

Teaching Further Mathematics (TFM)

Frequently asked questions

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If you have any further questions please contact: Sharon Tripconey, TFM Course Leader
sharon.tripconey@mei.org.uk

Will the TFM course help prepare me to teach the new AS and A levels in Further Maths from Sept 2017?

From September 2017, A level Further Mathematics has 50% of its content prescribed by the DfE. See the [Further Mathematics content](#) for full details. Awarding organisations can decide on the topics included in the remaining 50% of the content. AS level Further Mathematics has 30% prescribed content with 70% to be decided by the awarding organisations. The Teaching Further Mathematics (TFM) course covers the content prescribed by the DfE and will provide coverage of further pure content that is anticipated to be included by the awarding organisations in their specifications. When the different awarding organisations publish their accredited specifications, the content of the course will be reviewed to take in to account any changes in emphasis however, we do not anticipate any major change to the topics that are currently planned and advertised. TFM only covers pure maths content. The TFM course is structured in such a way as to preserve the coherence of the subject content; presenting mathematics in an interconnected way.

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How much does TFM cost?

The fee for TFM1 (non-masters) unit is £300 and the fee for TFM2 (non-masters) unit is £300. For teachers currently working in a state funded school or college in England offering A level Mathematics to post-16 students, the fee per unit is reduced to £200. The FMSP is funded through the Department for Education and as a result can only offer this subsidised fee to teachers working in state-funded schools or colleges in England.

Delegates who wish to study at masters level will need to pay an additional fee of £550 per unit. If you have any queries about studying at masters level, including queries about the fees then contact Sue de Pomerai, TFM Masters Link Tutor: sue.depomerai@mei.org.uk

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How much time will I need to devote to studying?

It is difficult to be specific about the amount of time needed for study as this will vary from delegate to delegate depending on previous qualifications and experience. In the past, successful delegates have reported to have spent between 2 and 8 hours studying each week. Ideally, delegates should aim to study regularly for a few hours each week however, in reality many working teachers have weeks when this is difficult and they use out-of-term time to catch up. If you decide to enrol on the masters programme this would require additional study time.

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What happens after I have submitted an application for TFM? How do I know if I have been offered a place on the course?

When you submit your application for TFM you will be sent an email with a finance form attached to print out, complete and return by post before a specified date. Your place on the TFM course will be considered only if a signed finance form has been submitted. Places on the course are limited and early returns are strongly encouraged to avoid disappointment. If you apply to enrol on the Masters element (only available for TFM1 starting in July) you will be required to complete an additional online form to allow your enrolment with the University of Plymouth to be processed. This additional form will be issued in September.

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Do I need to be currently working in a school or college to enrol on the course?

No, this is not a requirement. TFM course fees can be paid by individuals as well as by a teacher's school or college.

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When do the TFM course fees have to be paid?

Course fees can be paid in advance at any time. Typically an invoice for a TFM unit course fee will be issued in the same month as the unit start date. Additional invoices will be issued, as applicable, to cover the fees for applicants enrolled on the TFM masters units. These invoices will be issued when enrolment on the relevant masters unit (TFM1M or TFM2M) is processed.

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Do I have to sign up for both units, TFM1 and TFM2, at the start of the course?

No, you can just sign up for TFM1 first and then decide at a later date if you wish to continue with TFM2. However, in the past some teachers have found it helpful to sign up for both units at the start of the course to ensure that funding for the whole course has been agreed in advance with their school bursar.

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Can I do TFM1 this year and then take a break and then enrol in TFM2 the following year?

Yes this is possible if you enrol on TFM1 in July. However if you are progressing well with TFM1, it is wise to keep going and enrol in TFM2 straight after TFM1. TFM1 is a prerequisite for TFM2 and delegates who take a break in between units will need to refresh the content of TFM1. If you enrol on TFM1 in January then you will automatically have a break as TFM2 is only scheduled once a year; starting in February.

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I am not sure whether I want to commit to the Masters qualification immediately, will I have chance to change my mind after I have submitted my TFM application?

Yes, the International Masters Programme (IMP) at Plymouth is designed to be flexible so you can decide to undertake the Masters level work after you have started TFM1. Please note the option to study at masters level is only available for delegates who enrol on TFM1 in July. All TFM delegates will be given more information about masters level study at the first TFM1 study day in September.

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I'd like to enrol in the Masters element, how often will need to travel to Plymouth University if I enrol in the Masters part?

There is no requirement to travel to Plymouth. Delegates enrolling in the Masters will be supported through flexible online tutorials. For more details about the Masters element of TFM please refer to [the Postgraduate Certificate and the Masters programme](#) or contact Sue de Pomerai, TFM Masters Link Tutor: sue.depomerai@mei.org.uk

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Do I need to have taught A level Maths before doing the TFM course?

There is no requirement that applicants have taught A level Mathematics before. However, much of the pure content of A level Mathematics is assumed knowledge. If you would like support with teaching A level Mathematics content then you may find the [Teaching A level Mathematics \(TAM\)](#) course of interest.

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I am already teaching A level Further Mathematics but would like further ideas and a deeper understanding of the pedagogy. Is this course for me?

The TFM course is primarily designed for teachers who want to develop their own subject knowledge to be able to teach A level Further Mathematics with confidence. Teachers who are new to teaching Further Mathematics or teachers who want to teach it in the near future will find the course an excellent way to help them prepare. However, many course participants who are already teaching Further Mathematics say that they have benefited from the course, having gained deeper insights and that as a result their A level teaching has become far more effective.

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How much time is devoted to the mathematical content and how much is devoted to discussing pedagogy?

The MEI certificated course mainly focuses on improving subject knowledge. Pedagogical discussions are embedded throughout the course. The mathematical content of the course is coordinated by the unit tutors through study plans using textbooks, online sessions and study days. The online sessions tend to outline concepts and look at specific material and examples and the study days tend to have more focus on teaching ideas and enriching activities. There is an opportunity to engage fellow course participants in discussion about content or pedagogy through an online discussion forum.

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What happens if I can't attend one or more of the study days?

Teachers on the course enjoy the study days and appreciate the chance to meet up with fellow students. As the study days are held on a Saturday, this makes it feasible for most delegates to attend but if you are unable to attend one or more of the study days then don't worry, the materials and presentations will be shared with all delegates afterwards. You will still be eligible for a TFM course certificate even if you can't attend the study days.

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Is TFM hard?

This depends on what you interpret as 'hard'! The mathematical content covers the pure mathematics topics that are in A level Further Mathematics. Course delegates will have the opportunity to think more deeply about the concepts and make links within the topics. Delegates, if they wish, can explore the concepts beyond the confines of the current A level specifications; having access to a range of extension material. There is also support for delegates who are meeting the concepts for the first time and need support in mastering the fundamental concepts. TFM is offered as two units, TFM1 and TFM2. To progress on to TFM2, it is important to be grounded with TFM1. Some delegates choose to start TFM1 then have a break before progressing on to TFM2 the following year. Delegates who have done TFM report that the 'hard' part is managing all their commitments as well as devoting time to TFM. Many say that TFM is a rewarding challenge.

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What equipment do I need to join a live online session for TFM?

You need a computer with a reliable internet connection and an audio output device (e.g. speakers or a headset / earphones). If you want to interact fully then a USB headset with a microphone is recommended to provide the best sound quality and to prevent audio issues for other users.

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How do I join the online classroom for TFM?

At the start of the course, a web-link will be provided to a dedicated online classroom. You do not need a login or password; you will only need the dedicated link to the room. At the start of the course you will be invited to join an introductory online session to outline the features of the online classroom and test your connection.

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What happens if I miss a live session, can I catch up?

Live online sessions are all recorded. After each live session, all delegates enrolled on the course will be given access to the recordings of each session. You will need a PC / laptop to view the recordings as currently, it is not possible to view a recording from a tablet or any other mobile device.

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As well as learning about topics in Further Pure, I'd like to have some support for applied modules, is this possible?

The TFM course currently just covers the pure mathematics topics within an A level Further mathematics qualification. The FMSP provide online courses for small groups of teachers through their [Live Online Professional Development \(LOPD\)](#) programme and MEI offer one day face to face courses for [Mechanics](#), and [Statistics](#). In addition to these courses, extended CPD courses in [Teaching Mechanics](#) and [Teaching Statistics](#) are available however, for a working teacher, it not advisable to enrol on an additional extended professional development course at the same time as studying TFM.

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What happens if I withdraw from the course?

Please refer to the terms and conditions for MEI's CPD events: <http://www.mei.org.uk/terms-cpd>

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Further information

The **Further Mathematics Support Programme** is a government-funded initiative, supported by the Department for Education and is managed by MEI. The aims of the FMSP are to:

- Increase participation in AS/A level Mathematics and Further Mathematics, particularly that of girls and those from other under-represented groups;
- Increase capacity within schools and colleges to provide high quality mathematics teaching;
- Increase demand from students to study AS/A level Mathematics and Further Mathematics post-16;
- Support improvements in level 3 mathematics education.

These aims support the principle that all state-educated students throughout England should be able to access the mathematics education they need to fulfil their aspirations. Find out more about the Further Mathematics Support Programme: www.furthermaths.org.uk

Mathematics in Education and Industry (MEI) is a membership organisation and a charity which since the 1960s has worked to support mathematics teaching and learning. Any income generated is used to support mathematics education. MEI pioneers the development of innovative mathematics qualifications and teaching and learning resources. MEI offers teachers of all GCSE and A level specifications a range of continuing professional development courses, provides specialist tuition for students and works with industry to enhance mathematical skills in the workplace. MEI manages the government-funded Further Mathematics Support Programme.

Find out more about Mathematics in Education and Industry (MEI):

www.mei.org.uk

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