



A closer look at linear and unitised qualifications

GCSEs are assessed in different ways.

Some subjects are unitised (also known as modular) with units that can be assessed at different points during the course, while others are linear with all exams taken at the end of the course.

Linear qualifications

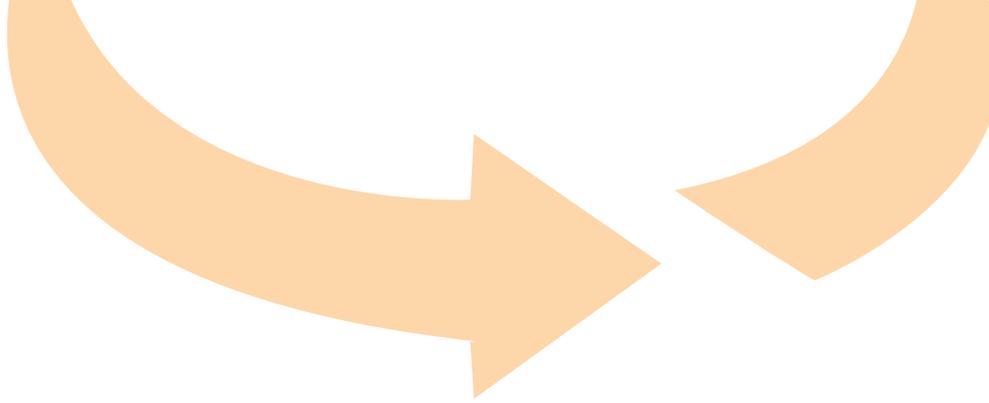
Linear qualifications require that all exams be taken at the end of the course. For GCSEs this would typically be following two years of study.

With a linear structure, teachers have more flexibility around how they deliver the course content. It also means that students get more time to build their knowledge and skills and to develop a more rounded understanding of the subject.

GCSE English Language is an example of a linear qualification.

Although the qualification is structured in units, all the assessment takes place at the end of the two-year course. This gives students an opportunity to develop and to mature their reading, writing and oracy skills.

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Unitised qualifications

With unitised (or modular) qualifications, learners can be assessed on individual units while the course is still being taught. Students get results for the units they sit, but they don't get an overall grade for the qualification until they have completed all their units.

The structure of unitised qualifications allows for content to be divided up into clearly defined chunks, allowing focus and clarity for both delivery and learning.

Students also have the choice of spreading their exams out over the course and reducing some of the pressure of sitting all their exams together at the end.

GCSE History is an example of a unitised qualification.

In Unit 1 learners study Wales and the wider perspective, Unit 2 is History with a European focus and Unit 3 looks at Thematic Studies from a broad historical perspective.

While key skills and learning objectives underpin each unit, the subject content is distinct, so a unitised structure gives students a choice of sitting the assessment after completing each unit, or all together at the end of the course.



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