

FAQs for those interested in Mathematics Enhancement Courses [Version compiled: November 2006]

1. What kind of previous qualifications/experience do I need to be eligible for an enhancement course?

You will need to be eligible to start a mathematics initial teacher education course in September 2007 in all aspects apart from your subject knowledge. You will not have a degree in mathematics, but may well have an A-level or equivalent in mathematics, and perhaps either some element of maths in your degree, or some occupational experience using aspects of mathematics.

2. How do I apply to go on a mathematics enhancement course?

You can apply in one of two ways.

[A] We strongly recommended that you first apply for a mathematics PGCE at your chosen initial teacher education course provider, and put that provider down as first choice on a GTTR application form. If you know which enhancement course is in your area (go to www.teach.gov.uk/enhancement to find out where your local course is), you should add this as your second choice on your GTTR form. The GTTR website lists the course code for all enhancement courses. You should also mention that you are interested in attending an enhancement course in your personal statement, and furthermore put 'Mathematics Enhancement Course, July 2007' in your anticipated qualifications box. If your initial teacher education course application is successful the provider will offer you a conditional place on their course, subject to your satisfactory completion of the mathematics enhancement course. The provider will then refer you to the enhancement course provider, who will accept you providing there are places still available at that stage. You may need to check with the MEC provider to ensure that you have been referred successfully.

[B] Alternatively, you can apply for an enhancement course place by contacting the enhancement course provider directly. Please be aware that you will need a conditional initial teacher education course place before your enhancement course place can be confirmed. Your initial teacher education provider may well be different to the MEC provider, so. This second option is mostly used during the period after MECs have begun in January of each year, but where PGCE or GTP providers are not interviewing applicants for the following year. Applicants in the autumn term should use option [A]

3. What if I want to do a GTP rather than a PGCE?

If you want to train through an employment based route, you apply directly to the institution of your choice (please see www.teach.gov.uk/routes for more information on these routes into teaching). You should mention the enhancement course on your application form. Attendance on the MEC can be included in your training plan, though it will mean a six month break from the main GTP while you pursue the MEC. For example someone starting a GTP in September could undertake one term of the GTP, then two terms of MEC, rejoining the GTP again the following September. Discuss this with your GTP provider.

4. What else could I be doing before I start an enhancement course?

If you want to find out more about teaching mathematics before you apply for teaching and the enhancement course, the TDA offers a range of career exploration activities. For example, the Open Schools programme gives you the opportunity to observe mathematics being taught in a school for a day. You can find out more about career exploration activities by visiting www.teach.gov.uk and going to 'Experience Teaching'.

Contact your MEC provider, who may have a range of options available for prior studies, or early registration so that you can access pre-course materials on-line.

5. What is the day to day structure of an enhancement course?

The exact day to day structure will depend on how your course provider has developed the course. Our MEC runs with a full timetable four days per week, with one day of consolidation and follow-up studies. The course includes taught time, practical work, research and periods of personal study. Each day will contain some tutor-participant contact time. You will be expected to discuss your progress on the course with a tutor in the role of your academic adviser.

6. Would I spend any time in schools during the course?

Although the course is designed to widen and deepen your knowledge and understanding of mathematics, rather than to focus on teaching it in schools, you will spend a small proportion of time – 12 days - in schools dealing with specific aspects related to curriculum subject knowledge and focusing on the misconceptions that may be developed while learning the subject, since these help to develop your deeper understanding of the subject. Obviously you will cover all other aspects of schools on your initial teacher education course.

7. How many hours a week in the course?

The course is full time, which means it will require you to work on the content before and after sessions, and within study days as well as during the 9.30 a.m. – 3.00 p.m. days when you are working with your course group.

The course is within a 26 week period, and in 2007 will start in week beginning 8th January 2006 and end in week beginning 2nd July 2007.

8. Will there be work to do outside of lesson time?

There will be a significant amount of work to do outside of lesson time. You will have the task of deepening your understanding of topics covered and to be covered, as well as being given assignments and 'homework' to complete. However you will also have periods of self study in your timetable which you can use to work towards these tasks.

9. What kind of financial support will I receive?

You do not have to pay any fees on the course. In fact, you will receive a tax-free

bursary of £225 per week for the duration of the course.

There may also be the possibility of a small amount of severe hardship funding, which will be decided on a case by case basis – this is intended to cover unexpected expenses and should not be considered to be factored into your financial plans.

Overseas students should be aware that although they will receive the enhancement course bursary, they will not be eligible for any bursary for their subsequent initial teacher education course and also may not be eligible for funding if they progress on to that course.

10. What kind of academic support will I receive?

All enhancement course providers will offer you a range of academic support outside of taught sessions, in the same way that all other students are supported. For example, you will be allocated an academic adviser.

11. Can I get access to student loans or hardship funds for the course?

There may be the possibility of a small amount of hardship funding from your enhancement course provider, which will be decided on a case by case basis – this is intended to cover unexpected expenses and should not be considered to be factored into your financial plans.

You will not be eligible for a student loan whilst participating in the enhancement course. However you may be eligible for this when you progress on to your initial teacher education course.

12. Will I be eligible for council tax relief as a student on an enhancement course?

No. However you may be eligible for this when you progress on to your initial teacher education course.

13. How will the course prepare me to go on to Initial Teacher Education?

The enhancement course will widen and deepen your knowledge and understanding of mathematics to enable you to teach it to at least 11-16 year olds, and if you show the talent, to 16-19 year olds as well. It will provide you with the skills and the confidence you need to address any gaps in your subject knowledge so that you are ready to go on to your initial teacher education course in the subject.

14. How is the course assessed?

A range of assessment methods will be used to check your understanding, provide you with feedback and identify your areas of strength. These methods include tutorials, examinations, practical tasks, essays, investigations, presentations and many more. The assessment methods used will help contribute to your deep understanding of mathematics. You will build a portfolio of assessed work as you progress through the enhancement course.

15. Will I get a qualification?

The enhancement course does not lead to a specific qualification, but is focused specifically upon preparing you to undertake a mathematics initial teacher education course.

16. What areas of mathematics will be covered during the course?

The enhancement course will widen and deepen your knowledge and understanding of mathematics to enable you to teach it to at least 11-16 year olds, and perhaps to 16-19 year olds, and is based around eight units:

- Algebra & Trigonometry Functions;
- Geometry & Mathematical Reasoning;
- Core Number & Algebra;
- Decision & Discrete Mathematics;
- Calculus;
- Mechanics;
- Statistics & Probability;
- Mathematical Structure & Proof.

17. How can I find out more?

For information about either of the two MECs within the Southern Consortium's region, at Hastings and at Bognor Regis, contact Patricia Adams and Adrian Pinel on mec@chi.ac.uk

For general information, call the Teaching Information Line on 0845 6000 991 to get more information about how to apply.

You can also visit the TDA website at www.teach.gov.uk/enhancement for more details on the courses. This webpage gives the contact details for each enhancement course.