test: it is designed to assess the precalculus knowledge you already have, and focuses on conceptual understanding as opposed to memorization. However, if you are interested in reviewing precalculus content and/or getting a sense of the topics covered on the Placement Test, please see the department’s Pre-Calc SelfAssessment at https://math.duke.edu/undergraduate/course-placement/self-assessments.

As noted above, the Placement Test is multiple-choice and is more conceptual than computational. This self-assessment is not the same format, but will give you an idea of the topics covered.) You might also find it helpful to look at Sections 1.1-1.6 of our Math 111L textbook, Calculus by Hughes-Hallett, et al., which reviews precalculus information, or any of the many precalculus materials freely available online, such as through Khan Academy. (See textbook access info at https://services.math.duke.edu/~viel/Math111L_F22_TextbookInfo.pdf). Please also do not focus on achieving a particular score on the Placement Test: recall again that it has no impact on your course grade, and is given solely to support your success by helping to place you in the appropriate Calculus I course.

For discussions on math placement in advance of the first day of class, please see the Math Department’s placement guidelines at https://math.duke.edu/undergraduate/course-placement/guidelines. You may also find it helpful to attend the Fall Math Placement Open House scheduled for Saturday Aug 27 from 9:00AM – 12:00PM in Room #123 of the Physics Building, or to email the Math 111L course coordinator Prof. Shira Viel at shira.viel@duke.edu, or the Math 105L course coordinator Prof. Rann Bar-On at rann@math.duke.edu.

Thank you! We look forward to meeting you soon.