

PRESS RELEASE

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Immediate

The Royal Statistical Society welcomes the Smith Review on post-16 maths education

The Royal Statistical Society welcomes the [publication of the report of Professor Sir Adrian Smith's review of post-16 mathematics](#). The RSS is encouraged by the [immediate response](#) from the Government, and calls for prompt consideration of further, substantial recommendations.

On the publication of the Review, Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter, President of the Royal Statistical Society, commented:

“The Royal Statistical Society strongly welcomes the publication of Sir Adrian Smith’s review, and looks forward to working with the government, the education community and business to ensure that every student has the opportunity to develop their number and data skills. In particular, we are pleased about the emphasis on the importance of statistics at A level, acknowledging the rise of data science, and boosting the take-up of core maths.”

RSS Vice-president for Education, Neil Sheldon, commenting on the Review and the Government’s response, said:

“We welcome the publication of the Smith Review, and the Government’s commitment to consider the report and recommendations. Today’s announcements of a new £16 million Level 3 Maths Support Programme, and efforts to ensure that appropriate expert advice is given to the employer groups developing T levels, are both encouraging.

We hope that in its further consideration of the report, the Government will give prompt consideration to Adrian Smith’s recommendations of financial incentives for AS, A level further mathematics and core maths, interventions in local areas with low level 3 mathematics participation, and specific activity to support and improve teacher skills, including in FE. This is to ensure that all students, in whatever setting or location, are able to access a range of pathways to develop their number and data skills. We would also welcome the opportunity to work with the Government on the long-term implications of the rise of data science, and the role of technology in teaching mathematical and statistical skills.”

– Neil Sheldon CStat. Vice President for Education and Statistical Literacy, Royal Statistical Society

The Royal Statistical Society is in favour of increasing participation in mathematical and statistical education. As stated in our response to the Review, everyone needs to be able to use and interpret statistical information, to benefit their studies (regardless of subject), their everyday lives, their engagement in the democratic process, and their future careers. This will benefit the economy, wider society and the individual. We advocate a range of pathways, including A level and AS Level Mathematics and Further Mathematics, A level and AS Level Statistics, Core Maths, and Functional Skills from post-16, and we are pleased to see the importance of each of these acknowledged in Adrian Smith's report.

The growth of data collected by technology plays a huge part in our economy and in our personal lives. Our Data Manifesto notes that the UK presently faces a major gap in skills for the data economy. We are pleased to see Adrian Smith highlighting the potential future role of data science in his report.

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITORS

1. In [our contribution to the Smith Review](#), we emphasised:

- An inclusive range of mathematical pathways that support young people's aspirations, including AS and A Level Statistics to prepare for highly analytical courses and careers.
- Increasing teacher supply and supporting teacher skills.
- Sufficient practical opportunities in school to apply and use technology for data science. A strong boost to teacher guidance and training is needed for this.

2. The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) reissued its [Data Manifesto](#) for government in September 2016. In it, we call for the Government to [prepare for the data economy by skilling up the nation](#).

3. For more information, contact Scott Keir, Head of education and statistical literacy, Royal Statistical Society, on s.keir@rss.org.uk or 020 7614 3929.

4. The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) founded in 1834 is one of the world's most distinguished and renowned statistical societies. It is a learned society for statistics, a professional body for statisticians and a charity which promotes statistics, data and evidence for the public good. Today the Society has nearly 8000 members around the world. Our Data Manifesto sets out our recommendations to government in ten key policy areas. www.rss.org.uk