

# University of Texas at El Paso

## Why ALEKS was Chosen

One of the Developmental Math Department's most successful initiatives is the summer bridge program, Mad Dog Math (MDM), which began in 2007. At the time, only 23% of students who placed two semesters below college-level math and 37% of students who placed one semester below college-level math were graduating within six years. To address this, ALEKS was piloted and it became clear that it was the system to choose. Today, more than 70% of students in the MDM program are successfully completing the program and subsequently passing their college-level math courses.

## Institution Profile

The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) is home to a majority Hispanic student population, many of whom are first-generation college students. UTEP is proud of its long history of fostering diversity with a campus of more than 22,600 students. Since it began as a small mining school in 1914, UTEP has been committed to providing access and excellence to those seeking a higher education.

## Implementation

The purpose of the MDM program is to reduce time to degree by moving students through developmental math in the summer prior to fall enrollment, and to increase student success in the college-level math courses by providing a strong foundation in critical math skills.

MDM follows the UTEP New Student Orientation schedule each summer. Students who attend orientation have two opportunities to take the ACCUPLACER in order to place out of developmental math. If they do not, they are recruited into the MDM program. The program covers Beginning and Intermediate Algebra. Students are required to complete a minimum of 14 hours each week—seven hours in the MDM campus lab and seven hours on their own. They are allowed to complete more than one course in a summer.



**Course: Developmental Math**

**Implementation: Summer Bridge Program**

**ALEKS Instructor: Denise Lujan**

**Enrollment: Approx. 590 students**

**Case Study Term: Summer 2008 -  
Summer 2011**

## Results Achieved

MDM has proven to be one of the most successful initiatives that UTEP's Developmental Math Department offers by providing opportunities for educational advancement to incoming freshmen. Additionally, MDM students are followed for success in their subsequent credit-level math courses. The students who went through ALEKS passed their college-level course at a higher rate. The success of the MDM program has given the Developmental Math Department the confidence to develop other new approaches and implement new policies that contribute to student success.

MDM Placement Levels	Passing Rates			
	2008	2009	2010	2011
Below Beginning Algebra	83%	69%	77%	85%
Math 0310 (Beginning Algebra)	90%	80%	55%	71%
Math 0311 (Intermediate Algebra)	79%	65%	63%	76%

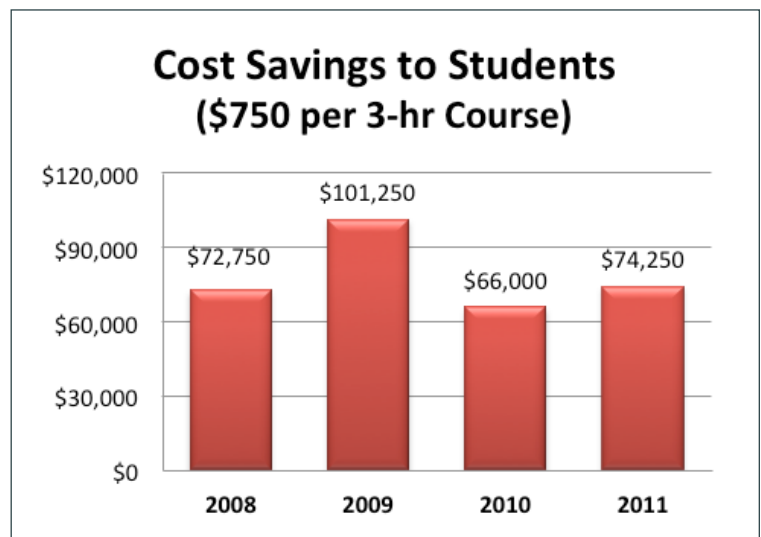
*Note 1: Starting in 2010, TAKS 2200 rule impacted the number of eligible students and lowered placement scores.*

*Note 2: All information came from UTEP's Banner student information system.*

*Note 3: Table does not reflect those who completed more than one course in the program.*

## Additional Benefits

There have been many positive benefits to students and the institution from the MDM program. These benefits include increased math confidence, expanded innovative math programs, state and national recognition, and the expansion of ALEKS into semester courses. MDM has also saved students the cost of courses, thereby allowing them to move toward their degree more quickly.



### What Students are Saying about ALEKS

“The best thing about the program was that for once I was actually understanding the material put in front of me, and I was allowed the time I needed to complete the program.”

“I’ve tried everything from tutoring to self-help books, and I always seemed to get grades no higher than a 75%. When I completed ALEKS, my final assessment was a 96%, the highest I have ever gotten. Plus, I was even able to retain the information I was taught.”

“With ALEKS, students have to continually prove that they understand the material. The mastery-based learning is what the students need to succeed. We also found that students who went through ALEKS passed their college-level course at a higher rate.”

– Prof. Denise Lujan



# University of Texas at El Paso

## Why ALEKS was Chosen

In 2007, UTEP's Developmental Math Department was tasked with finding a way to move students more quickly through their developmental math courses and to help them be more successful in their next math course. The department first created a summer bridge program that used ALEKS as the system for the course work. It was so successful that ALEKS was incorporated into the semester courses.

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## Implementation

A full implementation of ALEKS began in 2009, with three instructors using it for the fall, then it expanded to all instructors in the spring of 2010, and to all sections and instructors in the fall of 2010. The only required tools for the course are ALEKS and the ALEKS Student Notebook (developed by the department). The notebook is sold in the bookstore and bundled with the ALEKS access code, and was designed to help students not only learn math but also to develop strong study and organizational skills.

## Course Structure:

All classes are conducted in a math lab, where student attendance is mandatory. Students have a benchmark in both hours and percentage completion every other week. They must meet one of the benchmarks to remain in the class. The hourly goals are the same for each student, while the percentage completion goals are defined by the individual student's initial assessment score. For example, a student with an initial assessment score of 5% will be required to meet different percentage goals each week than a student whose initial assessment is 30%.



**Course: Beginning & Int Algebra**

**Implementation: Emporium**

**ALEKS Instructor: Denise Lujan**

**Enrollment: Approx. 2,880 students**

**Case Study Term: Fall 2009 - Fall 2012**

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## Course Grade:

Students must fill their ALEKS Pie to 85% and take a proctored comprehensive final given in ALEKS with a minimum score of 70% to pass the course. Finals are offered once a month during the first part of the semester and twice a month during the last months, which allows students to finish the course early.

## Results Achieved

Students who took an ALEKS developmental math course are doing well in their next math course. The pass rates are steadily improving in both developmental math courses with ALEKS. The drop in 2011 for Beginning Algebra is due to the lowering of the cut score in order to allow students at a lower level to take the course. Since then, the communication with these students has been revamped and the pass rate increased the next fall.

Beginning Algebra Pass Rates		Pass Rate in NEXT Math Course			
		Intermediate Algebra	Math for Liberal Arts	Math for Social Sciences	Pre-Calculus
2005 – 2008	60%	50%	91%	50%	38%
2009	53%	65%	100%	73%	47%
2010	75%	50%	100%	87%	14%
2011	54%	68%	100%	80%	25%
2012	70%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Intermediate Algebra Pass Rates		Pass Rate in NEXT Math Course		
		Math for Liberal Arts	Math for Social Sciences	Pre-Calculus
2005 – 2008	53%	100%	60%	56%
2009	65%	100%	73%	47%
2010	65%	100%	76%	57%
2011	68%	100%	80%	76%
2012	75%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note 1: The one area of concern is Pre-Calculus, and steps are being taken to address this.

Note 2: The drop in 2011 for Beginning Algebra is due to us lowering the cut score.

### What Students are Saying about ALEKS

“I’ve almost become obsessed with ALEKS. It’s like instant gratification. I turn to it when I get frustrated or tired of doing something else. I’ve NEVER done well in math, and I’m actually pretty proud of my interest/accomplishment/understanding of math now. I LOVE ALEKS!!”

“I’m really grateful for ALEKS. Going into the next level of mathematics, I feel confident I will do great.”

“I’ve tried everything from tutoring to self-help books and I always seem to get grades no higher than a 75%. When I completed ALEKS my final assessment was a 96%, the highest I have ever gotten. Plus I was even able to retain the information I was taught.”

“The absolute biggest benefit of ALEKS is that students are able to work on what they need to work on, instead of having to follow the path of the weakest student in the course or a path that is determined by a calendar.”

– Prof. Denise Lujan