



## G6 to G12 Math Placement Testing Frequently Asked Questions

After students have been accepted, it is our desire to place them at the appropriate math level at Concordia based on the level of skills they have mastered to date. We do not want to enroll students in courses that are a complete review of skills they have mastered, nor do we want to place them in courses in which students are expected to use foundational skills they have not yet mastered. For this reason, we have worked very hard to develop comprehensive Placement Exams that measure skills in order to best place students in the math class that is most appropriate for them at Concordia.

**1. Does every new student in Grade 6 to Grade 12 write a math Placement Exam?**

- Yes, every new student writes an assessment to determine math placement.
- Every new Grade 9 to Grade 12 student will be tested for Algebra 1 skills, at a minimum.
- If a new Grade 6 to Grade 8 student is currently enrolled in Algebra 1 or a more advanced math course, the student will first be tested for Pre-Algebra skills followed by Algebra 1 skills if the Pre-Algebra Placement Exam results show sufficient skill mastery to continue testing.
- Based on the results of the Placement Exam, a student may not necessarily be placed in the successive course that they would have entered at their previous school.

**2. When is the Placement Exam scheduled?**

For students who enroll at the start of the school year, the exam is at Concordia on Student Orientation Day, usually four or five days before the first day of school. You will receive a detailed schedule regarding the time and location. Exams are scheduled individually for students who enroll at any other point during the school year.

**3. What if I took a math test during the application process? Do I still need to take the Placement Exam?**

Yes.

**4. How long will the Placement Exam take?**

Students are allowed 90 minutes to take the Placement Exam for Algebra I or higher. Lower level Placement Exam testing times will vary depending on the grade level and diagnostic used.

**5. Are calculators allowed for the Placement Exam?**

No. Calculators are not allowed during the Placement Exam, regardless of the exam's level.

**6. How many questions and of what type are on the Placement Exam?**

The exam is a comprehensive test of skills on which students **must** demonstrate mastery before a student advances to the successive math course. The number of questions may vary depending on the exam; the exams are developed with the testing period in mind, **without the aid of a calculator**.

**7. What if my child doesn't finish the exam in the time allowed?**

Students with demonstrated concept mastery will have no difficulty completing the Placement Exam in the time allowed. Additional testing time is not given.

**8. Doesn't Concordia look at the transcript and schedule my child for the next class in sequence?**

We do look at the transcript, but this gives us only an indication of a student's performance in a math course in a different school. A transcript gives us very little information regarding the rigor of the course, how much material is covered, skill mastery, or how the grade is determined. The student's **demonstrated** mastery of the content and skills is the most important factor when determining math course placement.

**9. Aren't math courses the same among schools?**

No. Math courses vary greatly from school to school, state to state, and country to country. For instance, Algebra 1 is not Algebra 1 around the world. We have many students come to Concordia with an "Honors" or "Pre-AP" designation that **do not** receive credit at Concordia for their prior work. If the demonstrated skills on the Placement Exam are weak, a student will re-do a math course at Concordia, regardless of whether the student has received credit for the course at a previous school.

**10. Is it possible that my child may be required to repeat a math course?**

Yes, it is possible, depending on how a student performs on the Placement Exam. For example, if a student is scheduled for Geometry in their previous school, Concordia will test for Algebra 1 skills. If there are gaps in his/her Algebra 1 skills, then the student will be scheduled for Algebra 1 at Concordia regardless of the letter grade earned or course designation in the previous school.

**11. My family is only in Shanghai for a short time and repeating a math course will cause my child to fall behind at their home school. Can a child be placed in the course that will keep him/her on-track for our repatriation?**

No. A student will be placed in the appropriate math course at Concordia based on his/her performance on the Placement Exam, not necessarily in the math course that would keep a student on-track for repatriation. Our math department is committed to ensuring a student's success while taking courses at Concordia. Since our standards are high, math placement is based on the results of the Placement Exam. In order for a student to be advanced beyond grade level, the student must demonstrate significant mastery of the skills on the exam.

**12. What are the grade level math courses?**

- Grade 9 – Algebra 1
- Grade 10 – Geometry
- Grade 11 – Algebra 2
- Grade 12 – Pre-calculus

Some students move through the sequence at an earlier grade. However, this is only true if they demonstrate a significant skill mastery and natural aptitude in mathematics.

**13. Should my child prepare for the Placement Exam?**

**Absolutely.** The more you can do to build your child's mastery of the necessary math skills the better. Having said that, it is your decision whether or not to prepare for the exam. However, since math placement is determined by the performance on the Placement Exam, refreshing math skills, particularly during the summer months, may help your child perform better.

Concordia's website (<http://www.concordiashanghai.org> then follow the Admissions Criteria link) has resources to help prepare for the exam. Or visit <http://www.concordiashanghai.org/academics/high-school/math-resource> to go directly to the review page.

**14. What if my child is jet-lagged when he/she writes the Placement Exam and does not perform up to his/her potential? Can my child re-write the exam?**

No. We do not allow re-writes for math placement purposes. Please ensure your child is well rested before the Placement Exam. You may wish to consider arriving earlier to Shanghai and adjusting to the time change well before the Placement Exam. The skills we test for should be ones the students "own" regardless of outside factors.

**15. What if I disagree with the math placement for my child? Can I review the Placement Exam and appeal the placement?**

No. You are welcome to make an appointment with our Math Department to discuss the errors made on the exam, but the placement decision is final. The Math Department carefully considers each new student's admission materials including transcript, current math teacher comments, current math course, etc. Naturally, a student must demonstrate significant mastery of the math skills on the Placement Exam in order to be advanced beyond grade level.

Also, since the Placement Exam is used each year, we do not review the actual exam after testing. We will analyze the exam and prepare a list of topics that were not secure on the exam. This analysis allows parents and students to focus attention on areas of concern.