

Secondary Mastery Specialist Programme 2026/27 Cohort 11 – Information Sheet

Overview

Following the success of the Secondary Mastery Specialist Programme, Maths Hubs, working with the NCETM, are now inviting secondary schools to nominate a ‘lead teacher’ to take part in an important two-year professional development programme that leads to the designation of *Secondary Mastery Specialist*. Schools nominating teachers for this role would be committed to the development of teaching for mastery in that lead teacher’s classroom, and across their mathematics department. After successful completion of the programme some Mastery Specialists may be invited to support the development of teaching for mastery in other interested secondary schools within their Maths Hub area.

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.

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 Impact](#) pages you will find case studies and interviews 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

Over 1000 Secondary Mastery Specialists have been trained and are now working in schools to improve the experiences and outcomes for their students. 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 an eleventh cohort of Secondary Mastery Specialists.

What will participation in the programme involve?

Year 1 of the programme is structured with 7.5 days comprising:

- 5.5 days (equivalent) attending NCETM-led central events
- 2 days (equivalent) independent, in-school or hub-led development, including:
 - developing approaches in own classroom
 - visiting classrooms (primary and secondary) to see teaching for mastery in action
 - meeting with their hub’s Secondary Assistant Maths Hub Lead and wider team
 - engaging with a reflective journal and evidencing accreditation criteria.

Year 2 of the programme is structured with 7.5 days comprising:

- 5.5 days (equivalent) attending NCETM-led central events
- 2 days (equivalent) independent, in-school or hub-led 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 (primary and secondary) to see teaching for mastery in action
 - meeting with hub's Secondary Assistant Maths Hub Lead and wider team
 - engaging with reflective journal and evidencing accreditation criteria.

What are the benefits of participating in the programme?

The benefits for schools 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
- 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 the expertise to support 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.

Who should apply?

The table outlines the **essential** and **desirable** criteria for applicants, to enable potential participants determine whether this programme is right for them.

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 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/Ofsted observation	
Passion and enthusiasm for teaching for mastery	
Ability to work collaboratively with others	Experience of leading collaborative professional development

What are the expectations of participating schools?

- the lead teacher will participate fully in the development programme, and work on developing both understanding and practice
- with the support of the subject leader, the lead teacher will work with colleagues to develop teaching for mastery approaches across the department
- the lead teacher will maintain a working relationship with the Maths Hub
- 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 2026/27, the Maths Hub will cover the cost of the 7.5 days' release time for the nominated lead teacher. In 2027/28 the Maths Hub will cover the cost of the 7.5 days' release time for the lead teacher (**see above: if the teacher is already an accredited PD Lead they will not be funded for one of these days*). Travel costs to all required training events will also be covered.

How to apply

An application form will be published on the NCETM website on **16 December 2025** when the application window opens. Applicants, in conjunction with their headteacher, should complete and submit the application form by **23 April 2026**. The Maths Hub will contact applicants once the selection process has been completed.