What is ACCUPLACER?

ACCUPLACER is a computerized test used by Lethbridge College to determine your placement into various courses and/or programs. The test is made up of several sections that allow you to show your knowledge and skills in different areas. Depending on what program you have applied for and what your educational history is, you may be required to take all or some of the following ACCUPLACER sections:

- Arithmetic
- Elementary Algebra
- Reading Comprehension
- Sentence Skills
- Essay Writing (WritePlacer) – typed or handwritten

With the exception of the WritePlacer portion, the test questions are entirely multiple choice. ACCUPLACER software selects test questions that are appropriate for you based on your answers to previous questions. For example, if you respond correctly to the first question, the software will select a more difficult second question for you. If you respond incorrectly, the software will select a less difficult second question for you. This means that it is very unlikely that any two people will answer exactly the same test questions.

Why do I need to take it?

ACCUPLACER is used to assess the English and/or math skills of:
- Mature students who do not meet program entrance requirements through prior studies, and
- Applicants requiring placement in College and University Preparation (Upgrading) courses.

Your goal when taking these tests is to demonstrate your skills and knowledge, so you can be placed appropriately in college programs or Upgrading classes. If you do not meet the entrance requirements for a particular program, your test scores can be used by our staff to recommend an alternative course of study.

What do the scores mean? How are they used?

Because the test is completed on a computer, your test is scored immediately upon completion. The multiple-choice portions are scored on a scale from 20 to 120 points (not a percentage),
with higher scores showing more advanced skills. The WritePlacer portion is scored on a scale from 1 to 8, with a score of 8 showing clear and consistent mastery of on-demand essay writing. ACCUPLACER is not a test that you can pass or fail, but since your results will help guide your placement in programs and courses at Lethbridge College, it’s important that you do your best.

Different programs have different pre-requisite scores. To better understand the requirements for your prospective program, you can consult the latest academic calendar (available at www.lethbridgecollege.ca/admissions/academic-calendar) or contact one of our Admissions Specialists (by email: admissions@lethbridgecollege.ca; or phone 403-320-3323, option 1).

What can I expect to see on the test?

Depending on what program you are applying for, you may be required to write the full ACCUPLACER, or you may only be asked to write specific sections of the test. Here is a summary of the various portions of ACCUPLACER:

- **Arithmetic**
  - Measures a student’s ability to perform basic arithmetic operations and to solve problems involving fundamental arithmetic concepts. The content areas are:
    - Whole numbers and fractions
    - Decimals and percentages
    - Applications and problem solving
  - 17 multiple choice questions, no time limit

- **Elementary Algebra**
  - Measures a student’s ability to perform basic algebraic operations and to solve problems involving elementary algebra. The content areas are:
    - Integers and rational numbers
    - Algebraic expressions
    - Equations, inequalities, and word problems
  - 12 multiple choice questions, no time limit

- **Reading Comprehension**
  - Measures a student’s ability to understand what he or she has read. The content areas include:
    - identifying main ideas
    - direct statements and secondary ideas
    - inferences
    - applications
  - 20 multiple choice questions, no time limit

- **Sentence Skills**
  - Measures a student’s understanding of sentence structure (i.e., how sentences are put together to be complete and clear). The content areas include:
    - recognizing complete sentences
    - coordination/subordination
    - clear sentence logic
  - 20 multiple choice questions, no time limit
○ **Essay Writing (WritePlacer)**
  ○ Measures a student’s ability to write an on-demand essay when given a randomly assigned topic
    ▪ Essays are scored based on purpose and focus, organization and structure, development and support, sentence variety and style, mechanical conventions, and critical thinking.
  ○ 1 essay with a one-hour time limit

For a more detailed breakdown of what to expect in each section, visit [http://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/students/accuplacer-tests](http://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/students/accuplacer-tests).

**How long does the test take?**

With the exception of the WritePlacer section, there is no time limit for the test. Typically, it takes approximately two (2) to three (3) hours to complete the full ACCUPLACER (roughly 30 minutes for each multiple choice section and one hour for the WritePlacer).

**Can I review my answers at the end before submitting my finished test?**

No, you can’t. This is because each answer you submit affects what question you’ll get next. ACCUPLACER asks you to confirm each answer before going on to the next question.

**What resources do I need to bring to the test?**

You will need to bring photo ID to write at Lethbridge College Testing Services. You will not be allowed to bring cell phones or electronics (e.g., calculator), hooded clothing, jackets, purses, backpacks, hats, etc. into the testing room, but you can store them in our lockers while you complete the assessment. For the test itself, you will not be allowed any materials other than scrap paper and writing materials, which we will provide. For certain math questions, an on-screen calculator with basic functions will also be available to you.

**How often can I take the test?**

ACCUPLACER provides an accurate assessment of foundational math and language arts skills, so repeated testing likely will not result in significantly improved scores, unless considerable work is completed to improve these skills. For this reason, each individual is limited to three test attempts within any twelve-month period. Test scores are valid for two years.

**What happens if I don’t get the scores I need?**

If you don’t get the scores you need, you will have the option of retesting after two weeks have passed. During this two week period, you are expected to complete further study and practice in order to prepare yourself for the retest. If you don’t get the scores you need on your retest,
you will need to wait a period of three months before being allowed a third attempt. You are allowed a maximum of three test attempts within any twelve-month period.

Do I have to pay for the test?

Prior to testing, you must pay your application fee, which includes the fee for placement testing and one rewrite. To see our current fee structure, visit www.lethbridgecollege.ca/testing.

Are there accommodations for students with disabilities?

If you have a documented disability, you may be eligible for testing accommodations through Accessibility Services. You can contact them at (403) 320-3202 ext. 5400.

What happens after I write the test? What do I need to do?

After you write the test, your scores will be forwarded to Admissions for review.
  o If you have applied to a post-secondary program, Admissions will contact you by letter or email to explain the outcome of your test. This is usually sent within 48 hours of receiving your scores. If your scores don’t meet the cut score requirements, you’ll be told which sections of the ACCUPLACER you need to rewrite if you want to try again. Otherwise, you can talk to an Admissions Specialist to discuss other options.
  o If you have applied for Upgrading, course placement recommendations will be made for you based on your test results. Once those are complete (within 1-2 business days), you can meet with an Academic Advisor to review your course placement. You can call 403-320-3202 (ext. 4905) or stop by our Student Services desk to book an appointment with an advisor. If you believe your recommendations to be low, you have the option of rewriting the ACCUPLACER and having your recommendations re-assessed.

If you choose to rewrite the ACCUPLACER, you are required to wait at least two weeks before trying again, and it is highly recommended that you use that time to prepare for the test.
  o If you applied to a post-secondary program and your scores still don’t meet the cut score requirements, you may wish to speak with an Admissions Specialist at this time.
  o If you applied for Upgrading, you can meet with an academic advisor again to review any updated recommendations.

Do I need to prepare for the test?

Absolutely! Undoubtedly! No question about it!

ACCUPLACER is a unique assessment with unique questions covering a broad range of material. If you take the time to study the various question types found on the test (which may be different from questions you’re used to seeing), you’ll be far more successful on test day. If you take the time to study and refresh yourself on the subject matter being tested, you’ll be even more successful. Remember, this assessment will play a role in what program or courses you’re
placed in at the college. It’s far better to be prepared than to come to the assessment not knowing what to expect. Additionally, the importance of preparation increases the longer you’ve been out of school. If it has been a while since you were in a classroom, don’t underestimate the value of preparation.

How can I prepare for it?

It is very important that you do some preparation before coming to write the ACCUPLACER, and it will be worth it to put in time and effort to get ready. **A good place to start would be the four self-assessments found on the Placement Testing page on our website** (www.lethbridgecollege.ca/testing). These self-assessments are practice tests that you complete and mark on your own. Once you do that, you are given information about which subject areas to study based on the questions you answered incorrectly.

There is also an official ACCUPLACER web-based study app available at https://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/students/prepare-for-accuplacer.

Here are some basic tips for preparing:
- Focus your energy on the content areas mentioned on page 2.
- Don’t rely only on memorization to prepare for math. It will be far more helpful to do practice problems and put your skills to work.
- The same advice is useful in preparing for the sentence skills portion. Don’t just memorize grammar rules. Do practice problems to make sure you can use your knowledge correctly.
- Prepare for the reading comprehension portion by reading, even if you’re reading newspapers, magazines, or online material. Whatever you read, ask yourself questions. What are the main and supporting ideas? What is the author’s purpose for writing this text? How does the author develop his/her ideas? What is the tone of the text?
- To prepare for the essay, review essay-writing formats and strategies to make sure you can organize and develop your ideas properly.
- Reviewing language arts and math terminology will also help.

There are a number of tools available both online and at Lethbridge College to help you to get ready for writing the ACCUPLACER. We’ve identified some of them on the following pages.

After you have gone through some practice materials and identified possible trouble spots, you can contact the Learning Café at Lethbridge College for help with these areas. Except for during the summer months, our staff is available for half hour appointments to help you with any questions you may have, or for ten-minute drop-in sessions. The Learning Café is found in the Buchanan Library at Lethbridge College. Please contact them at 403-382-6952 or learningcafe@lethbridgecollege.ca. For further information, visit www.lethbridgecollege.ca/learningcafe.
ACCUPLACER Preparation Sites

Official ACCUPLACER Preparation Materials

https://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/students/prepare-for-accuplacer
  o FREE Web-based study app that features practice questions (with explanations) for all test sections
  o App can be accessed from your computer, tablet or smartphone

http://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/students
  o General information on the test, along with a link to the practice app
  o Also links to official practice questions in all of the test areas, along with answer keys for checking your work. The Free Sample Questions can be found on the right-hand side of the page. These are an accurate sample of the kinds of questions you might see on the ACCUPLACER test.

Self-Assessment Materials

  o Self-assessments on four tests: Reading Comprehension, Sentence Skills, Arithmetic, Elementary Algebra
  o Used to identify weak areas to help you focus your studying

Websites with Both Instructional and Practice Materials

http://www.studyguidezone.com/accuplacetest.htm
  o Scroll down for links to free instructional and practice resources for sentence skills, reading comprehension, and arithmetic
  o Also includes a detailed, 50-page study guide with information on specific test concepts.
    **Please note: Any references the guide makes to the multiple choice tests being timed are outdated and can be ignored.

http://www.rrcc.edu/assessment/accuplac_test.html
  o Instructional and practice resources

http://www.nv.edu/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=mrG39USvisU%3D&tabid=397&mid=1908
  o Test taker’s guide with practice questions

http://www.msjc.edu/StudentServices/AssessmentandPlacement/Pages/Assessment-Test-Study-Resources.aspx
  o Study guides with instruction and practice questions (just click “Cancel” if asked for log-in information)

More Practice Questions

http://demo-test.accuplacer-test.com/
  o A practice test that provides instant feedback on your responses

http://www.testprepreview.com/accuplacer_practice.htm
  o Self-assessment modules for many key ACCUPLACER content areas
Instructional Videos

http://www.cpcc.edu/testing_assessment/placement-testing/accuplacer-study-guides/accuplacer-review-videos-coming-soon
  o The practice tests on this page can’t be accessed, but the instructional videos cover many key ACCUPLACER content areas

http://www.khanacademy.org/
  o Hundreds of math instructional videos available (not ACCUPLACER specific)
  o You can also use this detailed mapping chart to identify Khan Academy resources that address ACCUPLACER-specific math topics
    ▪ http://s3.amazonaws.com/KA-share/Toolkit-photos/For%20Higher%20Education/NEBHE_Accuplacer_mapping.docx

Math Websites

http://www.khanacademy.org/
  o Hundreds of math instructional videos available

http://www.purplemath.com/
  o Instruction on several math topics

http://www.math.com/
  o Instruction on several math topics

http://www.sosmath.com/algebra/algebra.html
  o Instruction on several math topics

https://oli.cmu.edu/jcourse/webui/guest/activity.do?context=4d13c42980020ca6003f9358306acee8
  o You can create a log-in on this free website or enter without a login (though your work will not be saved). Unit 1: Mathematics has a number of useful resources.

English Websites

http://www.lethbridgecollege.net/elearningcafe/
  o Lethbridge College’s eLearning Café provides information on writing an essay, as well as links to a number of other helpful English-related resources

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/
  o General writing resources (mechanics, grammar, and punctuation will be especially helpful)

http://lklivingston.tripod.com/essay/index.html
  o Guide to writing a basic essay