

Get Ahead Project

Case Study

Vicky

Vicky was brought up in a small market town, some distance from the nearest colleges and universities. She attended the town's 11-18 school up to age 16. Although she had been predicted better grades, her examination phobia meant that she achieved five GCSEs at grade C and three others at grade D.

Some of her friends decided to go to the nearest college in Year 12, and as one of their parents could give them a lift, Louise went too. At the college she took three A levels, and found that college suited her much better than school. She applied to a number of universities and colleges, and received offers of a place from three of them. However, her exam phobia struck again, and she did not achieve the grades she had been predicted, or which the universities required.

She decided to re-sit two of the A levels, and attended the college on a part-time basis, working in a shop near her home on the other days.

She re-applied for higher education, and although her grades did not improve, she was offered a place in clearing at her nearest university. Vicky's reference from the college emphasised her exam phobia, and the university was often able to use other forms of assessment.

By now she had passed her driving test, and could borrow her mother's car to get to the university. Her timetable meant she only needed to be on campus three days a week, which meant she could also keep her job in the shop.

She studied for a degree in Travel & Tourism, and spent six months of her second year on an exchange with a university in France. Vicky still failed most of her formal exams and had to submit additional coursework instead, but she graduated with an honours degree, and now works in marketing.