**Independent Schools' Qualification in Academic Management (ISQAM) 2021-22**

**1.  Overview**

This guidance document provides an overview of the *Independent Schools' Qualification in Management* (ISQAM) 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).

**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 and developing 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)*

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- **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 usually advisable for participants to complete them sequentially over a two-year period.

Pre-requisites:

- It is a NOT a pre-requisite of the qualification to complete Level 1 before progressing to Level 2, although this is desirable
- It is a pre-requisite of commencing Level 2 that the participant has sufficient ICT skills, competence and experience in basic software packages and the use of the school management information system

## 4. Delivery

Each level of the ISQAM programme comprises of training sessions relating to each module, completion of an electronic portfolio of activities undertaken during the school year, and support from an in-school mentor[1].

**Three Level 1 clusters** will run in the 2021-22 academic year:

- 2 clusters will follow the "original" ISQAM model with 2 face-to-face training days (autumn term and spring term)
- 1 cluster will follow the "blended" model piloted in 2021, with a single face-to-face training day in the autumn term covering the first 2 modules, and spring term online sessions delivering the content relating to modules 3 & 4

**Two Level 2 clusters** will run in the 2021-22 academic year, both of which will follow the "blended" model, with a single face-to-face training day in the autumn term covering modules 5 & 6, and the content for modules 7 & 8 delivered online in the spring term.

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[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**.

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### 5. Portfolio Review

All portfolios which are submitted before the end of July 2022 deadline will be reviewed to ensure that certificates 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.

### 6. Delegate Fees and How to Book Places

Fees are dependent on the programme model, and association membership:

| Programme level / model | Total fee for participants from HMC or GSA member schools | Total fee for other participants |
|---|---|---|
| Level 1 "original" model (2 face-to-face training days) | £625 | £650 |
| Level 1 "blended" model (1 face-to-face training day, plus online sessions) | £499 | £525 |
| Level 2 "blended" model (1 face-to-face training day, plus online sessions) | £499 | £525 |

Fees include participant access to the training days / sessions for their cluster, an optional online training session for their mentor, online and distance-learning materials, support for participants and mentors from HMC during the year, and review and moderation of the portfolio and certification.

Please visit the HMCPD website for information regarding cluster locations and to register online: www.hmcpd.org.uk/isqam-2021-22.

### 7. COVID Contingencies

- Maximum cluster sizes will be reduced to 25 this year to allow for more space between participants at face-to-face events
- Venues, locations and dates may be subject to change if required
- In the event that any face-to-face training days cannot take place as planned, online sessions will be scheduled in their place

*"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)*

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# Independent Schools Qualification in Academic Management – Programme Content and Portfolio Activities

**Level 1:** Level 1 consists of four modules.

## Module 1: Improving learning through effective lesson observation and post-lesson dialogue

Module 1 training sessions are delivered by the UCL Institute of Education

| Content | Portfolio activities |
|---|---|
| Module 1 offers an opportunity to:<br><br>Explore and clarify:<br><br>• 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<br>• How to ensure that the monitoring of effective learning and teaching makes a difference to teacher practice and pupil achievement<br>• How using a coaching approach can have an impact on the culture around lesson observation and ensure a focus on teacher development<br><br>Further develop skills in:<br><br>• Evaluating learning and teaching and triangulating evidence, and (with reference to Module 2)<br>• Using a coaching approach to enhance post lesson dialogue<br><br>This module enables participants to develop a sound knowledge and understanding of:<br><br>• The purposes of lesson observation<br>• The value of triangulating evidence to monitor the quality of teaching<br>• The purpose of everyone's role in relation to it<br>• What we are observing<br>• How a coaching approach can enhance and support colleague development | 1.1 Structured reflection on the training session<br><br>1.2 Online lesson observation practice exercise<br><br>1.3 Undertake a minimum of 5 lesson observations<br><br>1.4 Structured response to reading: Stoll, L., 'Stimulating Learning Conversations'<br><br>1.5 The triangulation of evidence regarding learning and teaching - reflection |

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| Module 2: Coaching approaches and challenging conversations | |
|---|---|
| Module 2 training sessions are delivered by the UCL Institute of Education | |
| **Content** | **Portfolio activities** |
| This module is designed to introduce the process and practice of coaching and provides an opportunity to explore how a coaching approach can:<br><br>• Support you as a leader and a manager to make a difference to staff performance, and<br>• Enable you to be proactive and confident in having 'challenging' conversations | 2.1 Structured reflection on the training session<br><br>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)<br><br>2.3 Reflection on reading: 'Systems Thinkers' (Brown & Isaacs) |

| Module 3: Establishing and developing standards in student assessment, marking and feedback | |
|---|---|
| Module 3 training sessions are delivered by experienced HMC academic deputy heads | |
| **Content** | **Portfolio activities** |
| Module 3 enables participants to:<br><br>• Understand what is meant by work scrutiny, the role and responsibility of the HoD, and how this links to whole-school approaches and processes<br>• Develop the skills to conduct effective work scrutiny and give effective feedback, making it a positive process for the staff involved<br>• Identify anomalies and trends across the department, that contribute to, for example, under and over achievement<br>• Understand what activities should follow a work scrutiny exercise, including feedback, accountability/self-accountability and development<br>• Take away practical strategies and approaches to work scrutiny to use in their own school | 3.1 Structured reflection on the training session<br><br>3.2 Planning a departmental work scrutiny<br><br>3.3 Work scrutiny of at least one year group and creation of an action plan as a result |

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| Module 4: Employment issues and employment law | |
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| Module 4 training sessions are delivered by an experienced senior legal practitioner | |
| **Content** | **Portfolio activities** |
| Module 4 enables participants to:<br><br>• Have an awareness of the key issues in employment law, including equal opportunities<br>• Have confidence and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the HoD, and their school policies and procedures in relation to employment issues | 4.1 Structured reflection on the training session<br><br>4.2 Locating key school policies, processes and colleagues<br><br>4.3 Responses to questions relating to recruitment and capability<br><br>4.4 Reflection on training session case studies<br><br>4.5 Discussion with key colleagues on employment issues and safeguarding |

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**Level 2:** Level 2 consists of four modules:

| Module 5: Academic managers as leaders of learning. Making a difference to teacher practice and pupil outcomes | |
|---|---|
| Module 5 training sessions are delivered by the UCL Institute of Education | |
| **Content** | **Portfolio activities** |
| Module 5 offers an opportunity for participants to explore and clarify:<br><br>• their role as the leader of learning in their team and the impact effective leadership has on teacher practice and pupil outcomes<br>• the role of an academic manager in agreeing developmental objectives for members of their team and in holding individuals in their teams to account<br>• the role of professional development in supporting individuals to reach objectives set<br>• the importance of trust in leading teams effectively<br><br>And to further develop skills in:<br><br>• setting developmental, challenging SMART objectives<br><br>• identifying professional learning opportunities to support agreed objectives | 5.1 Structured reflection on the training session<br><br>5.2 Applying learning from the module to lead an objective setting meeting with at least one member of the team<br><br>5.3 Reflection on readings: Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's motivator factors and McClelland's needs based motivational model<br><br>5.4 Optional activity: Critical analysis of further readings |

| Module 6: Practicalities and innovation in curriculum planning and reform | |
|---|---|
| Module 6 training sessions are delivered by experienced HMC academic deputy heads | |
| **Content** | **Portfolio activities** |
| Module 6 provides an opportunity for colleagues to:<br><br>• Differentiate good and excellent features of current department schemes of work and department curriculum plans<br>• Be in a confident position to plan and execute effective department curriculum reform | 6.1 Structured reflection on the training session<br><br>6.2 Either: Modify at least two department schemes of work lasting one term or more in one year group, or lead a department curriculum reform exercise in one year group |

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- Apply the balance between curriculum needs and curriculum innovation in the above

During the face-to-face session, colleagues can expect to:

- Apply the "Golden Circle" leadership theory of why? how? what? (in that order) to all collaborative discussion
- Identify some definite "do's and don'ts" in terms of department schemes of work, curriculum plans and reform, based on collective cross-curricular experience
- Discuss relevance, timescales, ownership and impact success criteria in the department curriculum reform process

## Module 7: The use of data to improve pupil and departmental performance

Module 7 training sessions are delivered by consultant colleagues with significant experience in independent school performance data

| Content | Portfolio activities |
|---|---|
| Module 7 offers an opportunity for participants to:<br><br>- Understand a variety of statistical data that may be used to inform target setting and self-evaluation discussions<br>- Appreciate how the statistical data is generated<br>- Understand what the data means and does not mean<br>- Identify key aspects and patterns of data<br>- Become confident in interpreting and using data appropriately, and<br>- Explore the issues raised in a case study of a department's GCSE results<br><br>This module enables participants to understand and use data to inform:<br><br>- Professional judgement when undertaking effective target-setting and tracking, and<br>- Benchmarking discussions involving the interpretation of value-added data | 7.1 Structured reflection on the training session<br><br>7.2 Evaluation of the effectiveness of current department target-setting and monitoring procedures<br><br>7.3 Write a value-added report on the recent set of GCSE results, identifying strengths and areas for development<br><br>7.4 Conduct a department meeting review of the value-added report, incorporating it into the department's development plan<br><br>7.5 Identify and document further personal training needs, liaising with your school's CPD co-ordinator<br><br>7.6 Optional activity: Reflection on further key reading |

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## Module 8: Strategic Planning as a Head of Department

Module 8 training sessions are delivered by experienced senior colleagues from HMC member schools

| Content | Portfolio activities |
|---|---|
| Module 8 enables participants to:<br><br>• Understand the differences and relationship between strategic planning and development planning<br>• Understand the strategic and development planning processes<br>• Understand the relationship between departmental planning and whole-school planning<br>• Understand the link between Heads of Department and whole-school planning<br>• Develop the skills to write, review, and modify a departmental development plan<br>• Reflect and formulate the underlying values and aims of the department<br>• Understand general principles and approaches to department budget planning<br>• Develop the skills to produce an annual departmental budget submission | 8.1 Structured reflection on the training session<br><br>8.2 Consideration of the values and aims of the department, and of you as a Head of Department<br><br>8.3 Familiarisation with the different formats used for planning in own school<br><br>8.4 Exploring ways in which the department might contribute to the school's Strategic Development / Management Plan<br><br>8.5 Produce a departmental development plan or review and, if necessary, update an existing plan<br><br>8.6 Produce a departmental budget submission for the next academic year and document the process<br><br>8.7 Optional activity: Reflection on further key reading |

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