Breaking News: A level exam results of NEC students released today

Thursday 15 August, 2019

You don't have to go to school to get an A level.

Among the 300,000 students (BBC, 2019) taking A levels each year are thousands of adult and young learners who enter their examinations as private candidates. These include young people educated at home, adults who want a second chance at learning usually to prepare for a career change, individuals with full-time caring responsibilities and those for whom attending mainstream school or college is simply not an option due to disability or ill health.

In the academic year 2018/19, over 1000 students enrolled to study A level courses with online and distance learning provider the National Extension College (NEC). As well as providing high quality online courses for 20 A level subjects, NEC is an approved exam centre able to offer a complete exam booking service to their students. As such, NEC is in a unique position amongst distance learning providers as they have access to the exam results of most (but not all) of their students.* Some students who arrange their own exams and receive their results directly also report back to NEC.

NEC's student body is diverse. The youngest learner studying an A level is 16 years and the eldest is 68. For the first time the number of female students taking A level sciences has exceeded men in England at just over 50% (The Guardian, 2019). NEC's female science learners have exceeded this at 54%, a testament to the flexibility of NEC courses.

What is clear, therefore, is that despite the challenging circumstances that many students experience, through online distance learning with NEC they achieve A level results that are as good, or even better, as those of their peers in the conventional education system. This is the first year that NEC students sat all of their exams for the reformed specifications and NEC are pleased to report that the overall pass rate of students is high and in some subjects exceptional. For example, 100% pass rates in A level subjects such as: English Language, English Literature, Economics, History, Psychology, Classical Civilisation and French.

A level Spanish stands out, where 42% of NEC students achieved an A or A* grade compared with A and A* grades across subjects dropping nationally to 25.2% (education datalab, 2019). Similarly, 81% of NEC A level History students achieved A*-C. This is compared with the national picture, where across all subjects the proportion of entries awarded a C or above has decreased to 75.5% in England (education datalab, 2019).

In this context, the achievements of NEC students are incredible and have been the result of a great deal of hard work and determination. We know that the majority of NEC students have plans to go on to higher education, and these qualifications are very important to them and to the UK economy.

Learner case studies

Ella - English Literature and Classical Civilisation: Ella studied her A levels with NEC after facing bullying at school. Ella obtained an A* in English Literature and an A in Classical Civilisation. She has been offered a place to read English and German at The University of Oxford this autumn. Read more about Ella here.

Beth - Religious Studies, Philosophy and Classical Civilisation: Beth's chronic illness meant that by Year 10 she was unable to attend mainstream school. After leaving school with foundation Maths, English Language and Core Science GCSEs, Beth embarked on a Level 1 Art and Design course before starting A levels with NEC.

Congratulations from our Chief Executive

Congratulating NEC students on their A level results, NEC Chief Executive Dr Ros Morpeth OBE said: "I am very proud of all our students and congratulate each one of them for their achievements. Many NEC students are studying against the odds yet still manage to achieve excellent grades. Gaining a qualification can transform someone's life, and we are delighted to have the opportunity to help everyone who studies with us on the path to achieving their ambitions. Many NEC students go on to higher

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education as mature students or to professional courses like teaching or nursing. They deserve our admiration and respect."

About the National Extension College (NEC)

The National Extension College (NEC) transforms lives through learning. It opens up futures for people of all ages, from diverse backgrounds and cultures, by offering access to flexible distance learning courses across the UK and beyond. Over the past 55 years, NEC has forged a reputation for quality and innovation in learning, alongside a deep commitment to offering each student an exceptional level of support in achieving their future ambitions.

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Footnote

*The information here is based on results at the time of publishing. We will receive more results throughout the course of today and tomorrow.

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