

Secondary Mastery Specialist Programme

2025/26 Cohort 10 – Updated information

The successful Secondary Mastery Specialist Programme is undergoing some changes which will make it more accessible to classroom teachers and will improve the programme's impact within maths departments.

Specialists and their departments have undergone transformations resulting in improved experiences and outcomes for their students, and we now wish for this training to be available to a much wider audience.

This is a fantastic opportunity for participants to improve maths education through teaching for mastery within their own schools, and also to develop their professional development and leadership skills. Becoming a Secondary Mastery Specialist now means that teachers will focus on their own development and that of their department. In future years, Specialists may wish to work with other schools, but this is no longer a requirement.

Maths Hubs, working in conjunction with the NCETM, are now seeking applications from secondary schools that wish to nominate 'lead teachers' to take part in this important, long-term, professional development programme leading to the designation of *Secondary Mastery Specialist*. Schools nominating teachers for this role would be committed to the development of teaching for mastery in the lead teacher's classroom, and then across their mathematics department.

Since the intention of the programme is to effect long-term change across the department, it is important that the subject leader is fully aware and supportive of this work and should join their Maths Hub's Subject Leader Community to support ongoing developments.

Background

Since 2014, Maths Hubs and the NCETM have been working together to develop approaches to teaching for mastery. Teaching for mastery is a pedagogical approach which aims to develop a deep and connected understanding of maths for all learners, enabling them to enjoy maths and demonstrate high achievement (including in examinations), giving them a sound basis for future learning and preparing them for their future employment. In the NCETM's [Mastery Magnified](#) pages you will find case studies, interviews and podcast discussions with some of the secondary teachers we have been working with, and [interviews with Senior Leaders](#) explaining how the programme has positively impacted upon their schools.

At secondary level there are approximately 1,000 Mastery Specialists participating in the programme, a small number of whom have shared some of their reflections on how they have developed practices within their own schools in a series of [case studies and videos](#).

The government has committed substantial funding to support the expansion of teaching for mastery in the coming years, and funding is now available to support the development of a tenth cohort of Secondary Mastery Specialists.

What will participation in the programme involve?

Year 1

Participating schools will nominate a lead teacher to train as a Mastery Specialist and follow a two-

year development programme beginning in the autumn term of 2025. During the first year, the emphasis will be on the lead teacher developing their knowledge, understanding and skills of teaching for mastery, and the work will amount to 7.5 days' worth of release time which will be funded per day. It will include the following activities and tasks:

- 5.5 days attending central events (dates and locations to be confirmed, some will be face-to-face and some online). This also includes time to prepare for the central events by, for example, reading a set article or watching a shared classroom video.
- 2 days personal development which might include teachers:
 - working on their own classroom knowledge and practice
 - developing lessons and resources in collaboration with peers
 - visiting classrooms (both primary and secondary) to see teaching for mastery in action.

Alongside this, Specialists will receive three half-days of bespoke support from their hub's secondary team.

The headteacher, or their representative from the school's senior leadership team, will also be required to attend for a half-day alongside the lead teacher at the online launch event.

Year 2

In the academic year 2026/27, the participants will continue to develop their own classroom practices, but with a significant emphasis on developing the knowledge, skills and understanding of all members of their department. Alongside this they will explore, develop and implement department-wide approaches, structures and systems which support teaching for mastery. They will participate in sessions leading to accreditation as a Professional Development Lead. This work will amount to 7.5 days funded per day, and will include the following activities and tasks:

- 5.5 days attending central events (dates and locations to be confirmed). This also includes time to prepare for the central events by, for example, reading a set article or watching a shared classroom video.
- 2 days development including:
 - working within their own department to enhance teachers' knowledge and classroom practice
 - developing resources and systems in collaboration with departmental colleagues
 - visiting classrooms (both primary and secondary) to see teaching for mastery in action
 - Completing the Professional Development Lead accreditation document.

Alongside this, Specialists will receive three half-days of bespoke support from their hub's secondary team.

Year three and beyond

In the academic year 2027/28, the Mastery Specialist and a school colleague will join a Teaching for Mastery Work Group, in order to continue to develop aspects of teaching for mastery across the department.

In future years, where appropriate and convenient for their school, Secondary Mastery Specialists will be supported to lead provision with other schools. At this point, the Mastery Specialist will continue to be funded and supported in their development by the hub through the local leaders of mathematics education community, as well as through the national Secondary Mastery programme.

What are the benefits of participating in the programme?

The benefits for schools that apply to be part of the programme include:

- the department developing a curriculum informed by a clear set of principles, policies, practices and systems which support a teaching for mastery approach, as set out in the 2021 DfE Key Stage 3 non-statutory guidance
- the teachers in the department (including the Specialist) developing a deep understanding of the principles and pedagogies underpinning teaching for mastery, and acquiring enhanced maths specialist knowledge with a particular emphasis on progression within key areas of maths
- the growth of teachers' collaborative work, through which planning, teaching and assessment practices are developed
- the Specialist developing their own understanding and practice in supporting collaborative professional development within their school
- the department making effective use of materials and resources, to support the design of well-crafted lessons.

Developing teaching for mastery approaches takes time and is not a 'quick fix', but the intention is that students develop a deep understanding of the mathematical ideas they are taught so that they fully meet the aims of the national curriculum; show a positive attitude towards maths and demonstrate a growth mindset, leading to improved outcomes.

Who can apply?

For teachers being nominated by a school for the programme, the criteria outlined in the table below should be addressed in the application form, in the lead teacher's statement, and in the headteacher/senior leader's statement.

Essential	Desirable
Qualified Teacher Status (for at least two years)	Additional status, e.g. Lead Practitioner; Mathematics SLE; NCETM Accredited PD Lead
Employed as a teacher in a state-funded middle/secondary school in England; currently teaching maths to KS3 and/or KS4 students	Maths subject leader or responsibility within a maths department
A minimum of two years' experience teaching maths	Experience of developing a department's maths curriculum
Good teaching skills in maths as evidenced by internal/external observation	
Passion and enthusiasm for teaching for mastery	
Ability to work collaboratively with others	Experience of leading collaborative professional development

Keen to work to develop other professionals within their department	Successful track record of working effectively with other professionals within own school
Excellent communication and interpersonal skills	
An understanding of what constitutes effective learning in maths, and the ability and confidence to communicate this.	Already engaged with Maths Hub teaching for mastery work.

What are the expectations of participating schools?

Schools that are selected to have their nominated teacher participate in the programme would commit to the following expectations:

- the lead teacher will participate fully in the development programme and work on developing both understanding and practice
- working with the support of the subject leader, the lead teacher will support the department in developing its approach to teaching for mastery
- The subject leader will join the Maths Hubs Subject Leader Community
- in year 3 and beyond, the lead teacher and a colleague will join a Secondary Teaching for Mastery Work Group
- the school's senior leadership will support the department in its teaching for mastery development work, including ensuring the lead teacher receives the required release time, and will also attend a half-day launch at the start of the programme.

What is the funding for the programme?

In 2025/26, the Maths Hub will contribute to the funding of the 7.5 days' release time for the nominated lead teacher. In 2026/27, the Maths Hub will contribute to the funding of the 7.5 days' release time for the lead teacher. Travel costs to all the training events will also be covered.

How do schools nominate a teacher to take part?

An application form including headteacher consent form is available on the NCETM website. Applications will then be subject to a selection procedure undertaken by their local Maths Hub. Hubs will notify successful applicants/schools following the selection process (by the end of June 2025).