

Thinking about retaking GCSEs?

Read this helpful free NEC guide before you start.

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Turn your disappointment into success

There is nothing quite as soul destroying as not achieving the grade you hoped for on GCSE results day. It is important, however, not to let this disappointment stop you fulfilling your dreams or lead you to branding yourself a failure because of it.

Finding that inner resilience to try again can feel like you will be at the foot of an insurmountable obstacle. However, by looking at why it didn't work out for you first time around can help to make decisions that will help you turn the disappointment into success.

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. A strong commitment to achieving your goals is sought after by many companies, as is a strong work ethic, so it really is a worthwhile route forward. In some situations, taking a subject at AS level may be a better option than a GCSE retake.

What are you waiting for?

Find out everything you need to know from our complete guide to resitting your GCSEs 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 GCSEs?

Generally students who come to us wishing to resit their GCSEs 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 levels where there is usually a minimum requirement to have 5 GCSEs at Grade 9 -5 (equivalent to A* to C), or to be considered for an apprenticeship or career where there is a requirement to have reached a certain level of qualification. Certainly, more and more employers consider a good set of GCSEs an important prerequisite to be considered for employment.

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, GCSE 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 apprenticeships.
- Having the right foundation requirements for your preferred career goal - for example teaching which requires Grade C/4 equivalent in English, Maths and the Sciences.
- 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 school or have been out of education for some time, everyone is eligible to retake their GCSEs. There are no barriers.

How long will it take?

It really depends which route you decide to take. If you are starting the GCSE from scratch - say for example you did Maths at school 10 years ago and haven't studied the subject since - then it can take between 12-18 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?

There are some very common subjects that students chose to retake which include: English, Maths, Science and Modern Foreign Languages. However retakes are offered in almost every subject including specialist areas such as [Business](#), [Astronomy](#) and [Psychology](#).

When can I resit my exams?

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 our candidates.

There are winter exams for [GCSE English Language](#) and [GCSE Maths](#) but this will need to be booked before the awarding body deadline in early October.

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.

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 GCSE 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 GCSE resits?

If you are aged 16-18 and are planning to resit Maths and English GCSE at your school or college, there is a government policy that determines your eligibility for continued funding which is important you read and understand. If you didn't manage to get a grade 4 or above in Maths or English, you'll need to keep studying these subjects until you're 18 as it is a legal requirement. The good news is that your costs are likely to be covered. For every other subject there are no rules at all! If you have failed your [Geography GCSE](#), [Spanish GCSE](#) or [Biology](#) then there is no obligation to do a retake. You can therefore now potentially use this time to consider swapping your subject choice. For example, if you didn't get the grade in [Sociology](#) but need another GCSE, why not try [Psychology](#) or [Business Studies](#)? Try and think carefully about your options and your personal interest when deciding what to resit.

One thing you will need to be mindful of when considering a resit is whether the specification for your course is still being examined. Due to the GCSE overhaul to specifications and introduction of IGCSEs, syllabuses from some subjects are now no longer being examined as they have been replaced with revised versions, which will mean you will have to talk to us about your options before you book.

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

How much will it cost to resit my GCSEs?

If you are 16+ without a Grade 4 or higher in GCSE Maths and/or English then you may be eligible for funding or may be able to study these subjects for free at a local learning centre, so this is worth exploring.

Generally, however, resitting your GCSEs will involve paying exam 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 a GCSE in person at a local college can cost upwards of £1000 per subject for your tuition.

A typical GCSE through online learning will cost £500 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 GCSEs 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.

When will I get my results for my GCSE 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!

Here are the timings for when you will find out your results:

- For anyone who resat Maths in November - results will come out in mid-January
- For IGCSE resits in January - results will be available in March
- For resits sat in May/June, GCSE and IGCSE - results will be available on the fourth Thursday in August

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

When you choose to study for your GCSE 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.

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