

Admissions Policy



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Admissions Policy

1. POLICY STATEMENT & MISSION

The National Extension College (NEC) transforms lives through learning. A pioneer in distance learning, NEC opens up futures for individuals of all ages, from diverse backgrounds and cultures through flexible distance learning courses.

We were founded on the aspiration to make education more accessible. A desire to do things differently, to find a better way is part of our DNA.

For over 60 years, the NEC has forged a reputation for quality and innovation in learning, alongside a deep commitment to offering each Student an exceptional level of support. This is how we help our students to work towards a better future.

The National Extension College welcomes applications from potential students of all occupational, social and ethnic backgrounds. Our Admissions Policy aims to promote equal opportunities, while at the same time providing guidance to ensure that students benefit from the courses for which they intend to enrol by entering at the appropriate level. Post-school experience and breadth of interests may be taken into account as well as previous educational attainment.

2. OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

NEC's *Student Charter* sets out our commitment to you and what we ask of you in return. By working together, we hope to ensure that we offer a great learning environment where you can achieve your learning ambitions. To support you pre-enrolment we aim: *'To guide you onto a course that meets your learning aspirations'*

We will:

- offer impartial, professional and accurate advice through our Course Advice Team
- provide a user-friendly Guide to Courses and website that contain accurate information
- give you the opportunity to access in depth information about our courses by providing course samples
- respond promptly to all phone calls and emails (normally within one working day and always within two working days with the exception of public holidays)
- consider your enrolment fairly and promptly
- make you aware of the [Terms and Conditions of Enrolment](#) at the point of enrolment
- reserve the right not to accept an enrolment.

3. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Prior qualifications/experience

On a small number of NEC courses, entry requirements do exist. In some cases, these are a statutory requirement or a requirement of the Awarding Organisation.

Occasionally, NEC recommends specific qualifications which need to be achieved prior to enrolment to help provide the Student with the best possible chance of success. For example, Maths GCSE may be a requirement for a science A Level.

You may choose to enrol despite not having the specified entry requirement, but you need to be aware that additional study may be required and/or your chances of success may be limited.

For some vocational courses there may be a requirement to have access to a specific work environment to enable you to apply learning and complete observed assessments.

You can find out about any entry requirements before you enrol on the information page for each course on the NEC website.

3.2 Overseas Students

Because our courses are delivered online you can study with us no matter where you are in the world, and communicate with your tutor and the Student Services team in exactly the same way that a UK-based student would. However, not all of the UK awarding bodies hold exams overseas. AQA exams are not available for private candidates to sit outside the UK at all.

If you wish to sit an exam at the end of your course, it's essential you get in touch with the relevant awarding body before you enrol to find out where you can sit the exam and how much it will cost. You can find contact details for the awarding organisations we work with on our [Working in partnership on NEC's website](#) page.

3.3. Level of English Language skills

All of our course materials are written in English, so you'll need a good standard of written English and English comprehension in order to study with us. For some subjects such as A Level English or humanities based A levels, your command of the English language will need to be particularly high as the course and assessment is predominantly essay based.

For non native speakers of English we do recommend an IELTS score of 6 or above. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) measures the language proficiency of people who want to study or work where English is used as a language of communication. It uses a nine-band scale to clearly identify levels of proficiency, from non-user (band score 1) through to expert (band score 9).

Further information on IELTS levels can be found here: [British Council - IELTS](#)

You may choose to enrol despite not having the recommended entry requirement, but you need to be aware that additional study may be required and/or your chances of success may be limited.

3.4 Level of IT skills/access to IT

As courses are online you will need to have access to a computer and be able to browse websites, send emails, produce documents and upload files.

Minimum system requirements have been met to access your course online through learn@nec. Further information can be found here: <https://www.nec.ac.uk/learn-at-nec/>

3.5 Communicating with NEC staff

We will always treat you with courtesy and respect and expect the same in return. We reserve the right to refuse enrolment onto the course to anyone who is abusive to any member of NEC's staff including NEC's tutors.

4. ADDITIONAL NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS

If you have specific learning needs, it is important that you tell us at the point of enrolment. Specific learning needs might include dyslexia, Asperger Syndrome, anxiety, depression or other needs that may affect your ability to study.

In line with current legislation, NEC will provide reasonable support to enable applicants with specific learning needs to undertake courses and access course materials (*e.g. alternative course formats*).

Our online learning platform *learn@nec* has some accessibility features to help make the platform more accessible for people with specific requirements.

NEC also offers a **pastoral support service**, which provides one-to-one help for students who may be experiencing personal, emotional, or wellbeing challenges during their course. Our experienced team is here to support you throughout your learning journey, and we encourage you to reach out if you need advice, guidance, or simply someone to talk to.

For students entering for exams through one of NEC's partnership exam centres, special access arrangements (such as extra time or use of a laptop) can be made for candidates who can provide documents that support evidence of need. These will include a full assessment report and written evidence from an educational establishment that clearly shows that special access arrangements aid the candidate's normal way of working.

Please note, although NEC's partnership exam centres will always do their best to accommodate special access arrangements, they are unable to guarantee this. Applications are dealt with on a case by case basis.

5. YOUNGER STUDENTS

5.1 Under 18s and contractual relationship

If Students are under 18 years at the time of enrolment, the contractual relationship will be with the parent/guardian or sponsor. Parents/guardians or sponsors will be asked to give their consent to the enrolment being processed. Under the new data protection regulations (GDPR) we will require consent from the parent/guardian or sponsor to process Student data for under 18s. Further information on how we use and retain personal data and Subject Rights can be found in our [Privacy Policy](#).

Our [Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy](#).

In some cases, the course material may not be suitable for specific age groups or the requirements of the qualification may have specific entry requirements in terms of the age of the Student.

5.2 Students under the age of 13 and KS3 requirements

Key Stage 3 is the education a student is expected to receive in UK schools from the ages of 11 to 14. Our course materials are designed to meet the requirements of the Awarding Organisation specification, therefore themes and topics within the course material may not be suitable for specific age groups. With this in mind NEC does require a Student to be 13 years or above to enrol onto a GCSE course with NEC and to have covered the KS3 curriculum for the subject that they are intending to enrol onto.

5.3 Under 18s

Students and parents/guardians of students under the age of 18 need to be aware that:

- all NEC's course materials are provided online
- NEC's students will need to communicate on *learn@nec* with their NEC tutor. This is generally by the use of Messaging. Tutors may also suggest Skype or similar communication, but this is not compulsory.
- under 18 students will be studying courses alongside adult learners and will have access to course forums also available to adult learners.

6. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

NEC welcomes applications from students with additional needs and is committed to making information, guidance, and course content accessible and inclusive.

We encourage all applicants to tell us about any medical conditions, disabilities, or specific learning support needs at the point of enrolment. This includes, but is not limited to, dyslexia, autism spectrum conditions, anxiety, depression, and physical or sensory impairments. Sharing this information early allows us to offer the most appropriate support and ensure a smooth transition into online learning.

NEC provides a **pastoral and learning support service** that works with students to provide reasonable adjustments, help with study skills, and regular check-ins where needed. Our online learning platform, *learn@nec*, includes accessibility tools and can be used with assistive technologies. We can also provide course materials in alternative formats on request.

6. Applicants with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Where a student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and is being funded by a local authority, we ask that all relevant documentation — including the most recent annual review and the full EHCP — is provided at the earliest opportunity. This ensures that we can assess our ability to meet the student's needs and put appropriate support in place.

NEC welcomes placement consultations from local authorities. We work closely with local SEND teams, schools, and families to support transition planning and to ensure the support outlined in the EHCP can be delivered through an online learning environment. We may ask to attend review meetings to help plan for a successful start to the course.

6. RIGHT TO DECLINE AN ENROLMENT

NEC reserves the right to decline an enrolment without providing a reason.

7. ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Our Terms and Conditions of enrolment can be found here: [Terms and Conditions of Enrolment](#)

Our Privacy policy can be found here: [Privacy Policy](#)

Our Safeguarding Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy can be found here: [Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy](#).

Our Online Safety Policy can be found here: [Online Safety Policy](#)

Our Prevent Policy is available to enrolled students, parents and guardians.

Our Student Charter is available to enrolled students, parents and guardians.

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY

We will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its stated objectives.