

# **Retake guide**

## **A levels**

**WHY SHOULD I RETAKE MY A LEVELS?**

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO TAKE RESITS?**

**WHEN CAN I RESIT MY EXAMS?**

**RESITTING AS A PRIVATE OR EXTERNAL CANDIDATE**

**HOW NEC CAN HELP**

**[www.nec.ac.uk](http://www.nec.ac.uk)**

**0800 389 2839**



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## Turn your disappointment into success

**It can be disheartening to receive a lower grade than you hoped for on A level results day, despite your best efforts. 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.**

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

The cancellation of the A level exams this summer and their replacement with teacher-assessed grades (TAGs) has created a new situation for many students. For some students it will have worked well but others may not have been in a position to be entered for a TAG or they may have been entered but have not done as well as they hoped. If this applies to you then be assured that you do have options.

It is important to look at the longer-term reasons why you took those subjects in the first place. Do these reasons 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? Or maybe you received a teacher-assessed grade based on work not up to your usual high standard?**

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.

**NEC's helpful course advisers can help you make a choice.**



## Course spotlight

### Structured Fast Track A levels

If you are looking to complete an A level in biology, chemistry, physics, psychology or maths within an academic year, you might want to take a look at our new Fast Track A levels. With a set start date, structured approach and tutorials, we've designed this course to help you to complete the course within a year, and gain the all important grades you need.

**[Learn more](#)**

## What are you waiting for?

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

If you have any questions or want to find out more about enrolling on a course with NEC, contact our Course Advice Team who will be happy to help you make the right choices.

### Contact us:

Call for free: 0800 389 2839

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

# Do you need to retake?

Certainly, more and more employers request a strong set of A level grades in relevant subjects to be considered for employment - particularly for advanced apprenticeship 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.

**Do you need higher grades in specific subjects to get onto a particular foundation or higher education course?** - it may be a good idea to retake your exams.

**Do you need more UCAS points?** - maybe try a different subject at AS or A level. This would be a good opportunity to rethink your subject choices and make the most out of this fresh start.

**Do you have a particular university in mind?** - or are you open to going somewhere else? Going to university can be 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.



## What could better A level results do for you?

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!

## NEC students get 10% off selected undergraduate study

We have partnered with two highly respected online universities to offer discounts on undergraduate study.



Open  
College  
of the Arts

Get 10% off your first year of undergraduate study with the Open University.

NEC students and alumni who have completed studies within 3 years, get 10% off their first level of study at the Open College of the Arts.

**Speak to our Course Advice Team for more information.**

# 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.

## Case Study

### Globe-trotting whilst studying

Globe-trotting has always been important to Julia's working life, but it also had a starring role in her teenage years too. Her father was offered a six-month contract in Belgium which became several years and a flexible solution was needed for Julia's schooling. When Julia left formal education at the age of 15, her parents turned to home education for their academically able and ambitious daughter. They found NEC through home education connections and an internet search.

The freedom to learn as she chose suited Julia down to the ground. She studied for A levels with NEC and her grades won her a place to study for a BA in Classical & Archaeological Studies with French at the University of Kent. As well as pursuing her passion for ancient Persia in the university library, she spent at year working in a high school in Quebec teaching.



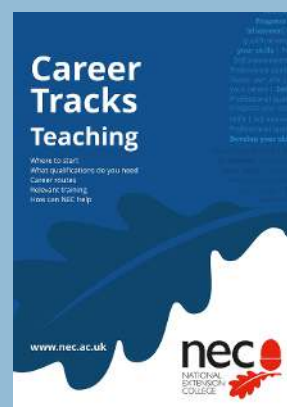
## NEC Career Tracks: Teaching

At NEC, we're often asked for advice about the best courses to choose for particular careers. That's why we've published a series of free practical guides covering the careers most popular with our students.

This free [NEC Career Tracks guide](#) is intended for anyone who is considering a career in teaching, or who has definitely decided that's what they want to do and needs to know how.

It includes an overview of the schools sector, comparison of university-led and school-led training, and links to further information such as the Department for Education's eligibility criteria for secondary teacher training scholarships.

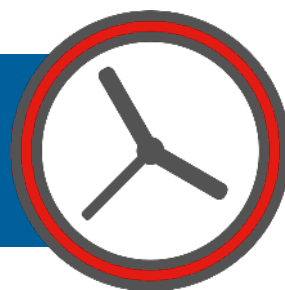
The full series of guides can be [downloaded here](#) and include helpful links to further information, for example on applying to university or courses available from NEC to help plug any qualification gaps you may have; including essential GCSEs in English and maths.



# 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.

**Recommended  
18-24 months**



**Check the awarding  
body**

**Check the exam  
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 moving to a different school or college, 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?

Unless you are eligible for the autumn session this year, 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. However, in order to secure your place, we recommend booking between October and December.

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](mailto: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.

# How can you book resits with NEC?

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.

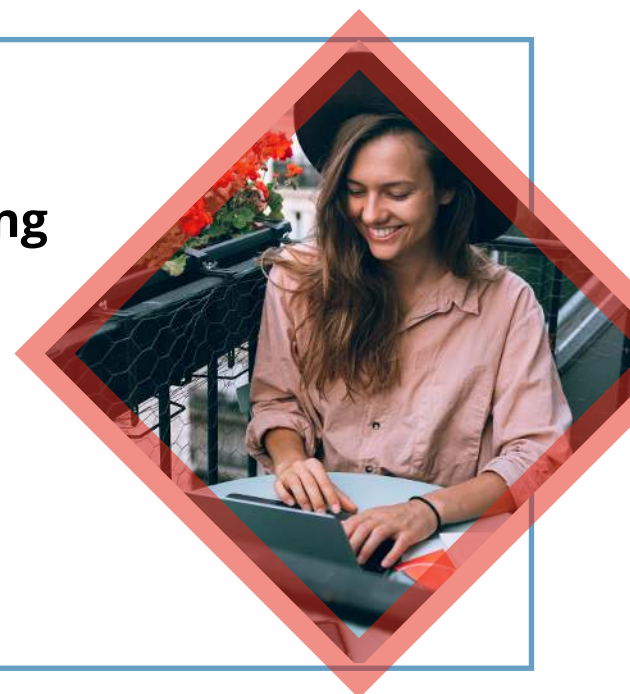
Have a look at our [Exams Handbook](#) for more advice on how to get this organised and for more information about special arrangements.

## Course spotlight

### Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

NEC's interactive online **Critical Thinking** and **Problem Solving** courses, give students the chance to prepare for university admissions tests and the world of work.

For a limited time, you can enrol on our Critical Thinking and Problem Solving courses for an introductory price of £80 each (down from £105), or £145 for both, giving you a saving of up to £65. Enrol now to secure your place and give yourself the best chance of succeeding in higher education.



# Can I study something different?

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.

## Course spotlight

### A level Economics

Economics shapes how we allocate limited resources and measures the impact of our choices. Through our [A level Economics](#) online course, with the support of a tutor, you'll study the UK and global economy; using economic theory to analyse issues and present your ideas and conclusions in a clear, logical way.

If you're pursuing a career in business, finance or politics, this qualification is the perfect choice.

[Learn more](#)



## Additional services for NEC students

To help you get the best results from your study, we offer a range of additional services that can be purchased separately should you need extra support.

- **Past paper marking**
- **Revision tutorial**
- **Optional tutorial on a topic of your choice**
- **Additional review on your progress**
- **UCAS application service** - NEC's UCAS Service can support you with predicted grades, a reference for your university applications, and even additional support on writing your personal statement.

## Course spotlight

### A level History of Art

Developed in partnership with the Association for Art History and Art History in Schools, our **A level History of Art** course is the perfect option for schools who do not currently have the capacity or capability to offer History of Art.

If you have Art and Design teachers who need the confidence to teach History of Art, this course is designed to be studied by students of any age or prior knowledge.

Maybe your students are looking to study history of art or architecture at university? This course will provide the perfect basis for higher education.

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 and family 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.

With online learning 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 students consistently perform as well or even better in their 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 will need to pay the exam fees for the resit and please 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. 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 exam fees, and potentially - if you need additional learning support - fees for a private tutor or 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 per annum for your tuition.

A typical A level through online learning with NEC will cost £750 and is a much more affordable route, yet still enables you to learn with an expert as you will receive tutor support through assignment marking and robust feedback.



## 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 website 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 typically be available on the third Thursday in August.

## Case Study

### Studying as a teacher to deepen knowledge and grow confidence

Daisy is a newly qualified Arts and Design secondary school teacher and she is studying A level History of Art with NEC to help her become a more confident teacher. Daisy hopes that completing the A level course will strengthen her teaching skills in art history and theory, which will help her own students improve their writing and contextual analysis of art. Daisy will also be an inspiration for her school students, promoting art history as an option for higher education.

[Read more.](#)



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

## Wide range of subjects

When you choose to study your A levels through online distance learning with NEC, you'll be joining thousands of students who have exceeded their expectations and gone on to get great grades by studying from home. You may be home schooling from the start, or perhaps looking to retake A levels through distance learning in order to improve on previous grades.

[Find out more.](#)

## Course fees

NEC course fees cover:

- ▶ most course materials (some subjects require additional set texts)
- ▶ assignment feedback
- ▶ online diagnostic exercises and assessments
- ▶ quizzes, videos, ebooks, and webinars.

Whatever subject you want to study, you can sample our course materials before you sign up. When you've made your choice, you can enrol at any time and start studying when it suits you.

## Over 55 years' experience

Thousands of adults and young people across the UK and beyond have gained life-changing qualifications by studying A levels with NEC. What matters most to us is the success of our students, so we offer all the support you need, combined with total flexibility to learn the way you want to.

We're so confident in our expertise that we offer all students our exam pass guarantee.

# Why NEC?

For students who need a flexible route to those essential GCSE and A level qualification, the National Extension College is a hidden treasure and a superb option.

**Mary Curnock Cook, Former Chief Executive, UCAS**

*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.*

## Get in touch

info@nec.ac.uk

0800 389 2839

