

ISQAM Level 1 Blended Pilot 2021

1. Overview

The *Independent Schools' Qualification in Management* (ISQAM) is a development programme for Heads of Academic Departments (HoDs) and aspiring HoDs in schools of The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC) and The Girls' School Association (GSA). The ISQAM is designed and delivered in partnership with the UCL/Institute of Education (IOE).

This document provides an overview of the new "ISQAM Level 1 Blended Pilot", which HMC are introducing in response to continued interest in the programme this year despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. The Aim

The aim of the ISQAM is to:

- Improve standards in teaching and learning by providing training for Heads of Department, aspiring Heads of Department and other managers in the key practical skills that they need to perform their job
- Encourage the on-going continuous professional development of Middle Leaders
- Establish best practice and define sector-wide standards in relation to these skills, and
- Provide a qualification that is understood by schools and is portable between schools

3. The Structure

The ISQAM is a modular programme that operates at two levels:

- **Level One:** An introduction to some of the key skills required by HoDs:
 1. Improving learning through effective lesson observation and post-lesson dialogue
 2. Coaching approaches and challenging conversations
 3. Establishing standards in student assessment, marking and feedback
 4. Employment issues and employment law

"It is a real pleasure to spend time with like-minded colleagues from a range of outstanding HMC schools as we collectively strive to be better at our jobs. ISQAM provides a great platform for professional discussion and development."

(ISQAM L2 Participant 2017-18)

- **Level Two:** Development of the key skills required by HoDs:
 5. Academic managers as leaders of learning. Making a difference to teacher practice and pupil outcomes
 6. Practicalities and innovation in curriculum planning and reform
 7. The use of data to improve pupil and departmental performance
 8. Strategic Planning as a Head of Department

Levels 1 and 2 are each standalone, though it is highly advisable for participants to complete them sequentially over a two-year period. Participants may choose to have a gap of a year in between the two levels, though this may affect the collegial nature and benefits of studying both levels with the same group of people.

Only Level 1 of the programme will be available this year as part of the Blended Pilot, and it is hoped that both levels will return in their usual format next academic year.

4. Delivery

Each level of the ISQAM programme is usually comprised of two face-to-face training days, completion of an electronic portfolio of activities undertaken during the school year, and support from an in-school mentor¹.

However, for the ISQAM Level 1 Blended Pilot, there will be a **single face-to-face training day in the summer term**, with content from the usual second training day delivered through **online twilight sessions in the spring term**.

5. Portfolio Review

All portfolios which are submitted before the deadline will be reviewed to ensure that certificates of completion are only awarded to those who have completed the programme to a satisfactory level. A sample of portfolios will be moderated by the UCL / IOE as part of this process.

The closing date for **portfolio submissions** in the Blended Pilot will be in **December 2021**.

¹ An in-school mentor, who may be an experienced HoD or the Deputy Head Academic/Director of Studies, is an essential part of the delivery of this course. **Mentors must have the capacity to meet with their mentees at least twice per term and should review their portfolios and add a supporting statement before they are submitted at the end of the year.**

6. Delegate Fees and How to Book Places:

The delegate fee for the ISQAM Level 1 Blended Pilot is £450. This fee includes the summer term face-to-face training day, access to the new online twilight sessions in the spring term, online and distance-learning materials relating to portfolio completion, and review of the submitted portfolio and certification. Please visit the HMCPD website to register: www.hmcpd.org.uk.

7. ISQAM Level 1 Blended Pilot FAQs

How does the Level 1 Blended Pilot differ from the usual Level 1 programme?

- The programme will begin in the spring term rather than the autumn term, with a later portfolio submission date in December 2021 rather than July
- The content for modules 3 & 4 will be delivered through online twilight sessions in the spring term rather than face-to-face
- There will only be 2 pilot clusters running rather than the usual 4, and each will be limited to 20 delegates
- A new portfolio review process will result in the award of certificates of completion without feedback
- The delegate fee has been reduced from £625 to £450

“As an aspiring Head of Department, I felt that this course gave me a thorough insight into many crucial areas of the role and developed my confidence in applying for middle management positions.”
(ISQAM L1 participant 2015-16)

What will happen if the face-to-face training days cannot take place?

The locations / venues for the face-to-face training days, and their timings in the summer term, will be planned to try and minimise the risk that local lockdowns may result in cancellation. However, if any of the training days cannot take place as planned, then online sessions will be scheduled in their place. Venues are likely to require travel by road.

What support is available for mentors new to the programme?

An online briefing video is available to explain the programme structure to those new to mentoring ISQAM participants. In addition, new mentors may contact Pete Larkin (HMCPD Project Manager) to discuss how they might best support their mentees during the year.

Will the standard Level 1 & level 2 programmes return next year?

It is hoped that it will be possible to return to the usual standard programme structure in 2021-22. However, the pilot will be evaluated in order to help inform whether there is a place for a more blended approach in the future.

Independent Schools Qualification in Academic Management – Level 1 Programme Content and Activities

Module 1: Improving learning through effective lesson observation and post-lesson	
Module 1 training sessions are delivered by the UCL Institute of Education	
Content	Portfolio activities
<p>Module 1 offers an opportunity to:</p> <p>Explore and clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which lesson observation, evidence triangulation and post lesson dialogue enhance the learning and development of teachers and subsequently enhance pupils’ classroom experience • How to ensure that the monitoring of effective learning and teaching makes a difference to teacher practice and pupil achievement • How using a coaching approach can have an impact on the culture around lesson observation and ensure a focus on teacher development <p>Further develop skills in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating learning and teaching and triangulating evidence, and (with reference to Module 2) • Using a coaching approach to enhance post lesson dialogue <p>This module enables participants to develop a sound knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purposes of lesson observation • The value of triangulating evidence to monitor the quality of teaching • The purpose of everyone’s role in relation to it • What we are observing • How a coaching approach can enhance and support colleague development 	<p>1.1 Structured reflection on the training session</p> <p>1.2 Online lesson observation practice exercise</p> <p>1.3 Undertake a minimum of 5 lesson observations</p> <p>1.4 Structured response to reading: Stoll, L., ‘Stimulating Learning Conversations’</p> <p>1.5 The triangulation of evidence regarding learning and teaching - reflection</p>

Module 2: Coaching approaches and challenging conversations	
Module 2 training sessions are delivered by the UCL Institute of Education	
Content	Portfolio activities
<p>This module is designed to introduce the process and practice of coaching and provides an opportunity to explore how a coaching approach can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support you as a leader and a manager to make a difference to staff performance, and Enable you to be proactive and confident in having ‘challenging’ conversations 	<p>2.1 Structured reflection on the training session</p> <p>2.2 Lead three coaching conversations during the year, including at least one in which you have to address a difficult issue. (Alternative available for aspiring HoDs)</p> <p>2.3 Reflection on reading: ‘Systems Thinkers’ (Brown & Isaacs)</p>

Module 3: Establishing standards in student assessment, marking and feedback	
Module 3 training sessions are delivered by experienced HMC academic deputy heads	
Content	Portfolio activities
<p>Module 3 enables participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand what is meant by work scrutiny, the role and responsibility of the HoD, and how this links to whole-school approaches and processes Develop the skills to conduct effective work scrutiny and give effective feedback, making it a positive process for the staff involved Identify anomalies and trends across the department, that contribute to, for example, under and over achievement Understand what activities should follow a work scrutiny exercise, including feedback, accountability/self-accountability and development Take away practical strategies and approaches to work scrutiny to use in their own school 	<p>3.1 Structured reflection on the training session</p> <p>3.2 Planning a departmental work scrutiny</p> <p>3.3 Work scrutiny of at least one year group and creation of an action plan as a result</p>

Module 4: Employment issues and employment law

Module 4 training sessions are delivered by an experienced senior legal practitioner

Content	Portfolio activities
<p>Module 4 enables participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have an awareness of the key issues in employment law, including equal opportunities• Have confidence and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the HoD, and their school policies and procedures in relation to employment issues	<p>4.1 Structured reflection on the training session</p> <p>4.2 Locating key school policies, processes and colleagues</p> <p>4.3 Responses to questions relating to recruitment and capability</p> <p>4.4 Reflection on training session case studies</p> <p>4.5 Discussion with key colleagues on employment issues and safeguarding</p>

“Our candidates flourished professionally and gained such a lot from working through the modules.”
(Amanda Triccas, Senior Teacher – Staff Development, and ISQAM mentor, The Godolphin and Latymer School)