

## A level Mathematics still the most popular choice

Amidst significant changes to both GCSEs and A levels, Mathematics has sustained its popularity as the most popular A level choice, reflecting the high regard it is held in by teachers, students and their parents. The Further Mathematics Support Programme (FMSP), through its programme of enrichment events for Key Stage 4 students and professional development work with teachers, promotes the continued study of mathematics as a key facilitating subject for further study in a wide range of subjects, opening the door to many exciting and rewarding careers. Last year over 12000 students attended FMSP mathematics enrichment events, and each year the FMSP works with over 2000 teachers to improve their subject knowledge and pedagogy.

Congratulations to the 92163 students in the UK who successfully completed A level Mathematics this summer, and to the 15257 students who also completed A level Further Mathematics. Whilst there was a small reduction in the numbers taking Mathematics, and a modest increase in numbers taking Further Mathematics compared to last year (-0.59% and 1.76% respectively), entries for both A levels have grown rapidly since 2003. Total entries for all A level subjects fell by 1.65% this year, meaning these small changes in A level Mathematics and Further Mathematics entries represent a positive outcome.

For over 10 years the FMSP, which is managed by Mathematics in Education and Industry (MEI) and funded by the Department for Education, has supported the teaching of A level Mathematics and Further Mathematics, ensuring all state-educated students have access to the mathematics courses they need to progress to higher education. The FMSP has been supporting teachers with the changes to GCSE Mathematics, for which teaching began last September, through the provision of professional development and resources to extend and enrich students' mathematical learning. The aim of this support is to encourage more students to continue studying mathematics after GCSE. Teaching of new A levels for Mathematics and Further Mathematics, with new compulsory content, greater emphases on problem solving, proof, modelling and the use of technology, will begin in September 2017. It is vitally important that schools are well-prepared for the transition to the new A level courses. The FMSP is supporting teachers with resources

and an extensive programme of events to ensure that the number of students choosing AS/A level Mathematics and Further Mathematics continues to increase. High levels of participation in advanced level mathematics by 16-19 year-olds are essential in order to equip more young people for exciting careers in STEM and help ensure the UK workforce remains competitive in the global economy.

### **Compared with 2015:**

A level Mathematics numbers are down from 92711 to 92163, a decrease of 0.59%.

A level Further Mathematics numbers are up from 14993 to 15257, an increase of 1.76%.

Total entries for A levels decreased from 850749 to 836705, a decrease of 1.65%.

AS level Mathematics numbers are down from 165311 to 162741, a decrease of 1.55%.

AS level Further Mathematics numbers are down from 27034 to 26742, a decrease of 1.08%.

Total entries for AS levels decreased from 1385901 to 1196380, a decrease of 13.7%.

Since 2003 A level Mathematics numbers have increased by 82.13% (from 50 602) and AS Mathematics numbers have increased by 154.92% (from 63 841).

Since 2003 A level Further Mathematics numbers have increased by 187.06% (from 5 315) and AS Further Mathematics numbers have increased by 693.30% (from 3 371).