

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Volunteer role description (December 2018)



United Kingdom
Mathematics Trust

Aims and objectives

The United Kingdom Mathematics Trust (UKMT) is a charity registered in England and Wales, and a company limited by guarantee.

The UKMT's aim is to advance the education of young people in mathematics, in particular, by organising and running mathematics competitions. Its current agreed goals are:

1. To inspire a love of mathematical problem solving in the widest possible group of young people.
2. To widen participation and increase inclusion and diversity.
3. To retain the independence and reputation of the UKMT, whilst raising its profile, locally and internationally.

Trustees act collectively to govern the UKMT and take decisions. The trustees also have specific duties as set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association <https://www.ukmt.org.uk/docs/Memorandum%20and%20Articles%20of%20Association%2027-04-2013.pdf>. The Board of Trustees is responsible for leading the UKMT and deciding the strategy, ensuring compliance and that legal responsibilities are fulfilled, and delegating the day to day operations to the Executive Director. Regardless of how much is delegated, legal responsibilities remain with the trustees.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees has particular responsibility for ensuring the effective functioning of the board, providing clear leadership and direction, and keeping the board focused on the UKMT's aim.

Description of tasks

According to guidance from the Charity Commission (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved>), trustees' main duties are:

1. Ensure your charity is carrying out its purpose for the public benefit.
2. Comply with your charity's governing document and the law.
3. Act in your charity's best interest.
4. Manage your charity's resources responsibly.
5. Act with reasonable care and skill.
6. Ensure your charity is accountable.

The Chair does not automatically have any extra powers or legal duties than the other trustees, but they may have specific roles or responsibilities delegated to them.

In the case of UKMT, these specific responsibilities include:

1. Chairing meetings of the Board of Trustees.
2. Chairing the Annual General Meeting.
3. Communicating regularly with the Executive Director.
4. Understanding the importance of the work of our volunteers, and ensuring effective communication with the Trust's volunteering community.

5. Ensuring the Board of Trustees has the range of skills required to carry out its role, making sure all trustees understand their role, and managing any conflicts of interest.
6. Encouraging the Board of Trustees to work as an effective team, to participate constructively during meetings and to take their share in the work of any committees.
7. Leading strategic developments within the Trust, in partnership with the Executive Director.

Additional responsibilities may also include:

1. Being a UKMT Designated Child Protection Officer or Person, in line with the UKMT's Child Protection Policy.
2. Being an ambassador for the UKMT at external meetings and events, such as meetings with government or potential sponsors, or at volunteer events.
3. Acting as a spokesperson to represent the UKMT's views e.g. in the media.
4. Performance management of the Executive Director.
5. Investigating or dealing with escalated complaints or misconduct as per the Code of Practice and Grievance Policy for Volunteers.

Essential qualities, skills and experiences

The principles and personal attributes that individuals bring to the UKMT are as important as their skills and knowledge. These qualities enable trustees to use their skills and knowledge to function well as part of a team and to make an active contribution to effective governance. The Chair of the Board of Trustees should demonstrate:

1. Strong commitment to the UKMT's aim and goals.
2. A strong love of mathematics and the education of young people in mathematics.
3. Experience of chairing meetings.
4. Experience in a strategic role, and an understanding of the differences between a strategic and operational role.
5. Excellent knowledge of or willingness to learn about mathematical enrichment in the UK and beyond.
6. Willingness to take a leading role in the work of the Trust, devoting the required time and energy to help advance the education of young people in mathematics.
7. Strong commitment to safeguarding, and an understanding of the UKMT Child Protection Policy and Health and Safety Policy (available at <https://www.ukmt.org.uk/about-us/policies/>).
8. Creativity and willingness to challenge conventional wisdom in an appropriate manner and open-mindedness about new approaches, recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success.
9. Ability to communicate views and opinions clearly and in a constructive manner in person and via email.
10. Willingness to listen and work in partnership with others.
11. The ability to build strong working relationships with trustees, our volunteering community, the Executive Director and other staff, and with other stakeholders as appropriate.
12. The ability to deal with challenging situations in a courteous but, where necessary, firm manner.

Location of work and time commitment

Trustees have very recently agreed major changes to our governance structure, and these changes are being implemented throughout 2019. The new Chair will help implement these decisions and build on the changes to ensure the Trust has a clear vision and effective governance structure for the future. Some of these changes cannot take place until they have been discussed and approved by Members of the Trust at the AGM, which is being held in April 2019.

Trustees are appointed for a term of three years. It is being proposed that trustees can serve two terms before being required to stand down. The Chair of Trustees is initially appointed for a term of three years. This term of office is renewable subject to the rules surrounding trustees' terms.

From 2019, the Board of Trustees will meet four times a year (in London on the Wednesday before Easter, in July and October, and in Leeds in January). The Chair must commit to attending all meetings, however, two Vice-Chairs are in position in case of emergencies. The AGM takes place in London before the Board of Trustees' meeting just before Easter. Meetings of the Board of Trustees currently last around three hours, and the AGM is normally under two hours. It is anticipated that the time needed to attend and chair these meetings, along with preparatory work before and after, will take around 50 hours per year, with the workload peaking around the time of meetings.

In addition to attending meetings, trustees are expected to participate in discussions via electronic means (such as email or virtual meeting) from time to time during the year, which may be led by the Chair. The role of the Chair also requires further commitment. This further commitment includes communicating with the Executive Director on a regular basis, and following up on any relevant actions from meetings. The time commitment needed outside of meetings will depend on the priorities of the Trust and any external influences. In the first year as Chair, as the Trust continues to put in place its plans for structural change, we anticipate this time commitment will be no more than 20 hours per month. After the first year, we expect this time commitment will reduce.

The Chair may also wish to attend some of our events to meet our stakeholders (for example, the annual IMO lecture and celebration, a national final of the team competitions, or a marking event), or they may feel that they wish to be a member of a Board Committee. This is not a compulsory part of the role, however, it will add to the time commitment needed if the Chair decides they would like to be further involved in this way.

We are looking for a new Chair to be in post by the October 2019 meeting of the Board of Trustees. If the successful candidate is available before then, a six-month handover period with the current Chair is likely to be beneficial. If the successful candidate is not available until shortly after October 2019, a later start can be negotiated.

Benefits

The role is voluntary (unpaid) but, as with other trustees, reasonable expenses will be paid to enable the Chair to attend meetings. If the trustee is a teacher, the Trust will pay for cover to ensure they can attend meetings.

Trustees have the opportunity to shape the work of the UKMT and have a positive impact on the mathematical education of thousands of young people across the UK each year. They will gain experience of working at a strategic level in a large national charity, helping broaden interests and developing skills. The work of the Chair has a hugely important role to play in contributing to the charity sector and success of the organisation.

Supervision and review

The Chair of the Board of Trustees is appointed by the Board of Trustees, and is answerable to the Board.

A trustee training course and Child Protection course is offered and recommended. Additional training and support can be provided as needed.

A review takes place mid-term, where trustees and other stakeholders provide feedback on the Chair's performance.

Application procedure

Informal enquiries may be sent to the UKMT Secretary, Mrs Mary Teresa Fyfe, at secretary@ukmt.org.uk.

To apply, please send a CV and supporting statement of no more than 1500 words by email to Mary Teresa Fyfe at secretary@ukmt.org.uk, by noon on 31 March 2019. This statement should explain your motivation for applying for this role and how you meet each of the essential qualities, skills and experience. All applications will be acknowledged.

You may be asked to have a follow-up conversation with a trustee, or be invited to a meeting of the Board of Trustees or AGM (being held on 10 April), to find out more.

The final decision about who to appoint will be made by the Board of Trustees by 26 April and communicated by the UKMT Secretary by 30 April.

Thank you for your interest.

UKMT Trustees, December 2018