

Thinking about retaking A levels?

Read this helpful free NEC guide before you start.

www.nec.ac.uk





Contents

Turn your disappointment into success	3
So why might it not have quite gone to plan this time around?	3
What are you waiting for?	3
Why should I retake my A levels?	4
What are the benefits of retaking my exams?	4
Who is eligible to take resits?	4
How long will it take?	4
What subjects can I resit?	5
When can I resit my exams?	5
Are there rules for A level resits?	5
Resitting as a private or external candidate	6
So what is our exam pass guarantee?	6
Your exam	6
How much will it cost to resit my A levels?	7
Course fees	7
What can I do to prepare for my exams?	7
When will I get my results for my A level resits?	7
Let NEC help you resit your A levels and realise your path to success.	7

Turn your disappointment into success

It's an extremely hard moment when you realise that, despite your best efforts, you didn't get the grade needed when you received your email on A level results day. It can feel like the end of the world, and like every other student passed with flying colours. Rest assured, you are not alone. Many thousands of other students faced the same dilemma, but there are options that can help you turn it around and get you back on the path to follow your dreams.

At a time when your confidence can feel low, it is hard to find the energy to tackle a retake of your A levels, however it is important to look at the longer-term reasons why you took them in the first place. Do they still apply? Are you still intent on using your A levels for a specific purpose - for example, a route into Higher Education, or a change in career? If the answer is an emphatic 'yes' then the best course of action is to dust yourself down, reflect on why you didn't produce the required results last time around, and get ready to turn a negative into a positive result.

So why might it not have quite gone to plan this time around?

Maybe you let the exam stress get to you and hinder your performance? Perhaps you didn't put in the hours required to adequately prepare yourself? Or maybe your revision plan didn't give you enough time to focus on some of the key subject areas or your exam technique?

Whatever the reason, try and consider how you could do things differently. Before you embark on a resit it is essential that you reflect on how you may change the way you approach it this time around. It is important that you dust yourself down, dig deep and find the determination you need to keep positive and prove to yourself that you can, and will, succeed. Evidence of a commitment to achieving your goals is valued by many employers, as is a strong work ethic, so it really is a worthwhile route forward

What are you waiting for?

Find out everything you need to know from our complete guide to resitting your A levels and get back in the mindset for success.

Once you have read through this guide, if you have any questions or want to find out more about booking exams or non-examination assessments (NEA) with NEC, contact our exams team who will be happy to help you make the right choices.

Contact us:

Call free: 0800 389 2839

Overseas/mobile: +44 (0) 1223 400 200

Email: exams@nec.ac.uk

Why should I retake my A levels?

Generally students who come to us wishing to resit their A levels do so because they already know that they need a particular grade in one, or more, subjects in order to pursue an ambition to study further. For example, to go on to a Foundation or Higher Education course where there is a minimum requirement to have particular grades at A level, to ensure you have enough UCAS points, to get into art or performing arts schools, or to be considered for a role or career where there is a requirement to have reached a certain level of qualification. Going to university is expensive and it is important that you get the best possible degree in your chosen subject. Compromising your plans based on lower grades may not be a sensible decision given the level of investment you will be making over the duration of the course. Certainly, more and more employers request a strong set of A level grades in relevant subjects to be considered for employment - particularly for school-leaver programmes. Or, it may be that you know that you could have performed better. Sometimes fulfilling your own expectations is one of the most important reasons, above any others, to try again and regain your confidence in yourself.

What are the benefits of retaking my exams?

In summary, what are the benefits of rolling up your sleeves and getting stuck into one, or more, A level resits? Benefits include:

- Improving your confidence and proving to yourself that you can get the grade you need with hard work and support.
- Improving your choices for further study and further education, and to opening up your future career options.
- Adding value to your CV and your LinkedIn profile.
- Improving your job applications - including school-leaver programmes.
- Having the right foundation requirements for your preferred career goal - for example for Accountancy where you don't need a degree in order to start on-the-job training.
- Helping you earn more as it opens up greater earning potential.
- Enjoyment! Maybe you just enjoyed learning the subject and can use this opportunity to study it for slightly longer!

Who is eligible to take resits?

It doesn't matter if you are younger or older, have little experience or lots, have just left your Sixth Form or College, have been out of education for some time, everyone is eligible to retake their A levels. There are no barriers. If you retake and do get better grades then your prospects of getting a good place at university are higher, and benefits of retaking become greater.

How long will it take?

It really depends which route you decide to take. If you are starting the A level from scratch - say for example you did History at school 5 years ago and haven't studied the subject since - then it can take between 18-24 months to ensure you are exam-ready. If you recently took your exam then you can approach your learning provider now to find out when they can put you in for a resit exam, and then use your existing materials to revise again - which could be achieved in a matter of months. If you are changing provider, you need to make sure that the new provider is able to offer you support for the same awarding body and specification.

What subjects can I resit?

Retakes are offered in every subject although it is important to realise that no marks can be carried over from your previous attempts to get your grade. You will be taking your exams with a completely clean slate and will not be able to bring over marks from any papers that may have gone well the first time around. With coursework, however, you may not be required to redo this - you can ask for your old coursework mark to be 'carried forward'. The same applies to the practical endorsement for science A levels.

If you are changing provider, you need to make sure that your new provider is able to offer you support for the same specification and awarding body you prepared for the first time around.

When can I resit my exams?

You can only take A levels in the summer - so in the May/June sitting. As a guideline, summer exams usually have an entry deadline set by the awarding bodies in February, but if you are entering for your exams using the NEC exam entry service, our deadline is in January. This is because we offer a guaranteed exam place for all of our candidates.

If you have special access arrangements your exam entry deadlines will be earlier. Once you are enrolled on a course with NEC, entry deadlines will be available to you on the Exams and Assessment page of our learning platform, learn@nec.

Private centres will have their own deadlines so if you are organising your own exams make sure you check what the centre's deadline for entry is. Late entries have an additional cost, set by the awarding organisation. In addition to this, all exam centres have a date after which they do not accept any entries.

In addition to exam deadlines, do remember that for all UCAS application you need to make your plan as soon as possible as these all need to be submitted well before Christmas, even if you decide to take a short study break and resume your revision in the new year.

At NEC we have put a lot of work into building a seamless exam booking service for students who are enrolled with us. We can do this because we are an exam centre in our own right, and we work with a network of partnership exam centres across the country. We will be happy to help advise you if you decide to retake one, or more, of your A level subjects. Have a look at our [Exams Handbook](#) for more advice on how to get this organised and for more information about special arrangements.

Are there rules for A level resits?

If you have failed your A level Chemistry, Spanish or Biology, there is no obligation to do a retake. You can therefore either try the same A level you took previously, or potentially use this time to consider swapping your subject choice. For example if you didn't get the grade in Biology but need another A level, why not try Psychology or Maths? Try to think carefully about your options and personal interests when deciding what to resit - or to start from scratch.

It may feel like a challenging time, and the last thing you may feel like doing is picking that textbook up and trying again but do try and look at it as a fresh opportunity. Ask friends, family and your tutor for extra support and try approaching your studies differently. The long-term rewards will outstrip the short-term effort needed.

Resitting as a private or external candidate

If you are considering retaking your A levels but don't think you can go back to studying in a classroom, then maybe online learning is the way forward for you. Not only does it provide greater flexibility with a timetable that can fit around your work, life or business, but it can mean that you can start studying for your A levels while you embark on your resits, or can continue to undertake paid employment - therefore not holding you back.

You will have your own personal tutor with one-to-one support, and you will have the freedom to study at your own pace. Moving through the modules at your own speed can mean more time to concentrate on the areas you found more difficult, and less on those you didn't!

If you do decide to retake your exams through online learning, locating an exam centre and ensuring that you are entered correctly for the exam you plan to take can be stressful.

NEC is unique as we are the only distance learning provider who can offer an guaranteed exam place for our students at one of our partnership exam centres across England, and if you wish to sit an exam at one of these centres, our exams team can arrange this for you.

As an approved exam centre, NEC can cover all types of exams, including: written exams, oral exams, coursework/non-examination assessments, plus practical endorsements and spoken language endorsements. Not only do we offer an exam pass guarantee to our students, but NEC consistently performs as well as, or better, in exams than national outcomes.

Alternatively you can find your own exam centre but still enrol on one of our online courses.

So what is our exam pass guarantee?

With our students, we are confident that if you complete all your assignments and follow our advice on working through the course, you will pass your exams. However, if you don't, get in touch and we'll arrange support for you to try again at the next exam session. You should be aware that we are only able to do this if you have completed all your assignments and the specification for your course is still being examined.

Your exam

If you decide to retake your A levels using an online provider like NEC you will not be different to any other A level student when it comes to the exam. You will sit the exam in person, and at the same time, as all other A level students for that subject - with the same exam conditions and regulations applying. There is always a fee to sit the A level exam which is not covered by any online course provider. The exact cost of this will vary depending on your A level course.

How much will it cost to resit my A levels?

Resitting your A levels will involve paying course fees, and potentially - if you need additional learning support - course fees.

Course fees

How much you pay for your course will depend on where and how you choose to study, as well as the course materials you will need to support your learning.

Doing an A level in person at a local college can cost upwards of £1000 per subject for your tuition.

A typical A level through online learning will cost £700 and is a much more affordable route, yet still enables you to learn with an expert as you will receive one to one tutor support.

What can I do to prepare for my exams?

Once you have decided to embark on a resit for your A levels and have made a decision on how, where and when you will be doing them, then you need to pick up your textbooks, look again at your revision notes, and get back to studying!

We have a wealth of information, written by experts, to help you reboot and restart your learning. You are not on your own. Visit our study tips page for more information so you can take advantage of some of our top advice for exam success.

In addition, we have worked closely with UCAS to prepare a series of free study skills guides, which provide further information and guidance - including one on understanding and answering exam questions. [These can be downloaded from the UCAS website.](#)

When will I get my results for my A level resits?

Once you decide to resit then the first date to mark in your calendar is the date you will find out if you have been more successful this time around! For A level resits sat in May/June, results will be available on the third Thursday in August.

Let NEC help you resit your A levels and realise your path to success.

When you choose to study for your A level retakes through online distance learning with NEC, you will be joining thousands of students who have exceeded their expectations and gone on to get great grades by studying from home. You can trust NEC's 55+ years of experience to support you.

Gain qualifications,
start a career, change
direction, learn for
fun. Whatever your
goal we'll help you
achieve it.

Psychology
DOUBLE SC
professional o
Languages cre
GCSE Professional
A levels creativ
Psychology GCS
DOUBLE SCIE
professional qu
Languages crea
GCSE Professional
GCSE Profession
A levels creativ
Psychology GCSE
DOUBLE SCIE
professional o
Languages o
GCSE Profess

