

February 1, 2020

Dear Incoming Department of Public Administration and International Affairs students:

Welcome to the Maxwell School! We look forward to a terrific academic year and are excited for such a wonderful class of incoming students.

Given the importance of mathematics in our curriculum, we ask that all incoming students review key algebraic and geometric principles. Students must demonstrate proficiency in these concepts prior to the fall term to register for our core courses in economics and statistics. Our goal is to improve your understanding of course content and performance. We are confident that these resources will ensure success for all.

There are two ways to demonstrate this proficiency. (1) Scoring 158 or higher (740 on the old scale) on the GRE's Quantitative Reasoning section or (2) demonstrating a mastery of 85% or higher on the math review at ALEKS.com, a web-based assessment system.

**To re-state, here is how to meet our basic mathematical proficiency requirement:**

- 1. Determine whether your GRE scores demonstrate proficiency in basic math concepts. (i.e. did you score a 158 or higher on the GRE-Q?)**
- 2. If not, then access the ALEKS course at the [ALEKS website \(www.aleks.com\)](http://www.aleks.com), and create an account. Using the 10-character class code (N6A6P-Y9WRK) provides six weeks of access to the "Maxwell Summer Math Refresher" for \$40.**
- 3. Complete the ALEKS online course with 85% mastery by August 21, 2020.**

The ALEKS course starts with a diagnostic test, determining what topics you need to review. ALEKS then creates a personalized mini-course to work through over the summer. For each topic, it offers instructions, practice problems, and worksheets.

As the core courses will acquaint you with topics you have not used for several years, or were not exposed to in the past, we encourage everyone to review these skills through the ALEKS course. For more information, please see the attached the FAQ's on the ALEKS course.

We look forward to meeting you soon.

Sincerely,

Professors Sarah Hamersma, Len Lopoo, and Pete Wilcoxon  
(on behalf of all of the core area faculty)

## Mathematics Proficiency FAQ's

### 1. **What specific math skills are needed?**

Basic algebraic and geometric principles. The topics covered in the ALEKS course are below:

- Real Numbers (e.g. fractions, decimals, exponents and integers, order of operations, absolute value);
- Equations and Inequalities (e.g. solving two-step equations, solving linear equations and inequalities);
- Exponents and Polynomials (e.g. evaluating expressions with exponents, scientific notation);
- Lines and System (e.g. plotting in the coordinate plane, graphic and line, writing the equation of a line);
- Function and Graphs (e.g. finding inputs and outputs of a function from its graph, graphing a parabola);
- Radical Expressions (e.g. square root functions, rational exponents);
- Geometry (e.g. area of a square, area of a triangle).

### 2. **How can I demonstrate proficiency?**

Scoring 158 or higher on the Quantitative Reasoning section of the GRE (or 740 or higher on the old scale) OR completing the ALEKS online course with a minimum of 85% overall mastery).

### 3. **What if my GRE score was below 158 (or 740 on the old scale)?**

You must use the ALEKS program. It is focused on the skills needed for our program and will even benefit those with a GRE-Q score of 158 or above.

### 4. **How to I access ALEKS?**

To access the customized ALEKS math review course, follow the instructions below. Access to the review is available at a cost of \$40 for six weeks. You are expected to work through the course, demonstrating an overall mastery of 85% by August 21, 2020. Trust us, the time, money, and effort you put into this preparation will pay off when you being the program this fall.

We encourage you to begin early (before June 30) with your initial assessment so that you can have some idea of how much review will be required for you to reach proficiency and can pace yourself as needed. Even once you have reached the 85% mastery level, we recommend going beyond that in order to be as prepared as possible for the fall core.



**How to access the Course:**

1. Click on “Sign Up Now” on the left-side of the ALEKS.com home page beneath the “Registered Users” box;
2. Enter the following course code in the “Using ALEKS with a Class” box: “N6A6P-Y9WRK”. The code is not case-sensitive.
3. The next page asks you to confirm that you are enrolling in the right class. The top line in the box should say “Maxwell Summer Math Refresher”. If that is correct, click “Continue”.
4. You will be asked whether you have used ALEKS before;
5. On the subsequent screen, click “Purchase an Access Code”;
6. You will see a screen that says you are registered for “Maxwell Summer Math Refresher”.
7. Complete the requested information and follow the remaining prompts.
8. Good luck in completing your 85% mastery by August 21, 2020.