

CHEMISTRY PLACEMENT INFORMATION (REVISED- July 2026)

Students wishing to register for either CHEM UN1604 (Intensive General Chemistry) or CHEM UN2045 (Intensive Organic Chemistry) must take an on-line Chemistry Self-Assessment Examination which will be made available through a coursework page for CHEM UN1604 (<https://courseworks2.columbia.edu/courses/248738>). You can take the exam in any contiguous 2 hour interval between Tuesday September 1 and Wednesday September 2, 2026. It must be taken without use of outside resources, and in a manner consistent with the University's Honor Code. Performance on the examination will inform us, your instructors, about what to teach this year; therefore, we will appreciate if you do your best work to give us an accurate indication of your preparation. Your score on the examination will also partly determine whether you will be invited to register for CHEM UN1604, CHEM UN2045 or for other chemistry courses. During the term we will assume knowledge of the specific introductory topics covered by the placement examination. This exam, and the course in general, assumes a mastery of the topics covered in Chapters 1-8 of our textbook, Chemical Principles, 8th Edition, by Zumdahl and DeCoste. Students are advised to obtain a copy of this text before the term begins and to review Chapters 1-8 before the exam, with particular attention to material in chapters 2 and 3. The exam has two sections of questions. The first section covers prerequisite knowledge for UN1604 including: precision and accuracy, the periodic table, isotopes, composition and empirical formulas, concentration (molarity and other units), balancing reactions, stoichiometry, limiting reagent, equilibrium constants, and kinds of bonding. It assumes basic knowledge of the ideal gas law. The second half of the exam includes questions on the orbitals of hydrogen and electron configurations in atoms; hybrid orbitals, geometry of molecules, oxidation number, molecular orbitals and bonding. It also covers some concepts from thermodynamics and kinetics. It will assume knowledge of Lewis structures. The material in the second half will be covered during UN1604 (chapters 9-15) and knowledge of it is not required for admission into UN1604, but is considered a prerequisite for UN2045. You can divide your time between the two parts as you choose.

Please contact Dr. Vesna Gasperov (vg2231@columbia.edu) for further information and for access to the Courseworks page in order to take the exam.