

An Adapted Mastery Approach and Contextualised Curriculum for Functional Skills Qualification Level 1 Trial Specification

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The Department for Education is inviting you to take part in an exciting set of trials in the 2024/25 academic year. The trials will engage around 20,000 learners across England and aim to generate new, high-quality evidence on what works in adult numeracy.

By taking part you will be randomly allocated to a treatment (delivering something new) or control (business as usual) group. If you are in the treatment group, it will be an opportunity to deliver something innovative that has potential to improve results for learners. If you are in the control group, you will continue to deliver your business-as-usual curriculum. Both groups are vital to the research and will receive payment for being involved. This trial is delivered as a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) which is a type of evaluation that measures the impact of an intervention or ‘treatment’ using randomisation. Learn more here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnc5YpCyyXA>

Registration is now closed.

The Trial

This multi-arm trial will test whether adult learners (aged 19+) who are taught using the Mastery Approach or Contextualised Approach to Functional Skills Qualification Level 1 (FSQ L1) Maths have better outcomes than those who are taught using a business-as-usual approach to FSQ L1.

For this trial you will have a two in three chance of being assigned to a treatment group to deliver a new approach to teaching FSQ L1 - either Mastery Approach or Contextualised Approach.

A Contextualised Approach for Functional Skills Level 1

The intervention

This intervention is designed to improve adults’ attitudes and beliefs about the value of maths and attainment in Level 1 Functional Skills maths using a Realistic Mathematics Education (RME rme.org.uk) approach in classroom delivery. This approach differs to commonplace practice in maths classrooms where learners are shown a technique first

and the ask to apply it. In a contextualised curriculum learners are first engaged with a context.

The principles for the approach are based on the work of the Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) who investigated the impact of the RME approach on achievement and attitudes in post-16 GCSE Maths resit classes and the teaching and learning materials used as part of the research.

Key to the approach is to use 'Realistic' contexts – showing a simplified version of a real-life context, but still bear a reasonable resemblance to the real scenario. Real and realistic contexts are useful for maths courses such as Functional Skills, as they enable students to access abstract concepts and demonstrate useful applications of maths.

The main approaches to this intervention are:

- using contexts that draw on initial understanding of a realistic situation, or a situation that learners can imagine could occur
- using tasks that have a high degree of realism while also providing a natural opening to understanding important mathematical ideas
- engaging with maths both in general real-world situations and in situations relevant to specific vocations.

What will be delivered?



Teachers attend 10 hours of training on Contextualised Approach



Trial starts September 2024



Teachers deliver 1.5 hours/week for 12 weeks (total of 18 hours)



Functional Skills results collected from Individualised Learner Record (ILR) dataset

The lessons take place within existing curriculum hours. The 18 hours of lessons can be delivered either as part of weekly 1.5-hour sessions over 12 weeks, or divided over 30 weeks, depending on the format of delivery in adult education providers.

The intervention is designed to be delivered face to face but could be adapted for online or hybrid courses.

An Adapted Mastery Approach for Functional Skills Level 1

The Intervention

"Maths mastery" refers to a teaching approach that emphasises a deep understanding of mathematical concepts for all learners. The mastery approach is associated with the principles of teaching for understanding, coherence, and mathematical thinking.

The intervention targets teachers of adult learners working towards a Functional Skills Level 1 qualification. The aim is to support the teachers to develop new teaching practices aligned with the mastery teaching principles that they can apply across their wider practice. This involves a change of approach from 'covering the curriculum' to deepening understanding and spending time building from context to abstract reasoning.

Teaching for Mastery involves various practices, including interactive teaching, group work, and engagement within a class, facilitated by adult education teachers, with the intervention focusing on the following five key principles for mastery of maths:

1. Teaching that allows learners to develop an understanding of mathematical structure.
2. Valuing and building on learners' prior learning
3. Prioritising curriculum coherence and connections
4. Developing both fluency and understanding of key ideas
5. Developing a culture in which everyone believes everyone can succeed.

What will be delivered?



Teachers attend 10 hours of training on Maths Mastery



Trial starts September 2024



Teachers deliver 1.5 hours/week for 15 weeks (total of 22.5 hours)



Functional Skills results collected from Individualised Learner Record (ILR) dataset

The lessons take place within existing curriculum hours. The 22.5 hours of lessons can be delivered either as part of weekly 1.5-hour sessions over 15 weeks, or divided over 30 weeks, depending on the format of delivery in adult education providers.

The intervention is designed to be delivered face to face but could be adapted for online or hybrid courses.

Who can take part?

- Adult learning organisations delivering Level 1 Maths Functional Skills to adult learners (19+)
- These settings will primarily be FE colleges and adult education colleges across England.

Training – for teachers in the treatment groups only

High quality teacher training and resources will be provided by Education and Training Foundation (ETF) which includes a comprehensive training package of lesson plans, schemes of work, training materials.

Timeline of Training

Duration: 4 x 2.5 hours online

Teachers in the treatment group can sign up to the training below:

If teachers cannot attend the training in July, Education Training Foundation will hold catch up sessions in September 2024:

Adapted Mastery Approach Training:

Cohort 1 (09:30-12:00): 9, 10, 16, 17 September 2024

Cohort 2 (13:00-15:30): 10, 13, 16, 20 September 2024

Contextualised Curriculum Training:

Cohort 1 (09:30-12:00): 9, 11, 16, 18 September, 2024

Cohort 2 (13:00-15:30): 9, 11, 16, 18 September, 2024

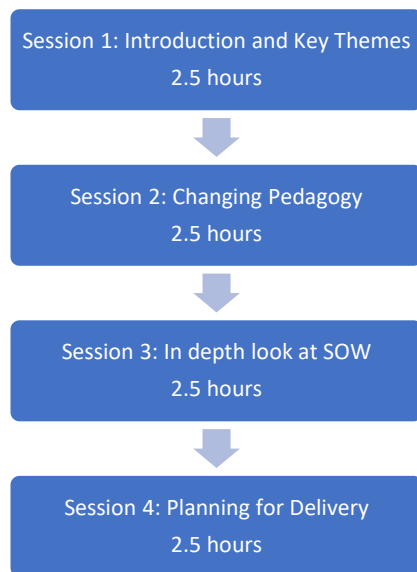
Ongoing Lesson Study:

From September 23rd your teachers will need to attend a 2-hour weekly Lesson Study with ETF, these will run over 12 weeks.

Please book here:

- Mastery: <https://booking.etfoundation.co.uk/course/details/1769>
- Contextualised Curriculum: <https://booking.etfoundation.co.uk/course/details/1768>

Pre-intervention – 100% attendance required – all sessions will be online.



During Intervention

‘Lesson study’ – 2 hours once a week online for 12 weeks (80% attendance required)

Led by a trainer, the sessions will give participants the opportunity to work together to reflect on teaching practices, deconstruct lesson content, plan for teaching of upcoming lessons, and consider the practicalities and possible challenges of delivering the lessons

What is expected from a Provider?

Below is a list of compulsory activities that we would expect learning organisations to complete as part of the trial. These will also be outlined in the contractual agreement.

- Share trial documentation with teachers and learners including information sheets explaining the purpose of the research and the course materials (for those selected to be in the treatment group).
- Collect details of learners who opt out of participating in the trial.
- Report to Etio and Ipsos on learner and teacher numbers and meet with Etio to raise any risks to recruitment or delivery.

- Collect and share attendance data to Evaluators of learners that take part in the trial sessions.
- Ensure that teachers attend the training (if they are selected to be in the treatment group).
- Ensure delivery of the intervention courses as specified.

Additional optional evaluation activities for learners and teachers that we would hope learning organisations would support in promoting / administering:

- Learner survey(s)
- Interviews with teachers
- Interviews with learners

Data will be collected by the evaluator from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) dataset and will not need to be provided by the learning organisation, including final Level 1 Functional Skills outcomes.

	Outcomes	Data Source	Data Collection
Primary	FSQ Maths Level 1 Pass rate	Individualised Learner Record	End of trial
Secondary	Maths Skills test & Maths confidence	Survey-based	Start & end of trial
	Attendance	Attendance sheet	Continuous

Process Map for Providers

	Before Course Starts			Course Starts		During Course	End of Course	
Actions for all providers participating in trial:	Random assignment to a treatment or a control group	Recruit learners to the course as usual	Update your Privacy Notice to include the trial information	You share trial information with learners, including how their data will be used and provide them with the	Evaluator will administer a baseline maths test survey (in person) to all consenting learners in the trial.	Teachers deliver course as usual while keeping a register of which learners attend each lesson	The evaluator or administrators endline survey (in person) to all consenting	Providers securely share learner information with Ipsos, including: > Names of learners

				opportunity to opt out			learners in the trial	who have opted out > Attendance information
Additional actions for those in the treatment group:	Teachers complete training delivered by ETF on the Mastery (or Contextualised approach depending on randomisation) from June to September.					Teachers deliver lessons as per the intervention plan. They also receive ongoing weekly/bi-weekly support by ETF in the form of online workshops.		

Incentives and payment

The total amount of the *Grant* will be based on the total number of learners recruited for the intervention and which group the Provider is placed into, control or treatment.

If placed in the control group, the provider will receive:

- £1,000 plus 10% of estimated total trial funding (admin premium)
- Trial funding will be determined by the number of learners recruited. Total trial cost will be based on £7.20 per project specified learning hour per learner. Plus:
 - Mean area cost uplift (1.01-1.2) applied

- Maximum disadvantage cost uplift (1.084 and 1.336) applied if applicable

If placed in the Treatment group, the Provider will receive:

- £1,000 plus 10% of estimated total trial funding (admin premium) and the total trial funding.
- Trial funding will be determined by the number of learners recruited. Total trial cost will be based on £7.20 per project specified learning hour per learner. Plus:
 - Mean area cost uplift (1.01-1.2) applied
 - Maximum disadvantage cost uplift (1.084 and 1.336) applied if applicable
- Teachers will receive free, high-quality training on how to implement the intervention

Further information about funding can be found in the Level 1 Functional Skills Trial funding guide.

Additional incentives include:

- A series of optional informational/best practice seminars will be run throughout the trials.
- A 'learning platform' for participating providers will be established.
- Local Areas –early / emerging findings will be shared as they become available with local areas
- Learner incentives (offered by Evaluators) –a £30 shopping voucher will be offered as an incentive for learner participation in depth interviews.

FAQs

Please find additional FAQs about the trial here: [Multiply Education Research Trials | Current Trials \(etioglobal.org\)](https://etioglobal.org/Multiply-Education-Research-Trials-Current-Trials)

Q: We enrol learners on a roll on / off basis - will they still be able to be part of the trial?

A: Yes, to be eligible you must deliver Level 1 Functional Skills Maths classes to adults for a minimum of 12 weeks but it can start at any point from September 2024 and end within the academic year. Please let us know in your registration form which cohorts you would like to sign up.

Q: How long will the whole project last?

A: It will start in September 2024 and results will be available from the evaluation in 2025.

Q: Will the resources be given by you?

A: Yes, the providers in the treatment group will receive the training materials and teaching materials to deliver the interventions.

Q: By what date will you be able to announce whether a provider is in the control or treatment group?

A: A: Randomisation into control and treatment groups will be on a rolling basis between June and September 2024. You must have signed your trial contracts to undergo randomisation.

Q: Can you apply for multiple trials?

A: Yes, you can apply to any of the trials you are eligible for. Find out more here: [Multiply Education Research Trials | Current Trials \(etioglobal.org\)](#)

Q: Is there a minimum cohort size?

A: There is no minimum, but the trial does not suit 1:1 learning.

Q: How many teachers can be involved from one organisation?

A: All teachers who are eligible for the trial may be involved. Ideally, two or more teachers per organisation would participate.

Q: We don't have lots of Level 1 learners, but more Level 2. Is there a minimum number of Level 1 that are needed?

A: There is no minimum number but please let us know the number of teachers and number of learners you expect via the registration form. [Multiply Education Research Trials | Current Trials \(etioglobal.org\)](#)

Q: If an organisation has already been part of the Mastery Approach training from CfEM, how would this affect being part of the trial?

A: You can still take part in this trial. Please speak to someone from the Multiply Research Project Team to register your interest: Multiply@etioglobal.org

Useful links

Questions? Please contact Multiply@etioglobal.org



Multiply Trials website: [Multiply Education Research Trials | Home \(etioglobal.org\)](https://etioglobal.org)



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