National Extension College students receive their GCSE exam results

Thursday 24 August, 2023

Distance learning students who sit their exams as private candidates are set to take the next step on their academic and career journeys after receiving their exam results today.

24th August 2023

The National Extension College (NEC) has been helping students of all ages to achieve their learning ambitions for 60 years and currently count 16 (I)GCSEs amongst the courses they have available to those learners seeking an alternative to mainstream education. Every year NEC enrols around 2,000 students including many young and older learners who opt to study one of the college's (I)GCSE courses.

As well as providing high-quality online courses, NEC is an approved exam centre and therefore in a unique position amongst distance learning providers to be able to offer a complete exam booking service to these students.

Congratulating NEC students on their GCSE results, NEC Chief Executive Esther Chesterman says:

"NEC students come from all walks of life and have many reasons for choosing to study their GCSEs via online distance learning with NEC. I am very proud of all of them and their results show that access to vital qualifications like GCSEs are essential to all learners including those for whom mainstream education may not be an option.

"We are delighted to have had the opportunity to help our GCSE students along the path to achieving their ambitions whether that is to move on to study A levels, a vocational course or an apprenticeship. Congratulations to each and every one of them on their achievement."

Among the 5.5 million students taking their GCSE exams this summer (www.gov.uk), there will have been thousands of young learners and adults, like those who have studied with NEC, who entered their exams as private candidates. They could be young people who have been educated at home for a variety of reasons, adults seeking to gain qualifications to move on in their life or career, and individuals for whom home attending school or college is not an option, maybe through disability, ill-health or a full-time role as a carer.

NEC is in a unique position amongst distance learning providers. Being an approved exam centre, they have access to most of their students' exam results, and many learners report back on the outcome of their examinations in the days after receiving their results.

"Today I received my GCSE results for English Language and Maths. I am pleased to let you know that I got a Grade 6 in both of them. These results are more than I could have hoped for." NEC Student, 24th August 2023

Last Autumn, Ofqual confirmed that GCSE grades were likely to fall back to pre-pandemic levels in 2023. Nationally, grades have fallen, but not quite back to 2019 levels with 22.7% of GCSEs being graded 9-7 (21.9% in 2019), and 70.5% being graded 9-4 (69.9% in 2019). (https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/)

Good passes at GCSE, especially in English and Maths, are essential qualifications. Pupils who do not achieve at least a Grade 4 in GCSE English and GCSE Maths are required to carry on studying them post-16. For those who achieved Grade 3 they are required to continue to study at GCSE, for others, they can study either GCSE or Functional Skills in these subjects. In the Summer 2023 exams 30% of English/Maths entries received a Grade 3 or below.

Resits can be undertaken alongside further studies and, for any student looking to improve on their grades, online distance learning gives them an option to fit their study flexibly around their life and family commitments.

Despite the challenges that many NEC students face, through online distance learning they achieve exceptional GCSE results that are a testament to their hard work, dedication and determination.

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“It is clear that, whatever their personal circumstances, studying by distance learning can enable students to achieve GCSE results that are as good as, or even better than, those of their peers in the conventional education system,” says Esther Chesterman.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

About The National Extension College (NEC)

Established in 1963 as a not-for-profit distance learning provider, the National Extension College (NEC) has a strong, proud heritage in widening access to education. Our aim is to transform lives and open up new possibilities for people of all ages by offering access to essential qualifications like GCSEs and A levels, as well as vocational qualifications in management, business and teaching.

www.nec.ac.uk

(I)GCSE subjects offered by NEC

With 60 years of dedicated experience, NEC provides a pathway to excellence through its flexible and comprehensive distance learning courses. It offers (I)GCSEs in 16 subjects: Astronomy, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Combined Science, Double Science, English Language, English Literature, French, Geography, History, Maths, Physics, Psychology, Sociology and Spanish.

www.nec.ac.uk/course-categories/gcses/

Functional Skills

NEC offers Functional Skills courses in English (Level 2) and English (Level 1 and Level 2) and in Maths (Level 2) and Maths (Level 1 and Level 2).

www.nec.ac.uk/course-categories/

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