Breaking News: GCSE exam results of NEC students released today

Thursday 22 August, 2019

"Self-study made me realise that learning never stops. It's not a race, not a sprint, not even a marathon, but it's a lifelong journey." - Natalia (who took her GCSEs with NEC this summer).

Among the 5.2 million (Ofqual, 2019) GCSE entries this 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.

Good passes at GCSE, especially English and maths, open many doors and are essential entry qualifications for apprenticeships, vocational courses and almost everything else.

NEC is an online and distance learning not-for-profit course provider. In the academic year 2018/19, just under 1,000 enrolled to study GCSE courses with NEC. As well as providing high quality online courses for 16 GCSE 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.

It is worth highlighting that NEC's results need to be seen in the context of post-16 results more generally. The majority of NEC's students are adults and at GCSE, for example, where the ages of students are tracked, the results of post 16 students for English and maths are much lower than for school age children. Nationally for maths, 21.6% of post 16 students achieved a grade 4 in comparison to 60% of NEC students. For English Language, the equivalent figures are 30.3% nationally and 61.5% for NEC students (FFT education datalab, 2019).

Nationally in maths, boys are still outperforming girls (BBC, 2019). However, NEC students have challenged this trend. 60% of NEC maths students are female, with a 6.2% higher pass rate than that of male students.

NEC are pleased to report that the overall pass rate of students is high and in some subjects exceptional. For example, an 100% pass rate in GCSE Sociology. Nationally, entries are up in Modern Foreign Languages. In relation to this, 71.4% of NEC students achieved a remarkable grade 8 or above in GCSE Spanish and 42.9% a grade 7 or above in GCSE French.

What is clear, therefore, is that despite the challenging circumstances that many students experience, through online distance learning with NEC they achieve the exceptional GCSE results which they deserve. In this context, the achievements of NEC students are incredible and have been the result of a great deal of hard work and determination.

Successful students

Natalia - GCSE Maths, English Language & Literature, Combined Science and History: Natalia started homeschooling with NEC after facing negative experiences within school. Natalia claims that studying with NEC has been the "the best decision" she's made and that it has prepared her well for going back into mainstream education to sit her A levels. You can read more about her experiences in her blog post here. Natalia achieved a grade 7 in History and a grade 6 in Maths.

Laura and Rebecca - GCSE Maths, Psychology and English Language: Laura and Rebecca are twins who studied their GCSEs with NEC after being diagnosed with Crohn's disease. They received a grant to study with NEC through Crohn's & Colitis UK. Both obtained the grades necessary to begin an access to higher education course in Psychology. Rebecca has written a blog on studying GCSE Maths and Laura on GCSE Psychology. Please check the blog section of our website here as we will be uploading the posts this coming Friday and Sunday.

A level results roundup

The youngest learner receiving their A level results with NEC this year was 16 years and the eldest 68.

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NEC students achieved fantastic A level results. There were 100% pass rates in 9 A level subjects: Business, Classical Civilisation, Economics, English Language, English Literature, French, History, Law and Religious Studies.

Particular subjects stood out also, with 43% of NEC students achieving an A* or A grade for Spanish and 81% of students obtaining an A*-C for History. It was noted that for the first time the number of female students taking A level sciences exceeded men in England at just over 50% (The Guardian, 2019). NEC's female science learners exceeded this with 54%, a testament to the flexibility of NEC courses.

Ian, 49 - AS History: "I find distance learning useful as it enables students to study at home without having to attend evening classes. The internet has been of enormous benefit to distance learning. For instance, I have used the NEC forum to raise discussions with other students. An advantage with NEC is that it has partner centres which makes exam arrangements much easier if there are centres near you. I am not aware of other distance learning colleges which offer this service."

Congratulations from our Chief Executive

Congratulating NEC students on their excellent GCSE 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. NEC students come from all walks of life and may not have done as well at school as they deserved. For them to be able to achieve all they are capable of, access to vital qualifications like GCSEs are essential. We are delighted to have the opportunity to help everyone who studies with us on the path to achieving their ambitions. We know that the majority of NEC students have plans to go on to further study such as A level, access courses and apprenticeships, and these qualifications are very important to them and to the UK economy. 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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