

**Media release**

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**For immediate release**

## **The impact of curriculum and funding changes on level 3 mathematics uptake**

At the end of the autumn 2017 term, MEI conducted a survey of schools and colleges offering A levels, to try to establish how uptake of the mathematics AS/A levels and Core Maths has changed between academic years 2016/17 and 2017/18. We received responses from over 500 schools and colleges.

The full survey report has just been published, and is available at <http://bit.ly/MEISurvey18>.

An executive summary is available at <http://bit.ly/MEISurvey18Exec>.

Comparing 2017/18 with 2016/17, the survey analysis suggests:

1. There has been an overall reduction (roughly 10%) in the number of Year 12 students starting AS/A level Mathematics
2. The number of students starting AS/A level Further Mathematics has not changed significantly
3. The uptake of Core Maths continues to grow
4. Overall, there has been an increase in the GCSE Mathematics grades which schools and colleges require students to achieve before allowing them to start AS/A level Mathematics and Further Mathematics programmes

Point 1 is hard to interpret as it is also the case that since A levels became linear far fewer schools and colleges are offering AS levels. Many had continued to offer AS Mathematics because, until this academic year, AS/A level Mathematics had continued to be modular. In the past, many students took AS Mathematics as one of 4 AS levels in year 12 and then dropped it, either because they had always planned to do so, recognising that AS Mathematics is a very valuable qualification in its own right, or because they decided they preferred to take only their other 3 subjects to full A level. The move to linear A levels has resulted in many schools and colleges offering only 3 AS/A level subjects to their students in year 12, so it is natural that the number starting AS/A level Mathematics should fall. It is hard to estimate what the overall impact on numbers taking A level Mathematics in 2019 will be, especially as we don't know what change there was in year 12 uptake between 2014/15 and 2016/17. MEI hopes that the recently announced [Advanced Mathematics funding premium](#) will boost both AS and A level numbers for Mathematics and Further Mathematics in academic year 2018/19 and beyond.

Point 2 looks like very good news, but again we cannot be sure what the impact on A level numbers in 2019 will be. Again, the Advanced Mathematics funding premium should support continued increases in uptake of AS/A level Further Mathematics.

Point 3 also looks very positive, and the Advanced Mathematics funding premium should really boost Core Maths numbers. Schools and colleges who were not offering Core Maths in academic years 2016/17 or 2017/18, but who are offering it from this September can receive £600 of Advanced Mathematics Premium funding for every student taking Core

Maths for at least the next 3 years, and those who were already are offering Core Maths will receive the premium for every additional student.

Point 4 is a concern. The new 9–1 GCSE Mathematics is intended to be a better preparation for AS/A level Mathematics than the previous GCSE Mathematics and MEI believes strongly that schools and colleges should not automatically deny some students with good passes at GCSE Mathematics the opportunity to start AS/A level Mathematics.

### Notes to editors

1. Mathematics in Education and Industry (MEI) is an independent charity that is committed to improving mathematics education for all. It seeks to improve maths education through developing new courses, providing resources and professional development for teachers, and influencing policy.
2. In February 2018 the Government provided details of the Advanced Mathematics Premium, which will help schools and colleges to overcome some of the barriers to offering the full range of level 3 maths qualifications for their students.
3. Core Maths qualifications are designed for students who have achieved a standard pass in GCSE Mathematics, but who do not intend to take AS/A level Mathematics. They enable learners to strengthen and develop the mathematical knowledge and skills they have learnt at GCSE so that they can apply them to the problems that they will encounter in their other level 3 courses, further study, life and employment. Core Maths courses started in September 2015. Six Core Maths qualifications are offered by five exam boards: OCR, AQA, Pearson, WJEC and City and Guilds.

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For detailed background information on MEI see: [www.mei.org.uk](http://www.mei.org.uk).