

Futures
FOR YOU

Parents, Carers and Guardians
Guide to the Exam Period

2024

How can I help my child?

Preparing for exams can be a challenging and stressful time for young people and adults alike. However, with the right level of support and guidance we can help prepare young people to stay positive and focused and to do well in their exams.

Here are some tips on how to support your child (and yourself!) during this time:

- **Inspire confidence through talking** – give them the power to speak their mind and encourage them to share
- **Make time to listen** – life can get busy with work and home challenges, but we were all young once. Try to remember how you felt when you were growing up and learning more about life, and how much it meant to you to feel listened to. By making sure you make the time to talk to your child about the help they need or how they're feeling, you can help to ease their anxiety and reassure them about their future. Make sure they know that whatever happens at results time, you're there for them.
- **Practice mindfulness** – take time to slow down and breathe! When you feel rushed or stressed, taking a moment to close your eyes and focus on breathing slowly for a minute can help you to soothe your mind and stay calm. This is a great practice for both you and your child!
 - Breathing in through the nose for five seconds and then out through the mouth for five seconds can help restore balance and make you feel calmer.
 - This article on [mindful parenting](#) has helpful topics with positive parenting, mindful parenting for ADHD and positive parenting skills



- **Create a calm and open environment** – you don't want to crowd your child and stress them out by constantly checking in over their shoulder. Instead, let them know that you love them and that you're available any time they want to talk to you, need your help with something, or just want to vent about any stress their feeling. Help them to create a calm and relaxing study space that is tidy and organised - you could even find a [study playlist](#) to help them focus.
- **Be ready to help solve problems** – it's unfortunate but sometimes your child won't get the results that they were expecting, and it's important to be there for them to explore their options and come up with solutions. As a parent, you can seek help from impartial careers services such as the [National Careers Service](#), who offer advice and guidance and can help to keep things in perspective. Your child has their whole life ahead of them to do and try a variety of things.
- **Be patient** – even if you don't mean to, rushing your child or asking them to do more than they're capable of can add pressure and make them feel anxious about everything they have on their plate. Be mindful of what you're asking them and be patient with their responses - remember that in times of stress or anxiety, they may be more likely to be upset or annoyed.
- **Be proud!** – No matter what, be proud of your child. The exam period can be incredibly stressful and they'll be working hard to get through it. Let them know how proud you are of them, and be there to celebrate with them when things go well or give them support if something goes wrong.



Understanding the GCSE grading system

What are the 9-1 GCSE grades?

In 2014, the 9-1 grading scheme was brought in alongside an overhaul of the curriculum. English Language, English Literature and Maths were the first subjects to be graded in numbers. By 2020, all subjects used the new system. The highest grade is now 9, while 1 is the lowest. The U grade, meaning “ungraded”, remains the same.

GCSE grade meaning:

- Grade 9:** This is the highest grade and represents outstanding performance.
- Grade 8:** This grade is also considered exceptional and is the equivalent of an A* under the old system.
- Grade 7-6:** These grades are equivalent to A grades under the old system and represent strong performance.
- Grade 5-4:** These grades are equivalent to C grades under the old system and represent a good standard of performance.
- Grade 3-2:** These grades are equivalent to D-E grades under the old system, and represent a pass, but with some room for improvement.
- Grade 1:** This is equivalent to a grade F and G.

It's worth noting that some subjects may have different grade boundaries, so it's always a good idea to check with your school or college to see how your grades are calculated.

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	
4	C
<hr/>	
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U



Useful resources

[Schools careers service](#) can provide you with impartial advice. Face-to-face advice and guidance should be arranged by a school where it is the most suitable for young people to make successful next steps — particularly for students at risk of disengaging from education or training, or those with special educational needs.

Ofqual has published a [detailed guide for students](#) due to be taking exams in 2024.

The guide is for students taking any of the following Ofqual-regulated qualifications in the academic year 2023 to 2024, and GCSEs in November 2024:

- GCSEs
- AS or A levels
- Other general qualifications, including International Baccalaureate, core mathematics and Pre-U
- Technical Qualifications within a T Level (the Core Assessment and Occupational Specialism)
- Vocational and Technical Qualifications taken alongside GCSEs and A levels in subjects such as engineering, health & social care and digital media

It also explains what support is in place when taking exams and assessments.

[Parentkind](#) - parent's guide to results day

[National Careers Service](#) - parent's guide to exam results

[Young Minds](#) - parent's mental health guide

**Further Support for
Parents, Carers and Guardians**

Using the National Careers Service

The National Careers Service can help you with your career, learning and training choices. They are able to provide you with free impartial advice and guidance that helps you to gain new skills, build your confidence, and move on in work and life.

The National Careers Service provides support with:

- CV writing
- Job searches
- Interview preparation
- Finding local employment opportunities
- Changing careers
- Accessing qualifications and courses
- Identifying your key skills

For adults aged 19+ to book onto a free workshop, follow the link to your area:

[East of England](#) ~ [East Midlands](#)

We have different workshops to help support you through your next steps. Once you have attended a free session you will have the opportunity to access free support for the next 12 months. You are welcome to return for further support after these 12 months should you need it. You can start exploring your training and career possibilities or get advice to help guide your next step here: [Adults](#)

Or get in touch through our website or over the phone:

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk> 0800 100 900



Accessing Free Courses

At Futures, we offer free short training courses to adults who are looking to gain new skills, find employment, or improve their functional skills in Maths and English.

Some courses also offer the opportunity to attend a guaranteed job interview with established local employers, including NHS, Framework, Rail Gourmet, and more.

[Visit our website](#) to learn more about the courses and qualifications we have available or [enrol on a course](#) here.

All of our courses are fully funded - yes that means free*.

On completion, you'll receive an accredited qualification and the opportunity to access further support and training.

* Subject to eligibility

** Other state benefits may be accepted, please email referral@futuresforbusiness.com or give us a call on 0345 266 9779

FULLY FUNDED - SUBJECT TO ELIGIBILITY



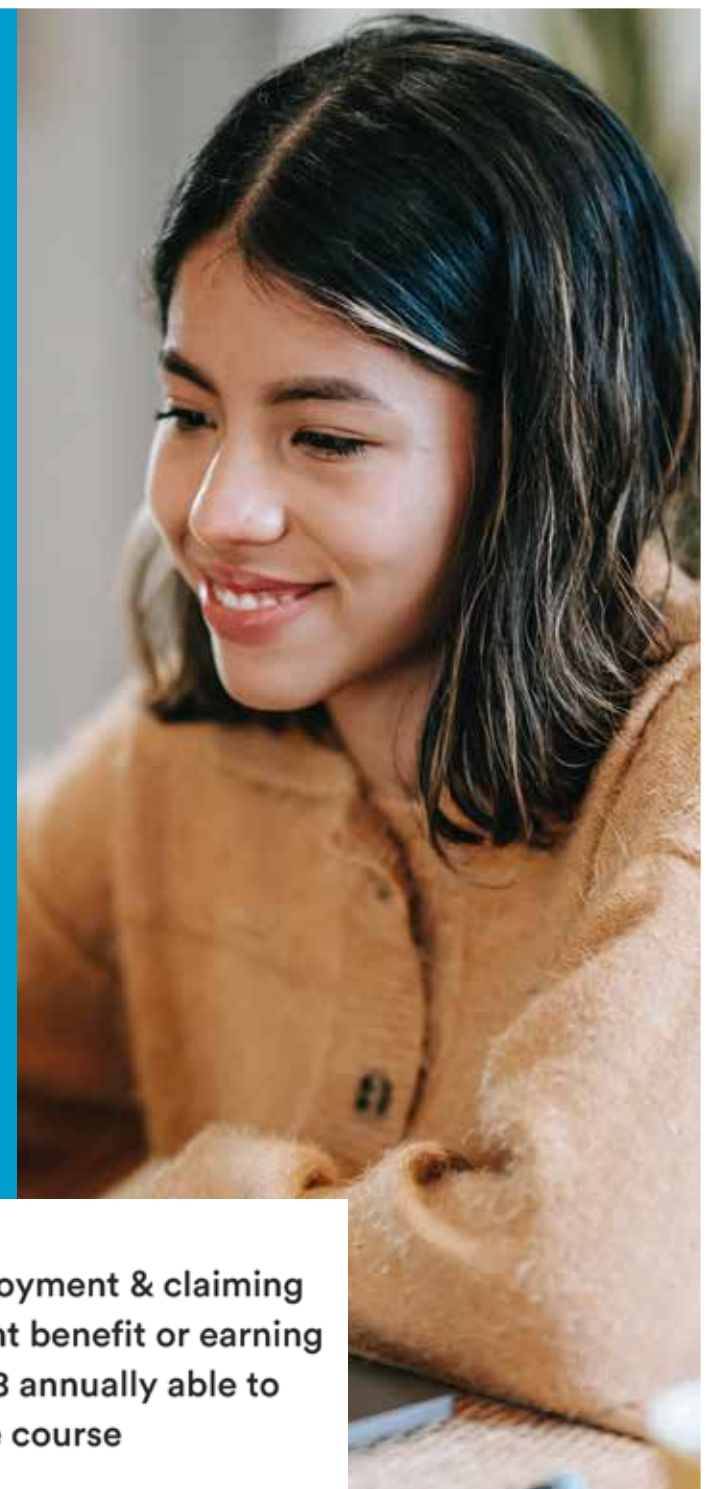
Aged 19 years old or over.



Lived in the UK or EU/EEA for 3 years



Seeking employment & claiming unemployment benefit or earning under £22,308 annually able to commit to the course



The September Guarantee

The September Guarantee is a guarantee of an offer, made by the end of September, of an appropriate place in post-16 education or training for every young person completing compulsory education. Ensuring that every young person has an offer of a place to progress onto is particularly important as it helps young people make a seamless transition into post-16 learning or employment with training.

The September Guarantee is supported by good quality information, advice and guidance. This can come from a number of sources which include:

- Teachers
- Parents and family friends
- Careers coordinators and guidance advisers
- Online and printed information about courses, progression routes and employment routes

The September Guarantee is an offer of a place in one of the following:

- A school sixth form
- A college of further education
- Employment with training to at least Level 2
- An apprenticeship September Guarantee - CSS | Children's Support Service (css-essex.co.uk)



