

## Establishing New Branches

Branches are important in helping the Institute meet its charitable objectives but they also provide networking opportunities for members. Established branches regularly hold talks by respected mathematicians which are open to members and non-members. Careers days are organised in collaboration with local schools and colleges and members regularly volunteer their services as speakers for schools in their area. Organising and running such events can be very rewarding and the Institute can help by covering expenses.

### Set-up Process

1. Check to see if the branch you are assigned to is active. Look on the IMA website [www.ima.org.uk](http://www.ima.org.uk). You can also contact the following:

Nigel Steele, Branches Co-ordinator	<a href="mailto:n.steele@coventry.ac.uk">n.steele@coventry.ac.uk</a> 024 7688 8568
Susan Bolton, Services Officer	<a href="mailto:susan.bolton@ima.org.uk">susan.bolton@ima.org.uk</a> 01702 356115

If your branch isn't active inform either of the above that you are interested in establishing an active branch in your area.

2. You will need to find out if other members are willing to help. The IMA can contact members on your behalf and forward your details to them. It is essential that you have enough volunteers to form a branch committee, all of whom should be members of the IMA.
3. Hold an initial meeting to discuss the plans for setting up a local branch. Identify those members who are willing to serve on the committee and hold a voting session if necessary.

Initially, a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson who can also undertake the Treasurer's duties and a Secretary are all that are required. However, established branches normally have a Chair Person, Vice Chair Person, Secretary, Membership Secretary and Treasurer. Additionally, a Web Master and/or Newsletter Editor and other committee members can be appointed. It is entirely the decision of the new branch as to how their committee is organised.

Agree on a formal name for the branch.

4. At the first meeting of the provisional committee discuss plans for future branch activities. The main consideration is to identify possible venues for branch meetings. Local universities or colleges quite often allow use of their facilities free of charge. Consider all issues including basic costs, hire of venue for evening events,

refreshments etc.

Activities could include:

Talks by noted speakers or branch members.  
'Careers in Mathematics' days at local schools and colleges.  
Maths Workshops  
Discussion groups.  
Social events including visits to places of mathematical interest.

5. Invite the Executive Director of the IMA to the next branch meeting to discuss your plans. After each prospective candidate has stated what they hope to bring to their role, a democratic vote must take place to formalise the committee. Candidates should expect to hold the role for one to two years minimum.
6. Inform Susan Bolton of the committee members and their contact details. A new branch page will be added to the IMA website.
7. Apply for funding from the Institute. The letter you send must include details of your planned activities and the anticipated cost of each. The IMA provides a budget of £500 for expenses for each branch annually. However, funding can only be used for activities promoting mathematics. Social events or outings cannot be funded unless they are held in conjunction with other activities which promote mathematics.
8. A bank account for the branch must be set up. This is the responsibility of the Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. Which bank is chosen is the committee's decision, but a small charity account should be opened and this will require 2 or 3 signatures. Only one person, normally the Treasurer, should be required to sign cheques.
9. Once 6 and 7 have been accomplished, organise your first event. Promotion is essential to the branch growing and being successful. The IMA will advertise your event in 'Mathematics Today', the E-Bulletin, on the website and also to all members in your area by email or post. Contact Susan Bolton to arrange publicity for each event.
10. At the end of the year each branch is required to submit their accounts, including receipts, to the IMA. If possible a request for funding for the following year and a schedule of proposed activities should also be included.
11. Each January a Branch Representatives Meeting is held at De Morgan House, chaired by the Branches Co-ordinator Nigel Steele. It is expected that either the Chairperson or the Secretary will attend. All branches are notified in advance of the meeting.

All of our branches have information on the IMA website. If you would like to speak to other branch committee members regarding their experiences of organising a branch then please contact them on the numbers or mail addresses on the website.

Our thanks to Dan Tilley of North Hants, Surrey and Berkshire Branch for his invaluable contribution.