

## **CETL-MSOR Conference 2015**

### **Mary McAlinden: The reform of pre-university qualifications: What has been happening and what is the potential impact for higher education?**

Education policy during the lifetime of the 2010-15 parliament was characterised by a fast moving reform agenda which led to wide-ranging changes to public qualifications across the full spectrum of disciplines. This period saw the development and accreditation of a new suite of Core Maths qualifications, designed for those students who have successfully achieved a grade C in GCSE Mathematics but who are not continuing with Mathematics to AS or A level. In 2014-15 Core Maths was trialled in a number of early adopter schools and will be taken more widely from September 2015. Major reforms were made to GCSE Mathematics with a much greater emphasis being placed on problem solving. Furthermore, substantial development work was undertaken on the proposed content of new A level Mathematics and Further Mathematics qualifications with much greater input and involvement from higher education than had previously been the case. In addition, for the first time, the Department for Education has now specified mathematical requirements for A level qualifications in a range of disciplines.

This presentation will provide a factual coverage of the major changes outlined above and will include details of the timetable for implementation, additional information regarding current ongoing developments, research findings and recent changes which will impact on university admissions. The session will provide the opportunity for a discussion of the potential benefits of some of the changes as well as the risks and challenges which can accompany such large-scale reform conducted within such a short timeframe. Throughout, a particular emphasis will be placed on the transition into university study both within the mathematical sciences and in other disciplines which use mathematical and statistical methods.