

Student Guide

Didn't Get the GCSE or A-Level Results You Were Hoping For?

First of all...

Take a breath.

If you're looking at your results feeling disappointed, upset or worried, you're not alone. Every year, thousands of students across the UK open their results and feel exactly the same.

It might feel like everything you've worked for has disappeared in a single morning.

It hasn't.

Today is important, but it doesn't decide the rest of your life.

Step 1 – Don't Panic

It's completely normal to feel disappointed.

You might feel:

- Angry
- Embarrassed
- Frustrated
- Confused
- Scared about what's next

All of those feelings are normal.

Try not to make any big decisions while you're upset. Give yourself a little time to think clearly before deciding what to do next.

Step 2 – Talk to Someone

Don't keep everything bottled up.

Speak to:

- Your parents or carers.
- A teacher you trust.
- Your form tutor.
- A careers adviser.
- A friend.

You don't have to face today on your own.

Step 3 – Find Out Your Options

One set of results doesn't mean every door has closed.

There may still be opportunities to:

- Join your chosen college.
- Study a different course.
- Find another college.
- Apply through UCAS Clearing.
- Start a Foundation Year.
- Take an apprenticeship.
- Resit your exams.

There is usually more than one route to your goal.

Step 4 – Make the Calls

It can feel scary picking up the phone, but remember that colleges and universities speak to students in your position every year.

When you call:

- Be polite.
- Be honest.
- Have your grades in front of you.
- Keep a pen and paper nearby.
- Ask questions if you don't understand something.

If you're applying to university, admissions staff will usually want to speak directly to you, so don't worry if they ask to talk to you instead of your parents.

Step 5 – Don't Compare Yourself

It can be tempting to scroll through social media and see everyone posting their grades.

Remember:

People usually post their best moments—not the setbacks.

Your journey is your own.

The only person you should compare yourself with is the person you were yesterday.

Step 6 – Think About What You Really Want

Sometimes unexpected results can make you stop and think.

Ask yourself:

- Is this still the career I want?
- Would I enjoy learning in a different way?

- Would an apprenticeship suit me better?
- Could a different course be an even better fit?

Changing direction isn't giving up.

Sometimes it's the smartest decision you can make.

Looking After Yourself Today

Results Day can be emotionally draining.

Try to:

- ✓ Eat something, even if you don't feel like it.
- ✓ Drink plenty of water.
- ✓ Go for a walk.
- ✓ Get some fresh air.
- ✓ Stay away from negative social media if it's making you feel worse.
- ✓ Get a good night's sleep before making any major decisions.

You'll think much more clearly after you've had time to process everything.

Remember These Facts

Many successful people:

- Didn't get the grades they wanted.
- Changed colleges.
- Took apprenticeships instead of university.
- Resat exams.
- Changed careers completely.

Their success wasn't decided by one day.

Neither will yours.

What to Do Today

- ✓ Collect your results.
- ✓ Speak to your school if you have questions.
- ✓ Contact your college or university if needed.
- ✓ Explore Clearing or other opportunities.
- ✓ Write down your options.

✓ Make a plan.

Small steps today will help you move forward.

One Final Thought

At SESMA Martial Arts, we often say that earning a black belt isn't about never failing. Every student makes mistakes, struggles with techniques or has days when things don't go to plan.

The students who succeed aren't the ones who never face setbacks—they're the ones who get back up, learn from the experience and keep moving forward.

Life works exactly the same way.

Your grades tell people how you performed in a set of exams.

They do **not** measure your kindness.

They do **not** measure your determination.

They do **not** measure your potential.

And they certainly do **not** decide what your future will be.

This isn't the end of your story.

It's simply the beginning of the next chapter.