

Secondary Mastery Specialist Programme 2025/26 Cohort 9 – Information

Following the success of the Secondary Mastery Specialist Programme thus far, 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 an important three-year 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, across their mathematics department and, later on, to facilitate and support the development of teaching for mastery in a small number of other interested secondary schools within their Maths Hub area.

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 podcasts with some of the secondary teachers we have been working with.

Over 1,300 Primary Mastery Specialists have completed a development programme and are leading Work Groups involving other primary schools, whilst at secondary there are over 850 Mastery Specialists participating in the programme, many already working with other schools. A number of them have shared some of their reflections on how they have developed practices within their own schools in a [series of short 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 ninth cohort of Secondary Mastery Specialists.

What will participation in the programme involve?

Year 1

Participating schools will nominate a lead teacher to develop as a Mastery Specialist and follow a minimum of a three-year 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 15 days' worth of time; release time for these days will be funded at £200 per day. It will include the following activities and tasks:

- five 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.
- ten days personal development which might include teachers:
 - working on their own classroom knowledge and practice
 - developing lessons and resources in collaboration with Cohort 9 peers
 - visiting classrooms (both primary and secondary) to see teaching for mastery in action
 - meeting with the hub's Secondary Assistant Maths Hub Lead and the wider hub team
 - participating in other hub or regional events related to teaching for mastery to

help shape thinking and practice, e.g. visiting an 'open lesson',

The headteacher, or their representative from the school's senior leadership team, will also be required to attend 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. This work will amount to 15 days funded at £200 per day and will include the following activities and tasks:

- three 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
- eight 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
 - meeting with the hub's Secondary Assistant Maths Hub Lead and the wider hub team
 - participating in other hub or regional events related to teaching for mastery to help shape thinking and practice, e.g. visiting or leading an 'open lesson'.
- four days to participate in, write up and complete the NCETM's PD Lead Development Accreditation Programme to acquire accredited PD Lead status to support the development of their own skills in leading professional development*.

** If the teacher has already gained NCETM Secondary PD Lead accreditation there is no need to repeat the programme; if the teacher has accreditation in another phase, they will need to discuss this with the NCETM central team during the first year of the programme.*

Year 3

In the academic year 2027/28, the Mastery Specialist will be funded to lead a Work Group consisting of colleagues from two other schools, as well as continuing to work with their own department. The Work Group involves supporting participating departments in developing teaching for mastery approaches.

At this point, the Mastery Specialist continues to be funded and supported in their development by the hub through the Local Leaders of Maths Education (LLME) community as well as through the national Secondary Mastery programme.

Beyond 2028, there will be further opportunities to work with schools and the Maths Hub, as agreed locally.

This is a fantastic opportunity for participants to improve maths education through teaching for mastery within their schools, and also to develop their professional development and leadership skills.

Commented [AY1]: Should this be 'Secondary Mastery Specialist 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 subject 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 and beyond school
- the department making effective use of materials and resources, including textbooks, to support the design of well-crafted lessons.

Developing teaching for mastery approaches takes time and is not a 'quick fix', but the ultimate goal 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	Additional status, e.g. Lead Practitioner; Mathematics SLE; NCETM Accredited PD Lead
Employed as a teacher in a state-funded middle/secondary school; 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/Ofsted observation	
Passion and enthusiasm for teaching for mastery	
Ability to work collaboratively with others	Experience of leading collaborative professional development

Successful track record of working effectively with other professionals within own school	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	Already engaged with Maths Hub work on teaching for mastery

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
- working with the Maths Hub, the lead teacher will help with the wider work of the hub, particularly in year 3 and beyond
- 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 cover the cost of the 15 days' release time for the nominated lead teacher. In 2025/26, the Maths Hub will cover the cost of the 15 days' release time for the lead teacher (**see above: if the teacher is already an accredited PD Lead they will not be funded for these four days*). Travel costs to all the training events will also be covered.

Commented [AY2]: '2026/27'?

In 2027/28, the Maths Hub will cover the cost of release time for the Mastery Specialist to participate in local Hub events and at a higher 'SLE rate' to enable them to work with other schools.

How do schools nominate a teacher to take part?

An application form including headteacher consent form will be published on the NCETM website in December 2024. Schools applying then undergo a selection procedure undertaken by their local Maths Hub. Hubs will notify successful applicants/schools following the selection process (by end of June).