

## Edexcel IGCSE Chemistry Assessment Options – Linear or Modular

My IGCSE Chemistry classes (Edexcel) run over 2 years and are aimed at preparing learners to take their exams in the summer sitting of the second year of the course (May / June). This suggested format follows the traditional *linear assessment* (exams sat at the end of the course in the same exam sitting). I do have the occasional learner who decides they would benefit from a longer revision preparation period, in which case they usually sit the linear exams in the following November sitting. However, there is now a third option (from summer 2025), for learners who are able to take their exams in a Tutors and Exams Centre – this is the *modular assessment* approach. The modular assessment route enables learners to sit their two module exams in different exam sittings e.g. one in the summer and one in the November.

It is important to understand that there is not necessarily a right answer to the question of which assessment model will best suit an individual learner. Outlined here are the main pros and cons of each type of assessment and details of how I structure the course, to help guide families in their choices.

### Linear Assessment

Linear assessment is the current standard model, where all exams are taken in the same exam series at the end of the course. Exams are available in May / June and November.

One of the main advantages of linear assessment is that it enables learners to build their understanding across the whole course. This allows a teaching order driven by common sense rather than the module split, enabling more complex topics to be taught later when learners are better able to access them. Some learners really benefit from having longer to build their understanding and refine their exam technique before taking exams. For those who want to continue to A Level, there are benefits to having all of the content fresh in their minds as they make that step up. However, they do have to pull together all of their learning ready to take exams in a single exam sitting, which can be a challenge.

At present, learners also benefit from an abundance of past papers for the linear route, which are not yet available for the modular route. This will make a huge difference to their exam readiness, as Chemistry is a subject where they have to do active learning i.e. lots of answering of questions. So having lots of past papers to work through is hugely beneficial.

For the linear route, paper 1 is a 2-hour exam (61.1 % of the marks) and paper 2 is a 1-hour and 15-minute exam (38.9% of the marks). Paper 1 is the same as for the linear Combined Science and paper 2 covers all the content, with a focus typically on the extra material not covered in Combined Science, much of which is slightly more complex.

### Modular Assessment

From summer 2025 Tutors and Exams are offering modular Edexcel Chemistry IGCSE exams. They are the only exam centre that are currently endorsed to offer the modular route to UK learners. All other exam centres will continue to offer linear assessment. So this option is only relevant to learners for whom it is feasible to sit their exams in a Tutors and Exams Centre.

One of the main advantages of the modular route is that it enables learners to split up their assessment. For learners who find Chemistry more challenging this will help to reduce the cognitive load and can give them opportunities to potentially improve on their approach to revision and exams, as they can sit papers at different times and reflect on how to improve outcomes. They can also benefit from the opportunity to retake individual assessments, should they need to improve their performance.

There are two main disadvantages to the modular approach. With the first exam sitting in summer 2025, there will be very few past papers, making exam preparation more difficult than for the linear route. In addition, for learners who want to continue to A Level Chemistry having followed a modular route, it will be important that they are aware that they will need to refresh the Paper 1 modular content before beginning A Level courses, to ensure that they are not disadvantaged compared to learners who have followed linear assessment. A Level Chemistry very much builds on IGCSE knowledge.

For the modular route, learners take two 1-hour and 40-minute papers that are each worth 50% of the marks, with the content split between them. Please note the modular paper 1 assesses different content to the linear paper 1.

### **My Course Structure**

I teach the course in an order that is appropriate for linear assessment. This means that learners will not be ready to take any module exams until the end of the course, if they want to follow this assessment model. Many of my learners continue to A Level and I believe that the linear model prepares them better for this, both in terms of the teaching order and available resources for exam preparation.

We complete all the linear paper 1 content by December in the second year of the course. I then encourage learners to begin paper 1 revision alongside the extra paper 2 content, which I continue to teach them in classes. Learners usually take their paper 1 mock in the February of the second year of the course. Paper 2 teaching is then completed before the Easter holiday, with a mock at the start of the summer term. Classes usually continue until early May, with a focus on exam technique. I find this works really well, as learners are able to begin their exam preparation well ahead of time for paper 1, which leaves them free to have more of a focus on paper 2 in the approach to the exams.

For learners who wish to follow the linear assessment model, but want a bit longer for revision, then the November exam sitting can work well. For this to work, learners do need to keep up their Chemistry learning, to ensure they don't have a lot of extra work to do to get back towards exam readiness.

For those learners wishing to follow modular assessment, I would suggest that they take the modular paper 1 in the summer sitting at the end of the course and then take the modular paper 2 in the following November sitting. This will enable them to benefit from the best of both worlds with the sensible teaching order and the help of splitting up their exams. I will be happy to give learners following the modular route continued access to resources beyond the end of the course, as well as providing and marking mock exams appropriate for the modular approach.