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Dear Colleague,

The government in England is taking a series of steps to improve the mathematical knowledge of young people. Our new mathematics curriculum in schools has a greater emphasis on mathematical fluency and reasoning; the new mathematics GCSE taught from September this year will offer a stronger foundation to successful study at A level; and new A level mathematics qualifications taught from 2017 will reflect the needs of universities. We are also working to increase the number of students studying mathematics post-16 through school and college performance measures and funded school and college programmes.

It remains a concern, however, that many students begin higher education without the mathematical knowledge required to succeed and achieve their potential. Last year's HEA report[i] highlighted gaps in the mathematical knowledge of new undergraduates in a range of disciplines, including economics, social sciences and business; and the recent British Academy 'Count us In'[ii] report called for the UK to improve its performance in developing stronger quantitative skills at all levels.

The problem of transition to mathematical study at university is compounded by the fact that many students have not studied mathematics since GCSE, resulting in a lack of fluency and confidence in using and applying mathematics.

It is for this reason that we have introduced new Level 3 'Core Maths' qualifications. These qualifications are aimed at students who achieve a Grade C or above in GCSE maths but do not go on to study AS or A level mathematics. The qualifications are designed to extend students' mathematical and statistical knowledge, deepen and strengthen existing skills and build confidence in using and applying mathematics. They focus in particular on the application of mathematics to address problems, building valuable skills in mathematical thinking, reasoning and communication.

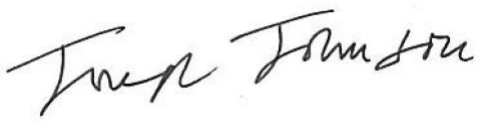
We want to give more young people the opportunity to acquire the mathematical knowledge to succeed. Universities have a particular role to play in building demand for these qualifications among students and parents by signalling their value for higher education. It would be extremely helpful, therefore, if you could share information about these new qualifications with relevant

departments in your universities and consider how their value can be signalled to prospective undergraduates.

Further information about Core Maths can be found at:
http://www.core-maths.org/

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/launch-of-new-high-quality-post-16-maths-qualifications

With Best wishes



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[i] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/hea_mathematical-transitions_webv2.pdf

[ii] http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/count_us_in_report.cfm?frmAlias=/countusin/