



Dear Applicant

My name is Alf Coles, a Senior Lecturer in Education (Mathematics) and I am writing to you as Programme Co-ordinator for the MSc Education (Mathematics Education). I am delighted you have a place on the programme for the coming academic year and want to take this opportunity to introduce myself, colleagues and highlight the key features of the programme, as well as sharing insights into the experiences thus far for those who joined us in September.



There are three members of staff who teach on the MSc Education (Mathematics Education): [myself](#), [Tracy Helliwell](#) and [Julian Brown](#). We have all had over 10 years' experience in the classroom, teaching mathematics, before entering the university and becoming university teachers and researchers. We share teaching and supervision, ensuring that you receive specialised advice and guidance.

I have been a member of the School of Education, University of Bristol, since 2010. My teaching and research interests focus on mathematics education, including using video for professional development, the development of early number sense and links between mathematics education and environmental sustainability. Tracy Helliwell joined the University of Bristol in 2015, her research interests are centred around issues of teacher education. Julian Brown has been working at Bristol since 2017 and has a focus on observational research.

There are important mathematics education national conferences ([British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics, BSRLM](#)) and international conferences ([Psychology of Mathematics Education, PME](#)) where you can meet academics and researchers who write within the field (journals such as *For the Learning of Mathematics* and *Educational Studies in Mathematics* are available through the library as e-journals). We see your Master's journey as joining a community of practice where we work to support your development as a mathematics education researcher. Some of you will go on to study for your PhD on completion of the Masters, return to your classroom reinvigorated or contribute to the development of mathematics teaching and learning curricula at a national level. Stories from our alumni, across the MSc programmes, can be found [here](#).

The [Mathematics Education Research Network \(MERN\)](#) website will give you information about current and past research projects. All three of us (Alf, Tracy, Julian) will be attending the PME42 conference in Sweden during July, as well as several doctoral students. You could consider aiming to submit a research report, based on your Master's dissertation, to PME43 which will be in South Africa in 2019!



### Key Features of Programme

You will become part of a diverse community studying alongside students from a wide range of international and UK contexts. The 2017/18 Mathematics Education students come from six different countries. We encourage you to find out as much as you can about other education cultures and contexts by working with your peers throughout your time of study.

In the second term of the programme you will have the opportunity to visit a local school, linked to an area of your own research interest. There may be possibilities to work alongside a local teacher and your dissertation may involve data collected from schools in the UK. As tutors on the course, we have strong links to many local schools and teachers and we use these to facilitate connections. All mathematics education units are important for developing towards the dissertation, including work to support academic writing, literature reviews and the school-based unit is often used as a pilot for the dissertation.

Your decision to pursue the MSc in Education (Mathematics Education) at the University of Bristol is a great choice, and we are confident that you will not only enjoy the academic challenges but also the personal ones.

In order to support preparations for your arrival please bookmark our '[New Student Webpages](#)'. These webpages will contain information and reminders on pre-arrival tasks to support your academic study.

If you have any questions about the programme or would like any support in helping you prepare for your course, please do contact me.

With best wishes,

Alf Coles  
MSc Education (Mathematics Education) Programme Co-ordinator for 2017-18  
School of Education  
University of Bristol  
[alf.coles@bris.ac.uk](mailto:alf.coles@bris.ac.uk)

If you are not already following us on [Twitter](#) we recommend you do so. This is a great way to start becoming part of the SoE community and we would love to hear from you on your reasons for applying, aspirations and preparations for arrival by using the [#MySOEBristol](#) and tagging us [@SoEBristol](#). You can find me on Twitter [@AlfColes](#).