

What is academic literacy?

Academic literacy refers to the ability to successfully navigate, understand, interpret, and produce texts in the academic environment. Regardless of their field of study, students will be required to read and comprehend academic texts and to display their understanding by producing information in the form of essays, assignments, examination questions and reports in order to successfully complete a degree.

Most students face many challenges when they transfer from school to university and may not be aware of the demands of higher education in terms of workload and independent learning, or they may be under-prepared academically. Research shows that students' poor performance at university is often linked to their lack of academic literacy abilities.

In order to support students in acquiring these academic literacy abilities, the NWU offers two Academic literacy modules at first-year level: Academic Literacy Development in English (ALDE 111) or Academic Literacy Development in Afrikaans (ALDA 111) offered in the first semester and ALDE 122 or ALDA 122 offered in the second semester. ALL undergraduate students who register at the North-West University for the first time are required to register for these academic literacy modules. Students must pass these modules before they can graduate. For more information, please visit the [website](#).

Who should complete the Academic Literacy modules?

All undergraduate students who register at the North-West University for the first time are required to complete the two modules in academic literacy. Students must pass these modules before they can graduate.

What does ALDE/ALDA 111 entail?

ALDE/ALDA 111 is an introductory module for the development of academic literacy abilities in the university context. The focus is predominantly on accessing information (reading and comprehending academic texts). This module is only offered in the first semester. ALDE/ALDA 111 is a prerequisite for ALDE/ALDA 122. In order to pass ALDE/ALDA 111 a student must do one of two things:

1. The student needs to obtain a module mark of at least 50% for ALDE/ALDA 111.
2. The student needs to obtain a score in a proficiency test (referred to as the TALL/TAG test) that indicates that the student does not show risk in terms of academic literacy abilities. If the student obtains such a score for the test, he/she can receive recognition for the ALDE/ALDA 111 module, unless the faculty the student is registered in requires the student to complete the ALDE/ALDA 111 module, regardless of the test score.

Further explanation of faculty requirements for ALDE/ALDA 111

Regardless of their proficiency test score, ALDE/ALDA 111 is **compulsory** for **ALL** students in the **faculty of Law** and **MOST** students in the **faculty of Natural Sciences**, as it forms part of their curriculum. Students enrolled in the following programmes within the Faculty of Natural Sciences are

not required to complete ALDE/ALDA 111 if they obtain a score indicating “not at risk” for the proficiency test:

- Quantitative Risk Management (2FT H01 N301P and N301V)
- Financial Mathematics (2FR H01 N301P and N301V)
- Data Mining (2FS G01 N301P and N301V)
- Actuarial Sciences (2FQ H01 N301P)
- Information Technology (2DX H01 N302P and N302V)
- Urban and Regional Planning (2FE K01 N401P)

What does ALDE/ALDA 122 entail?

ALDE/ALDA 122 is an advanced module in academic literacy skills offered in the second semester. It is a **compulsory, credit bearing module** for all students (both campus and distance-based) in order to complete their degree successfully. The purpose of the advanced module is to support students in the development of necessary academic abilities such as accessing information (reading and understanding), processing information (critically evaluating what is read) and producing information (writing effectively and submitting work that is academically correct).

ALDE/ALDA 122 comprises two compulsory components:

- The Academic Literacy class component (ALDE/ALDA 122), and
- A Computer and Information Literacy component (CI-Skills).

A student must pass both components and obtain an average module mark of at least 50% to pass the module.

What are the prerequisites for ALDE/ALDA 122?

As already mentioned, the prerequisite for ALDE/ALDA 122 is ALDE/ALDA 111. Further, more detailed stipulations regarding the prerequisites are listed below:

A student may continue with ALDE/ALDA 122 if:

- the student passed the ALDE/ALDA111 module;
- the student was exempted from completing ALDE/ALDA 111 after obtaining a score indicating “not at risk” for the TALL/TAG test (in the cases where the Faculty does not require ALDE/ALDA 111);
- the student received module recognition for ALDE/ALDA 111 based on a module successfully completed while studying at another university (request for module recognition should be submitted to the Academic Literacy subject leaders);
- the student is conditionally allowed to register for ALDE/ALDA 122 (please see section below) based on his/her ALDE/ALDA 111 module mark.

What is the conditional admission to ALDE/ALDA 122?

A student who obtains a final module mark between 40% and 49% for ALDE/ALDA 111 will be granted conditional admission to ALDE/ALDA 122. The student needs to complete both components (CI-skills component and Academic Literacy class component) and obtain a final module mark of 50% or more to have their ALDE/ALDA 111 result condoned to a pass.

Is there any other way to receive credit for ALDE/ALDA 111 and ALDE/A 122?

Module recognition can be granted based on recognition of prior learning (RPL) and/or credit transfer. This will depend on the modules and/or degree completed by the student applying for recognition.

RPL procedure for ALDE/ALDA

If a student has completed a module similar to ALDE/ALDA while studying at another institution, this student can request recognition by completing a student request form (SALA: Registration & Student Record Management). The student request form, official documentation indicating that the module was successfully passed, the module credits, NQF level, and module outcomes should be sent to the Academic Literacy subject leader on the applicable campus. Previously completed modules must at least be on a NQF 5 level, bear 12 credits, and have similar module outcomes to the academic literacy modules offered by the NWU.

Final approval of RPL can only be granted by the School of Languages. All enquiries should be sent to:

Mahikeng Campus: Ms Sarah Matsetela
Vanderbijl campus: Ms Natalie Boyd
Potchefstroom campus: Prof Henk Louw

What is the TALL/TAG proficiency test?

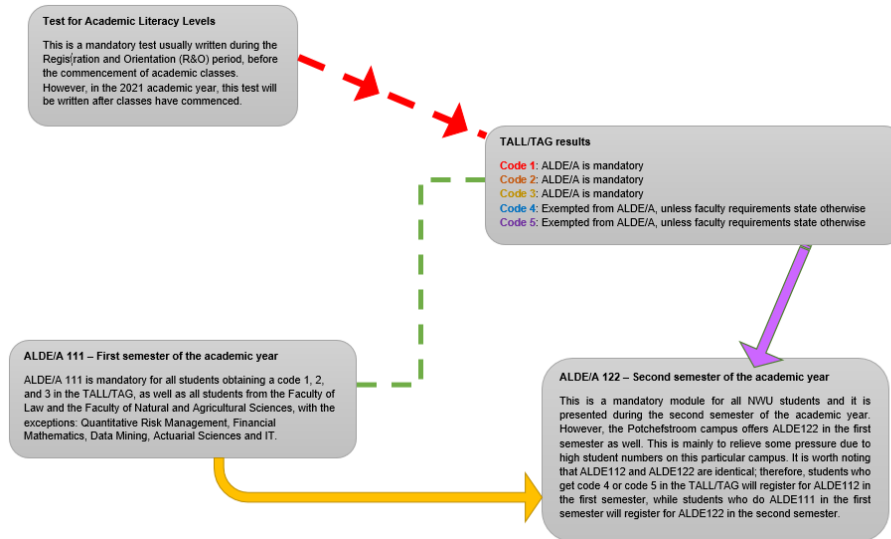
TALL/TAG is a compulsory proficiency test. The abbreviations refer to:

- TALL – *Test of Academic Literacy Levels* – the proficiency test written by ALL students who choose to complete the English Academic Literacy Module.
- TAG – *Toets van Akademiese Geletterdheidsvlakke* - the proficiency test written by ALL students who choose to complete the Afrikaans Academic Literacy Module.

The TALL/TAG is a reliable and valid method to measure students' academic literacy levels and is used at a national level. It is the students' choice whether to take the test in either English (TALL) or Afrikaans (TAG), but they will have to complete the module(s) in the language in which they wrote TALL/TAG.

This compulsory academic literacy test is written shortly before the commencement of the first semester. This test determines how academically literate a student is and therefore serves as a guideline to determine what type of support a student will need. Each student has only one opportunity to write the test during their academic career at the NWU. Thus, they may not report again in subsequent years to be tested. Students who miss both opportunities at the beginning of the year are required to take ALDA/E 111 in the first semester and ALDA/E 122 in the second semester.

All necessary information (time, place, date, and mode of the test) will be communicated with the students via eFundi. Students will also receive detailed information regarding results obtained and the effect of the results on the module/modules they need to complete. The diagram below contains detailed information about the TALL/TAG test and the impact that results may have.



Take note: Since 2010, all first years in the Faculty of Natural Sciences take ALDA/E 111 as a compulsory part of their curriculum (regardless of achievement in the test). For these students, ALDA/E 111 is taken into account for credit purposes. **The only exceptions** are students in the following programmes:

Quantitative Risk Management, Financial Mathematics, Data Mining, Actuarial Science, Information Technology and City and Regional Planning. These exceptions are valid only for students who received a code four or five in the TAG/TALL test and received recognition for ALDA/E 111 on those grounds.

Take note: Since 2018, all first years in the Faculty of Law take ALDA/E 111 as a compulsory component of their curriculum (regardless of achievement in the test).

To summarize

All students need to complete ALDE/ALDA 122 to graduate. Usually this is not an issue in terms of registration because the module is credit bearing, **BUT** there are pre-requisites for ALDE/ALDA 122. In other words, students need to do one of three things to enter ALDE/ALDA 122:

1. The student needs to pass ALDE/ALDA 111 (obtain a module mark of at least 50%).
2. The student needs to obtain a score in the TALL/TAG proficiency test that indicates that the student does not show risk in terms of academic literacy abilities. If the student obtains such a score for the test, he/she can receive recognition for the ALDE/ALDA 111 module, provided that the specific faculty does not stipulate that ALDE/ALDA 111 is a mandatory module.
3. The student needs to have received RPL after completing a similar module.

It is therefore very important that ALL students register for both ALDE/ALDA 111 and ALDE/ALDA 122 if they have not already been registered for these modules automatically.

Disclaimer: All information as explained in this document is also formally available in the various yearbooks. Please refer to the following pages in the various yearbooks for Faculty specific information regarding Academic Literacy modules.

- Humanities: p. 11
- Natural Sciences: p. 13
- Theology: p. 31

- Education: p. 6
- Economic and Management Sciences: p. 11
- Law: p. 3
- Engineering: p. 7
- Health Sciences: p. 23

Contact information

Administration

Vanderbijl campus: ALDEA-VC@nwu.ac.za

Subject Leaders

Mahikeng Campus: Ms Sarah Matsetela

Vanderbijl campus: Ms Natalie Boyd

Potchefstroom campus: Prof Henk Louw (Subject Chair)

Please see the following pages for an abridged registration guide for students and arrangements related to pipeline students.

Abridged registration guide

ALDA/E 111

- 1) ALDA/E 111 is only offered in the first semester.
- 2) Students who obtain a code one, two, three or three B in the TAG/TALL are required to register for ALDA/E 111 (this includes Engineering students).
- 3) Students in the Faculties of Law and Natural Sciences (with the exception of *Quantitative Risk Management, Financial Mathematics, Data Mining, Actuarial Science, Information Technology and City and Regional Planning*) are required to take ALDA/E 111.

ALDA 122 and ALDE 122

- 1) ALDA/E 122 is only offered in the second semester for the students who obtained a code four or five in the TALL test. ALDA 122 and ALDE 122 are compulsory for all students.

Pipeline students

There are certain arrangements for pipeline students (senior students) who have not yet completed AGLA/E 111/121, RINL 111, LEER 111 and/or AFN L116/126 or ENGL 116/126. They are as follows:

REGISTRATION IN RELATION TO ACADEMIC LITERACY

SENIOR STUDENTS

If senior students have passed/failed the module(s) in column A, they must take the module(s) in column B as indicated or are exempted as indicated.

A		B	
FAIL	AFNL 116/126 OR AGLA 111 or ENGL 116/126 OR AGLE 111	Register	ALDA/E 111
FAIL	LEER 111 or RINL 111	Register	ALDA 122 OR ALDE 122 (Even if the student has previously passed RINL 111 or LEER 111, he/she <u>must</u> complete all three components of the module.)
FAIL	LEER 111 and	Register	ALDA 122 OR ALDE 122

	RINL 111		
PASS	AFNL 116/126 OR AGLA 111 or ENGL 116/126 OR AGLE 111	Exempted	ALDA/E 111
PASS	RINL 111 and LEER 111	Exempted	ALDA 122 OR ALDE 122
PASS	AGLA/E 121	Exempted	ALDA 122 OR ALDE 122
PASS	FIAP 174	Exempted	ALDA/E 122

If ALDA/E 111 is outstanding, senior students must register for it in the first semester.

If only ALDA/E 122 is outstanding, senior students must register for ALDA/E 122. ALDE 122 is only offered in the second semester.

If both ALDA/E 111 and ALDA 122 or ALDE 122 are outstanding, senior students must register for ALDA/E 122 in the second semester.