

Retake guide

GCSE

WHY SHOULD I RETAKE MY GCSES?

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO TAKE RESITS?

WHEN CAN I RESIT MY EXAMS?

RESITTING AS A PRIVATE OR EXTERNAL CANDIDATE

HOW NEC CAN HELP

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Turn your disappointment into success

It can be disheartening to receive a lower grade than you hoped for on GCSE results day. It is important, however, not to let this disappointment stop you fulfilling your dreams and instead turn it into a new opportunity to succeed.

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 to make decisions that will help you turn the disappointment into success.

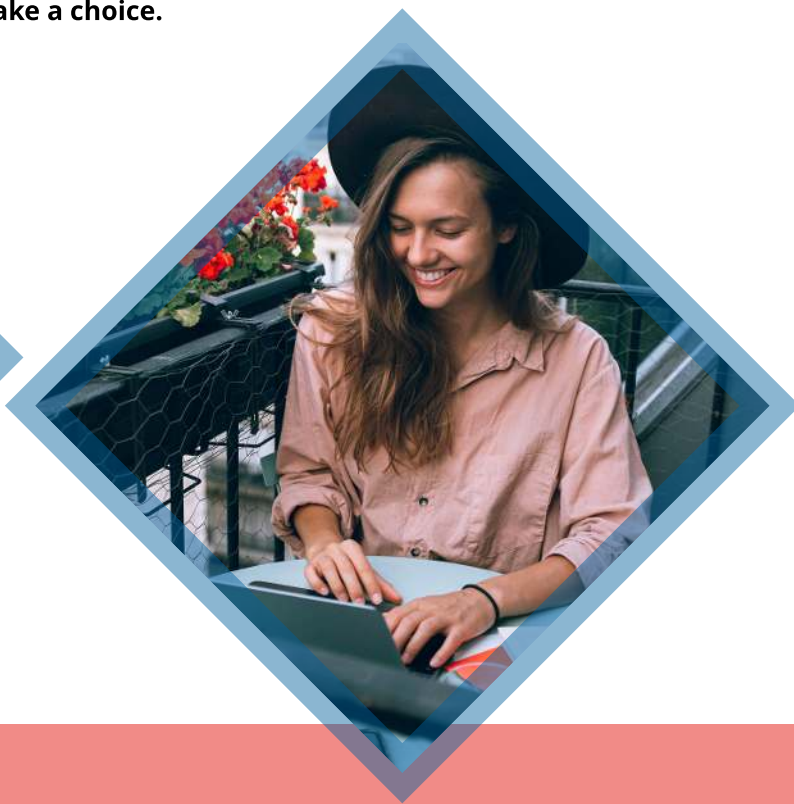
The unexpected cancellation of the GCSE exams this summer and their replacement with teacher-assessed grades (TAGs) has created a new situation for many students. For some students it will have worked well but others may not have been in a position to be entered for a TAG or they may have been entered but have not done as well as they hoped. If this applies to you then it may be a good idea to take advantage of the option to retake in this autumn's exam sitting (see our exams page for more information).

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, in the case of the 2021 exams, maybe you were not eligible to be considered for a teacher assessed grade?

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 A or AS level may be a better option than a GCSE retake. Or if you need English or Maths at level 2 to get on to a course or apprenticeship, check to see if they will accept Functional Skills and if so, that may be a better option.

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



What are you waiting for?

Find out everything you need to know from this 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 enrolling on a course with NEC, contact our Course Advice Team who will be happy to help you make the right choices. If you are looking to book exams for the next available session, information can be found on the website.

Contact us:

Call for free: 0800 389 2839

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



Course spotlight

Functional Skills

Our Functional Skills courses follow the Pearson Edexcel specifications with levels 1 and 2 in English and maths available.

Each level takes a recommended 55 hours of learning. As with most NEC courses, you will be able to work at your own pace. As assessment is on-demand, you do not need to study within the time frame set by exam sittings.

[Learn more](#)

	GCSE	Functional Skills
Why should I choose...?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more academic route, offering a wider breadth of content than Functional Skills qualifications and more suited if you plan go on to Level 3 qualifications like A levels and on to university. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A practical route to developing maths and English skills, focused on developing and using these skills. • A good choice if you plan a career in childcare and early years or to go on to an apprenticeship programme.
Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 (standalone qualification) • Level 2 (standalone qualification)
Approximate hours of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120-150 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55 per level
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCSE Maths - three exams • GCSE English Language - two exams and a spoken language endorsement • Exams are taken in June 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments can be taken throughout the year. You will demonstrate your skills through a series of assessments in real-life scenarios. • English has a speaking and listening assessment.
Grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths Foundation - Grade 1 to 5 • Maths Higher - Grade 4-9 • English - Grade 1 to 9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass or Fail • A pass at Level 2 can be seen as equivalent to GCSE Grade 4.

Could Functional Skills be your chosen alternative?

Our innovative Functional Skills courses are ready to enrol on now. These interactive online courses are designed by experts and will help you on your way to that career change, apprenticeship, new job or boost in confidence that you've been looking for.

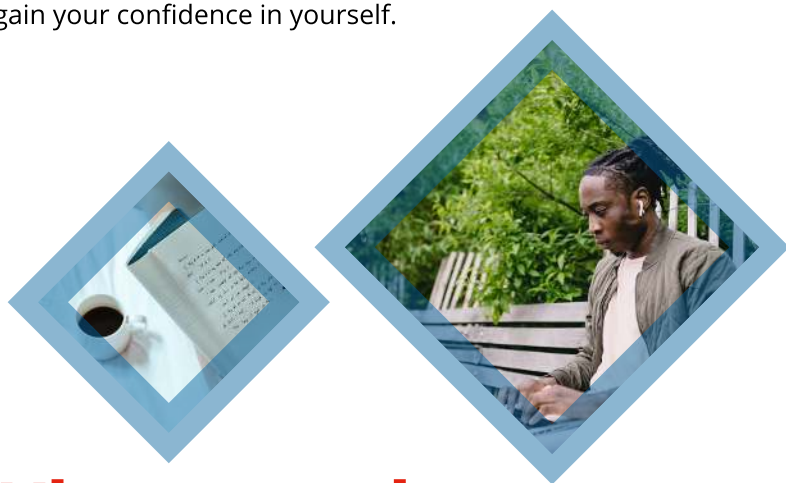
Each level takes a recommended 55 hours of learning. As with most NEC courses, you will be able to work at your own pace. As assessment is on-demand, you do not need to study within the time frame set by exam sittings.

GCSEs or Functional Skills...which qualification is right for you?

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 further study. 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 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 at primary level which requires Grade C/4 equivalent in English, Maths and Sciences.
- Opening up greater earning potential.
- Enjoyment! Maybe you just enjoyed learning the subject and can use this opportunity to study it for slightly longer!

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 guides also 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.



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.

Case Study

My experience with GCSE Maths

After failing GCSE Maths twice, Rebecca (aged 19) plucked up the courage to face maths again and decided to study with NEC using a grant from [Crohn's & Colitis UK](#). She went in with a positive attitude and realised that she needed to enjoy what she was doing in order to do well.

Studying with NEC allowed me to use my time how I wanted without being restricted by a timetable. I could make mistakes in Maths in my own time and figure out a way of learning the content in my way, there was no pressure. Slowly Maths became comfortable and, dare I say, enjoyable.

With this new approach, and the help from NEC, Rebecca passed maths in 2019 and is now studying BTEC Creative Media in college.



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.

**Recommended
12 - 18 months**



**Check the awarding
body**

**Check the exam
specification**



What subjects can I resit?

There are some very common subjects that students choose 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. If you are wanting to take the opportunity to change your mind about the subjects you picked the first time around, you can find NEC's full list of GCSE subjects [here](#).

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. However, in order to secure your place, we recommend you book between October and December.

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 growing 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 GCSE English or maths at your school or college, there is a government policy that determines your eligibility for continued funding. This is important to read and understand. If you didn't manage to get a grade 4 or above in maths and 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 GCSE Geography, GCSE Spanish and GCSE 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. Do you have a specific career goal in mind? Look into the qualifications that are recommended for that path and consider the other options available.

One thing you will need to be mindful of when considering a resit is whether the specification of 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.



Course spotlight

GCSE Maths

Our GCSE Maths online course is written by experts in the field. Well-structured materials covering topics – such as fractions, decimals and pythagoras – will enable you to gain confidence in basic mathematical skills, before progressing to more challenging areas.

[Learn more](#)

GCSE English Language

Gaining a GCSE in English Language is vital for future career progression and a minimum requirement for many further education courses. However, it's not just a 'means to an end', this course will help you develop your reading and writing skills, and enable you to communicate and express your ideas more effectively.

[Learn more](#)

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.

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.



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.

Online learning enables you to move through the modules at your own speed, which 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 can be stressful.

NEC is unique as we are the only distance learning provider who can offer a 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 of 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. 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 - 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 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 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 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 blogs 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 in late August



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

Wide range of subjects

When you choose to study your GCSEs 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 GCSEs through distance learning in order to improve on previous grades.

[Find out more.](#)

Course fees

NEC course fees cover:

- ▶ most course materials (some additional textbooks may be required)
- ▶ assignment marking
- ▶ 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 GCSEs and IGCSEs 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 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.

Get in touch

info@nec.ac.uk

0800 389 2839

