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Up-to-the-minute information
on the very best of maths
teaching materials

SMP AS/A2 for Edexcel

We answer Edexcel centres' questions

The SMP hasn't traditionally been associated with Edexcel's AS/A2 mathematics exam. Why produce books for it now?

We wanted to launch a major development at this level. Like Professor Adrian Smith's Enquiry we were concerned about students' negative perceptions of post-16 mathematics, the decline in take-up after the hasty Curriculum 2000 changes and low success rates. With a talented writing team in place and full support from practising teachers we were in a good position to take action when changes to the structure from 2004 were announced. As there are significant differences between one exam board's content and another's, we've produced board-specific books to lighten teachers' planning load. And we wanted to be sure that the many students entered for Edexcel could benefit from our work.

How are the SMP books for Edexcel different from others?

Ours are not adaptations of older texts. Instead they offer fresh new writing that gets to the heart of each topic and has a precise match to the new specification. They have been widely praised for their development sections, which have clear explanations and involve students in making sense of new topics. And they are just as strong on all the other things you expect at



this level – carefully chosen worked examples, well-graded and plentiful exercises giving practice in techniques and past Edexcel exam questions to build confidence. A recent review in *Mathematics in School* details these features, saying of the books '... it would be hard to find many who would deny that they are, as it is claimed, "well structured, clear and thorough."' And all this at low cost.

But how can a department be convinced that the SMP books for Edexcel are right for them?

Claire Aitkins, head of mathematics at Henry Box School, Oxfordshire, used a try-it-and-see approach: 'We ordered inspection copies from all the main

publishers and trialed a chapter from each book in the classroom. SMP was clearly the best.' Other Edexcel users have praised our books for going into plenty of detail in an interesting way and for being less fragmented and formulaic than alternative texts. And they've judged ours to be better at providing some 'stretch' for students.

How can I judge for myself?

It's hard to gauge a text book just by reading it: you need to be sure how students respond to it and how it complements your own teaching approach. Our publishers have made it easy for you to do as Claire Aitkins did and try the course for yourself: for free loan of a trial set of books without obligation, simply contact Matt Harvey at Cambridge University Press on 01223 326114. We're sure you won't be disappointed.

If you want to order single inspection copies or to purchase books, contact CUP's Customer Services department at educustserve@cambridge.org or on 01223 325588; or use the SMP AS/A2 order form enclosed with this issue of *SMP News*.

SMP books for Edexcel AS/A2

Now available

Core 1	0 521 60533 4	£8.50
Core 2	0 521 60534 2	£8.50
Mechanics 1	0 521 60536 9	£10.00
Statistics 1	0 521 60535 0	£10.00
Core 3	0 521 60537 7	£8.50

Coming soon

Core 4	0 521 60538 5	£8.50
(July 2005)		
Mechanics 2	0 521 60540 7	£10.00
(Nov 2005)		
Statistics 2	0 521 60539 3	£10.00
(Oct 2005)		

“The format is very straightforward and businesslike.” Mathematical Gazette

SMP AS/A2 for AQA nears completion

Core 4 came into stock this month as promised. We are also making excellent progress with the remaining statistics and mechanics books: *Statistics 2* is due out during the summer holiday and *Mechanics 2* by early October.

For those of you who want to appraise these two books over the summer for use early next term, we'll be putting about the first half of each book – together with its answers – on our website www.smpmaths.org.uk by 15 July; if you intend to purchase you can download these sections free and photocopy them for use in class until you receive the published books.

Meanwhile, *Statistics 1 for AQA* has earned praise in the journal *Teaching Statistics*. Applauding the way we

collaborate with teachers as we develop material, the reviewer writes: 'The best bit about this book is that there are lots of examples and questions, which allow students to practise the concepts. Relevant examination-style questions are also included, which are invaluable.' She is also enthusiastic about the way we bring concepts to life: 'The book includes an excellent idea on how to use Excel to support work on confidence intervals. This type of activity enables students to develop a fuller understanding of topics.'

If you would like an inspection copy of *Statistics 1 for AQA*, contact CUP (details at the foot of the page) quoting ISBN 0 521 60527 X.

New SMP Interact support on www.smpmaths.org.uk

Follow the links [SMP Interact](#) → [cross-references to OCR specification C](#) and you will see that you can now download cross-references linking the criteria for the module M1 to *Book 9T* and the GCSE *Foundation* book. These cross references are intended for students using M1 as an 'easy start' to GCSE, rather than those who need to do a great deal of work at the M1 level.

We're also producing guidance on using *Book 7T* with the Key Stage 3 Strategy's year 7 intervention plan for pupils working at levels 3 and 4. We aim to have the guidance on the site by early June.

- If you haven't yet tried the applets previewed in the March *SMP News*, why not have a look on our site when things ease off later in the term – and let us know what you think?

Have your say about the two-tier GCSE pilot

A maths GCSE in which grade C can be awarded on all tiers is good news for teachers of students who currently lose interest in the subject once they know they are cut off from this prized qualification.

OCR has been piloting an exam like this for some time now and QCA has recently extended small-scale trials to the other English boards and WJEC. A decision on the general availability of a two-tier scheme will not be taken until the autumn.

There is no plan to depart from the present overall GCSE content, so if the new structure is adopted nationally, our

current SMP Interact books for GCSE will remain an indispensable resource for most students.

However we would like to talk later this term with teachers who use SMP Interact and have prepared students for any of the pilot exams, to see what advice and additional support we might usefully provide for other teachers and their students. If you are in this category and would be willing to share your experiences and views with us, please send an email to office@smpmaths.org.uk, giving your name and your school's contact details (including its phone number).

Become an SMP Trustee

The SMP is not a commercial organisation: it is a registered educational charity that makes no profit and relies to a significant extent on the contribution of volunteers. Some of those volunteers are teachers who trial and comment on draft materials, enriching them with their own ideas and experiences. In so doing they make a big difference to the quality of what we provide for the whole community of maths teachers and their students.

The Trustees of the SMP are also volunteers. Rather like school governors, they take ultimate responsibility for the charity, deciding its policies and ensuring that it is run effectively. We currently need to recruit a further Trustee. If you are interested, the main qualities required are a strong interest in mathematics education and commitment to the SMP's objective of improving it. Since we are currently planning work linked to possible future 14–19 developments, we have some preference for a person who has worked in that phase, especially if they have some experience of FE or, better still, of collaboration between schools and FE. But if you have strengths in other areas of maths education we're still keen to hear from you.

Duties include contributing to two formal meetings in London each year and serving on at most two subcommittees or informal groups (which deal with most matters by email but occasionally meet). Travel expenses are paid and if you are a teacher we will reimburse any supply cover cost your school incurs.

If you would like to be considered, please send your c.v. and a brief statement of your ideas about priorities for mathematics education in the UK to office@smpmaths.org.uk or to The School Mathematics Project, The University, Southampton SO17 1BJ.

Registered charity number 274767

Publication details and book orders: educustserve@cambridge.org 01223 325588
www.cambridge.org/secondary/mathematics

Professional support and resources: office@smpmaths.org.uk www.smpmaths.org.uk