

2025

August



From Esther Chesterman, CEO, NEC

August is often seen as a pause in the year — a time to reflect, reset, and prepare for the term ahead. At NEC, it's a moment when we support our learners through the results season and help many navigate important transitions, whether that's a new course, a university application, or a fresh start after unexpected outcomes.

This month's newsletter highlights both continuity and change. National data shows a small decline in overall entries for GCSEs and A levels in summer 2025. Yet NEC has seen an overall increase in enrolments across subjects — particularly in the languages and humanities — a clear indication that more learners are seeking flexible, high-quality alternatives to traditional education routes.

We know the coming weeks will bring both celebration and challenge. For some, this is a time of exciting new beginnings — for others, a chance to re-evaluate and take a different path. However you or those you support are using this time, we're here to help make it purposeful.

Wishing you a restorative summer and a smooth transition into the autumn term.

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## Results day — support for every outcome

With GCSE and A level results just around the corner, a mix of excitement and trepidation gathers in the student population as the culmination of all the hard work reaches its conclusion.

For some, the day will bring relief and celebration. Others however, face the prospect of uncertainty as results fall short of hopes or expectations. Feelings of disappointment and concern are natural in these circumstances, but it is not the end of the road.

Many students successfully retake exams, and go on to thrive — whether continuing in their intended direction or discovering new opportunities.

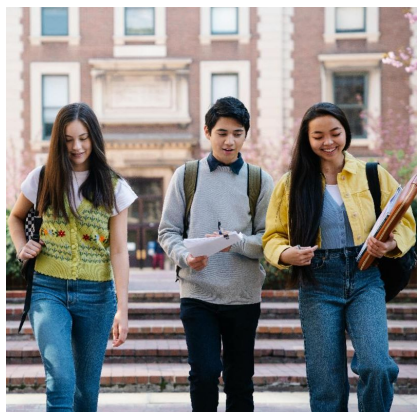
Many also gain from the chance to improve their subject knowledge and refine study strategies. The determination, persistence and self awareness needed, are invaluable qualities that benefit any young person going forward, whether in further education or a career.

At NEC we have many decades of supporting students and their families through, what can be, a



challenging time of year. We are here to help - with guidance, resources and encouragement — wherever you are on your journey, so please do get in touch!

[Get in touch](#)



### Next steps — applying to university and beyond

Will you, or someone you support, be applying to university this year, or in the near future?

Then our **free online webinar** is designed with you in mind! Taking place on Tuesday 2 September, the session has been created to help students navigate the university application process with ease and clarity.

We will highlight helpful resources and information, as well as important deadlines — and explain the ways in which NEC can support students with key elements such as personal statements, predicted grades and references.

We will also be joined by Gemma Standen (University of East Anglia), who will offer tips and insights around the transition to university. Gemma is a regular contributor to this webinar and always adds immense value with her enthusiasm and warmth, as well as practical experience from a higher education perspective.

So come along and bring any questions you have. This is a great opportunity to find out more from our experts.

[Book here](#)

### A university experience that works for your teen — not the other way around

If your child is weighing up their next steps after school or college, the idea of moving away might not feel like the right choice - or even be possible — due to financial, personal, or practical reasons. But there's another way.

The Open University (OU), one of NEC's valued partners, offers students the opportunity to gain a respected degree from home. Most OU courses have no formal entry requirements, and students can study online, at their own pace, with dedicated tutor support every step of the way.

It's a flexible option, built for people who want a degree while staying in control of their life — helping them save on living costs, avoid relocation, and balance study with work or other commitments. And it's delivering real results.

OU graduates are among the most employable in the UK, ranking third in Uni Compare's 'Top Universities for Employability 2026' category, and sixth overall for course quality — based entirely on student reviews. With award-winning careers support and a reputation for producing self-starters, OU graduates are seen as adaptable, determined, and work-ready.



There is no 'typical' OU student, but younger people are increasingly choosing this route. If this sounds like the right path for your teen, The Open University are open to all and has a place waiting.

[Learn more](#)



### Spotlight on exam entry trends for 2025 — a shift in the landscape

The recently published provisional entry data for the summer 2025 exam series reveals a slight overall decrease in GCSE and A level entries in England compared to 2024 — continuing a trend seen in previous years. This, despite a growth in the population of 16 year olds.

Maths continues to perform strongly, with entries rising by 1.6% at GCSE level and 4.5% at A level. Physics and Economics A levels have also proved popular, with entries up 4.2% and 5.6% respectively.

Some languages and humanities though have seen notable dips. Uptake for French and German for example, has declined at both GCSE and A level, with entries for French A level seeing the steepest fall at 8.3%.

[Read the full Oqual report](#)



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