



Media release

20 August 2009

For immediate release

Maths A-level numbers bounce back

The number of A-Level Mathematics entries across the UK is up 12.2% on last year, with 72,475 students sitting the exam. The number of entries is now higher than it has been for 17 years.

Figures released today by the Joint Council for Qualifications also show that

- A-Level Further Mathematics has continued to rise rapidly in popularity, with entries increasing by 15.2% (to 10,473)
- AS-Level Mathematics entries increased by 22.1% (to 103,312)
- AS-Level Further Mathematics entries have increased by an enormous 47.17% to (to 13,164)

The London Mathematical Society and the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications warmly congratulated all who have successfully completed these examinations.

This year's results are particularly welcomed. They reveal that the number of candidates sitting A-level maths has now fully recovered from the catastrophic drop of almost 20% in 2002 following the introduction of Curriculum 2000.

The results also come at a time when A-level mathematics has been widely discussed in the news, with controversy over plans to introduce a new A-level in *Use of Mathematics* as well as calls to award more school league table points for "harder" subjects such as mathematics and physics.

Professor Chris Budd, Education Secretary at the London Mathematical Society said, "We have been concerned at the recent decline in the number of candidates taking A-level mathematics and are now delighted that the subject is again attracting healthy levels of interest. Many of these candidates will go on to study mathematically-rich subjects at university, but many others will find their mathematics useful whatever they go on to study or in their working lives. We strongly support encouraging, and supporting, more students to carry on with their mathematical studies beyond the age of 16, in a form suitable to their needs. This will ensure that they are well equipped for the challenges of the 21st century."

Professor Duncan Lawson of the Higher Education Service Area at the Institute of Mathematics and Its Applications said "The continued growth in success at A-level mathematics is fantastic news for the future of the subject in the UK. It is also good news for the country as a mathematically well-qualified workforce is essential for our international economic competitiveness. It is important that as many students as possible develop appropriate mathematical skills through a range of qualifications with A level mathematics remaining as the pinnacle of pre-university achievement offering stretch and challenge to the brightest students."

Notes for Editors

1. The **London Mathematical Society (LMS)** is the UK's learned society for mathematics. Founded in 1865 for the promotion and extension of mathematical knowledge, the Society is concerned with all branches of mathematics and its applications. It is an independent and self-financing charity, with a membership of over 2600 drawn from all parts of the UK and overseas. Its principal activities are the organisation of meetings and conferences, the publication of periodicals and books, the provision of financial support for mathematical activities, and the contribution to public debates on issues related to mathematics research and education. It works collaboratively with other mathematical bodies worldwide. It is the UK adhering body to the International Mathematical Union.

2. The **Institute of Mathematics and its Applications (IMA)** is the learned and professional society for mathematics. It promotes mathematics research, education and careers, and the use of mathematics in business, industry and commerce. Amongst its activities the IMA produces academic journals, organises conferences, and engages with government. Founded in 1964, the Institute has 5,000 members. Forty percent of members are employed in education (schools through to universities), and the other 60% work in commercial, industrial and governmental organisations. In 1990 the Institute was incorporated by Royal Charter and was subsequently granted the right to award Chartered Mathematician designation.

3. The LMS and IMA are members of the **Council for the Mathematical Sciences**, which also comprises the Royal Statistical Society, the Edinburgh Mathematical Society and the Operational Research Society.

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