Vanderbilt University Chemistry Preparation (VUCP)

Vanderbilt University Chemistry Prep is available between June and August each year. This preparation course is online and used to determine whether a student is prepared for Chemistry 1601. The VUCP comprises of 2 components within the same system: 1) The Placement Exam (initial VUCP knowledge check), and 2) the completion (100%) of the topics determined by the Placement Exam. The VUCP is mandatory for all students enrolled in CHEM 1601. To remain enrolled in CHEM 1601 for the FALL semester, a score of 100% for the VUCP is required prior to the end of the add-drop period during the first week of classes.

Deadline for VUCP Summer Prep Course Fall 2018: August 29, 2018 at 11:59 pm.

Why do I have to take the VUCP placement exam and Summer Prep Course?
We want you to succeed in CHEM 1601. CHEM 1601 is taught at a fast pace and the instructors will assume that all students have a good background in both mathematics and some fundamentals of chemistry. (Keep in mind, many students may not have worked on chemistry since their 10th grade year of high school.) It is necessary for you to take the test to ensure that your math and chemistry are strong enough for you to succeed in CHEM 1601. Completion of the ALEKS assessment with mastery of 100% of the topics in the Summer Prep Course will allow you to remain enrolled in CHEM 1601. The instructors have gathered data, and continue to do so, correlating specific skill levels with CHEM 1601 performance. We want you to succeed!

The Summer Prep course may require for you to study and learn some new material before you begin CHEM 1601. Students come to college chemistry with a variety of backgrounds and levels of preparation. THE VUCP will not only assess where you are but will tutor you in those areas you need to be successful in CHEM 1601.

Tips for Succeeding with the VUCP Initial Placement Exam:

• The initial placement exam will only take 60-90 minutes, but working through assigned material to fill any gaps in the Summer Prep Course will take longer. Start at least 3 weeks before the start of classes.

• ALEKS, the artificial intelligence-based teaching tool behind the VUCP, will only present information that meets the following criteria: you don’t already know how to do it AND you are ready to learn it based on what you already know. This means that you must take the initial VUCP placement exam carefully and honestly (no guessing!) so that ALEKS will present you with the material you need.

• On the initial VUCP placement exam never click the “I don’t know” button unless you truly have no idea how to approach a problem. Otherwise, ALEKS might make you review information you don’t need.

• Everyone’s path through the VUCP will be different. ALEKS will tell you what you need to learn, if anything, to help you track your progress in the pie chart learning mode. When you complete the initial VUCP placement exam focus on what you need to know and don’t worry about your classmates. Completing any portion of the VUCP with outside help or completing any portion of the VUCP for someone else is a violation of the Vanderbilt Honor Code.
What does the VUCP (Initial Exam and Summer Prep Course) Cover?

- Math and Algebra
- Measurements – SI Units, unit conversions, dimensional analysis
- Matter – mass, volume, density, atomic theory, the elements
- Atoms, Ions, and Molecules – atomic structure, molecular and ionic compounds
- Stoichiometry – moles, molar mass, equations, reaction and solution stoichiometry

What happens if I do not achieve a 100% in the Summer Prep Course by August 29, 2018?

Technically, you will not be allowed to remain enrolled in CHEM 1601. For Fall 2018, you will need to see Dr. Tara Todd if this situation arises. The Summer Prep Course, additionally, will be built into the ALEKS homework component of the course, and will be worth 5% of the homework score for the semester. If your score is not 100%, then you receive a 0 for the first homework assignment (objective).

Where can I find the VUCP?

The VUCP initial placement exam and Summer Prep course are available online at www.aleks.com. The class code is NUNY9-MNETF. Please use your Vanderbilt issued email address and VUnetID when registering for the VUCP course on ALEKS.

What if I have a problem with the software while I am using it?

ALEKS provides excellent support their software. See http://support.aleks.com (select higher education science on line 5 of the web form to ensure your query is routed to someone who specializes in chemistry support). No one in the department of chemistry at Vanderbilt can provide you with competent technical support for ALEKS. Please do not write to faculty or technical support people at Vanderbilt with ALEKS questions.

When should I take the VUCP initial placement exam?

You should take the VUCP as early as you can before the start of the semester. (We recommend at least 3 weeks prior to the start of the semester.) We know from our students' use of ALEKS in the past, the more a student practices in ALEKS, the more prepared they are to begin CHEM 1601 and the more likely they are to earn a higher grade by the end of the semester.

How much does the VUCP cost?

The initial assessment and Summer Prep course are FREE for Vanderbilt students.

What if I am going to take CHEM 2211, use my AP/IB credit for CHEM 1601/02, or am planning to take CHEM 1601 next year?

The VUCP is only required for students taking CHEM 1601 during the current academic year. If you will be taking CHEM 2211, using your AP credit for CHEM 1601/02, or are planning on taking CHEM 1601 next year you do not need to take the VUCP at this time.

What if I have more questions?

Please contact Dr. Tara Todd at tara.todd@vanderbilt.edu.