

Primary Mastery Specialist Programme

2025/26 Cohort 11 – Information

Following the success of the previous nine cohorts of the Primary Mastery Specialist Programme, the NCETM and Maths Hubs are now seeking to recruit an eleventh cohort of expert primary school teachers to develop and work as *Primary Mastery Specialists*. This document gives information about the programme and how teachers and their schools can apply to be involved. The closing date for applications is

Background

Since 2014, the NCETM and Maths Hubs have been working together to develop [approaches to teaching for mastery](#) within primary mathematics. This has been informed by the teaching of maths in high-performing South-East Asian jurisdictions. The first year in post is a training and development year, either establishing or embedding mastery in their own schools, with the support of the senior leadership team. In the second year the training focus shifts to develop Mastery Specialists in their role of working with other schools. In the second and subsequent years, specialists will engage in a variety of work, including leading Work Groups, which support schools to develop, embed or sustain their approaches to teaching for mastery.

The programme

The NCETM and Maths Hubs now want to recruit an eleventh cohort of teachers to develop and work as Primary Mastery Specialists, enabling Maths Hubs to have the required capacity to support schools using teaching for mastery approaches. 2025/26 will be the development year for the Cohort 11 teachers and their schools. Then in 2026/27 and beyond (subject to DfE funding), the Mastery Specialists will each lead Work Groups to develop, embed and sustain teaching for mastery for their Maths Hub. It is expected that the Mastery Specialist's school becomes a leading exponent of teaching for mastery in this time, and so the school needs to ensure that it has the capacity and desire to take on and cultivate a teaching for mastery approach across the whole school. Before a teacher applies for the role, headteachers might find it useful to look at the NCETM website where there are [interviews with heads](#) who have led the introduction of teaching for mastery in a school. Here [Mastery Specialists discuss the benefits of the role](#) for themselves, their schools and their pupils.

In their specialist training year, 2025/26, participating teachers will:

- participate in three two-day residential professional development events led by the NCETM, these will be held in November 2025, March 2026 and June 2026 but are subject to confirmation
- broaden their own understanding of, and skills in, teaching maths for mastery in their own classroom
- work with colleagues, including the headteacher, to develop teaching for mastery approaches across their school, using a range of professional development activity, including regular workshops with an expectation that collaborative lesson observation will be an integral part of these lead a pilot collaborative lesson observation workshop with teachers from interested local schools
- collaborate with the Maths Hub's leadership and the other Maths Hub Mastery Specialists.

This first year will require 15 days' teacher release time and will be fully-funded through the Maths Hubs.

The second year onwards will require teacher release time and will be fully funded through the Maths Hubs. The exact number of days will be discussed with the Maths Hub and depend on the nature of the work carried out by the specialist. Typically, this could be approximately 12-37 days in any one academic year.

In 2026/27 and beyond (subject to DfE funding), the Mastery Specialists will:

- lead Work Groups to develop, embed and sustain teaching for mastery in other schools in their Maths Hub
- continue to develop, embed and sustain teaching for mastery approaches across their own school
- continue to collaborate with the Maths Hub's leadership and Mastery Specialists
- engage with additional Professional Development Lead sessions and obtain NCETM PD Lead Accreditation, if not already achieved.

Benefits for participating teachers and their schools

Participating in the programme will provide the following benefits to the Mastery Specialists and their schools:

- Mastery Specialists will develop:
 - understanding of the principles of mastery within the context of teaching maths
 - deep subject and pedagogical knowledge of primary maths to support teaching for mastery
 - skills of teaching, planning and assessment in order to effectively support pupils in developing a deep and sustainable understanding (i.e. mastery) of maths
 - professional development leadership skills to support teachers, within their own school and in other schools, to adopt a teaching for mastery approach, including leading Work Groups and facilitating high quality lessons to be observed by participants.
- Mastery Specialists will have the opportunity to work closely with the NCETM central team and the national and local communities of Mastery Specialists
- Mastery Specialists who are not already accredited NCETM PD Leads will be able to gain this accreditation through successful completion of the programme
- The Mastery Specialist's school will benefit from high-quality and sustained support in embedding teaching for mastery across the school.

Who should apply?

The table below shows the essential and desirable criteria for applicants to the programme. This should be evidenced in the application form.

Essential	Desirable
Qualified Teacher Status	Additional status, e.g. Mathematics SLE/MaST
Employed as a teacher in a primary/infant/junior/middle school, and regularly teaching maths to the same class of children	Mathematics subject leader
Able to fulfil the programme requirements and time commitment outlined above	
Good teaching skills in maths as evidenced by internal/external/Ofsted observation	A minimum of four years teaching primary maths
Passion and enthusiasm for teaching for mastery	A desire to develop as a specialist teacher of primary maths
Ability to work collaboratively with others	
Successful track record of working with other professionals effectively within your own school	A successful track record of working effectively with other professionals across a group of schools
Excellent communication and interpersonal skills	The ability to grow leadership capacity in others
An understanding of what constitutes effective learning in maths and the ability and confidence to communicate this	
Desire to develop skills both in the classroom and in working with others	
Works in a school where the headteacher understands the commitment required in the first year of training and beyond	

Maths Hubs will look to appoint Mastery Specialists so that they meet the criteria as set out above, but also fit into the hub's strategic plan for developing teaching for mastery across the region.

Expectations of participating teachers and their schools

For teachers selected to be part of the programme, there are the following expectations of them and their schools:

- The headteacher and Mastery Specialist commit to developing, embedding and sustaining teaching for mastery approaches in maths across the school, supported by professional development activity, including regular collaborative lesson observation and other collaborative professional development in their own school
- The headteacher commits to supporting the Mastery Specialist with their outreach work with other schools in ensuring that they are given appropriate release time to fulfil this.
- The Mastery Specialist commits to developing their understanding and practice related to maths teaching for mastery including:
 - participating in the three two-day residentials (subject to final confirmation)
 - developing maths teaching for mastery within their own classroom
 - completing any assignments required as part of the development programme
 - developing their role as a leader of professional development
- The Mastery Specialist commits to all aspects of the role and the release time required; in 2025/26 this is 15 days
- The Mastery Specialist commits to all aspects of the role and release time required in the subsequent years. The exact number is decided after discussion with the Maths Hub and is approximately 12-37 days carrying out the work outlined above
- The Mastery Specialist and headteacher will provide any reports required by the Maths Hub and participate in any evaluation processes required
- The headteacher commits to support the Mastery Specialist, including:
 - helping the specialist develop and embed teaching for mastery within the school
 - ensuring the teacher receives the required release time.

Funding

In the development year, 2025/26, the specialist's Maths Hub will fund the cost of 15 days release time for the Mastery Specialist's work. In 2026/27 and beyond (subject to DfE funding), the specialist's Maths Hub will fund the cost of release time for the Mastery Specialist's work and the cost of travel for school support visits. The exact number of days is to be discussed with the Maths Hub but would be in the region of 12-37 days per year.

How to apply

An application form will be published on the NCETM website on 2 December 2024 when the application window opens. Applicants, in conjunction with their headteacher, should complete and submit the application form by **5pm on 14 March 2025**. The Maths Hub will contact applicants once the selection process has been completed, in June.