

The Further Mathematics Support Programme helps students prepare for exams during school closures

With severe weather conditions causing major school closures during the run up to the January exams, many students have missed out on important revision lessons, but one organisation has stepped with a innovative way of helping AS and A level Mathematics and Further Mathematics students.

The Further Mathematics Support Programme (FMSP) already provides live online revision sessions to help students to prepare for AS/A level Further Mathematics exams. Students join these sessions by following a link to a website where they can take part in a real time virtual lesson - listening to the tutor, watching the maths as it appears on their screen, and using instant messaging to ask questions.

When last week's snow brought the country to a halt, the FMSP realised they could use this tool to help students with AS level Mathematics revision too, and they provided recordings of sessions for one of the first of the January session exams - Core Mathematics 1 on 11th January.

Sue Owen from the FMSP said:

'We were able to issue the details of these sessions to all of the schools and colleges – more than 2000 - that have registered with the FMSP, as well as to the students we teach. Some schools that were not able to forward the details to their students put the links on their virtual leaning environments so that students would be able to access them there.'

'Our office was also affected by the snow, but we managed to get them sent out just in time. Teachers and students have really appreciated our help at a time when it has been impossible for them to provide the support they normally would. One teacher said the sessions would prove invaluable as her school remains closed.'

Charlie Stripp, Programme Leader for the FMSP said:

'We started using live online tuition to enable us reach students in more remote rural areas who were not able to attend tuition groups, and it has helped us to achieve our aim to ensure that all students in England are able to access Further Mathematics qualifications, even if their school or college is unable to teach the subject itself. Now we are finding we can use the facility in other ways too. It has been so successful that we now also use it to provide online professional development for teachers. It's low cost, there's no travel involved, and with sessions usually held in the early evening, no disruption to classes either.'

Schools and colleges can register with the FMSP by completing a simple form online at www.furthermaths.org.uk. Registration is free and there are many benefits for the schools and colleges that do so. These include access to extensive online resources for teachers, newsletters, support and information as well as invitations to online revision sessions. At times like this teachers and students need all the help they can get!

Notes for Editors

1. The Further Mathematics Support Programme is a government-funded initiative, supported by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and is managed by Mathematics in Education and Industry (MEI), an independent charity that supports mathematics education. It follows on from the very successful 'Further Mathematics Network' initiative, which was set up following a successful 5 year pilot project that was developed by MEI and funded by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

2. The Further Mathematics Support Programme involves schools, colleges and universities working together collaboratively to widen opportunities for students. It uses a blended learning strategy that employs intensive tutorial input alongside independent study, supported by extensive, purpose-written, online resources. This model is proving very successful and, suitably adapted, could be used by other high-value shortage subjects such as physics and modern languages.

3. Further Mathematics reinforces the content of the standard AS/A level Mathematics and introduces students to important topics such as complex numbers and matrices, which are vital for many mathematics-related degrees.

4. For more information, please contact Janice Richards on 01225 774777 or by email at janicerichards@furthermaths.org.uk.

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For detailed background information on the Further Mathematics Support Programme, please see www.furthermaths.org.uk.