

## Independent Schools' Qualification in Academic Management (ISQAM) 2019-20

### 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 feedback
  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. Programmes of Study and Schemes of Work
  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.

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 system

#### 4. Delivery

ISQAM provides a high quality practical programme at a low cost to schools and includes a strong element of ‘on-the-job’ learning with support and mentoring from fellow professionals.

The “tuition” component is provided in three ways:

##### a. Face-to-face training sessions:

Delegates will take part in two face-to-face training days in Level 1 in the autumn and spring terms: the first covering modules 1 and 2 and the second covering modules 3 and 4.

Level 2 face-to-face elements follow a similar structure, with training days in October/November and February covering the contents of modules 5-8.

##### b. Online and distance-learning resources:

Participants will be asked to produce an electronic portfolio of evidence of work completed in-school, activities delivered via elearning, and reflections on these and other elements of the programme.

### c. In-school mentoring:

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.**

Please note that HMCPD have restructured their support for mentors this year, with online briefings available to explain how the programme works, and optional face-to-face training sessions for those who wish to develop their mentoring skills. Please visit our website for further information: [www.hmc.org.uk/professional-development/isqam-mentors](http://www.hmc.org.uk/professional-development/isqam-mentors)

## 5. Assessment

All portfolios which are submitted before the deadline at the end of July will be reviewed in order to provide feedback on areas of strength and areas for potential future development. The review process also ensures that certificates are only awarded to those who have completed the programme to a satisfactory level. A sample of portfolios are moderated by the UCL / IOE and participants receive feedback and a certificate of completion in September.

Level 2 participants also have the option to submit their portfolios for assessment by the UCL / IOE in order to gain 30 Masters level credits. This option replaces the previous 'ISQAM Level 3', and an additional fee is payable to the UCL / IOE. These Masters level credits could count towards a post-graduate qualification.

## 6. Venues, Costs and How to Book Places on ISQAM:

Delegate fees are £625 per level for Levels 1 and 2 in 2019-20. This fee includes two days of training for delegates, an optional half day training session for mentors, online and distance-learning materials, assessment and moderation of the portfolio and certification.

2019-20 Level 1 and 2 clusters will take place in the following regions:

Level 1	Level 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• London (two clusters)</li><li>• South West/South Central</li><li>• The Midlands</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• London</li><li>• The Midlands (training takes place in Birmingham)</li></ul>

**Note:** Optional half-day mentor training events will be afternoon sessions in central London or Birmingham.

To register for Levels 1 or 2, please visit the HMCPD website at [www.hmcpd.org.uk](http://www.hmcpd.org.uk) or call 01858 462477.

*“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)*

*“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)*

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

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

<b>Module 1: Improving learning through effective lesson observation and feedback</b>	
Module 1 training sessions are delivered by the UCL Institute of Education	
<b>Content</b>	<b>Portfolio activities</b>
<p>Module 1 offers an opportunity to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which lesson observation and feedback currently have the learning and development of teachers and pupils at its heart</li> <li>• How to ensure it makes a real difference to teacher practice and ultimately pupil achievement</li> <li>• How a coaching approach can make a difference to the culture around lesson observation and help to ensure improvement is sustained for both adults and pupils</li> </ul> <p>This module enables participants to develop a sound knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purposes of lesson observation</li> <li>• The purpose of everyone’s role in relation to it</li> <li>• What we are observing</li> <li>• How a coaching approach can enhance and support colleague development</li> <li>• The relationship with ISI inspection</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Structured reflection on the training session</li> <li>1.2 Online lesson observation practice exercise</li> <li>1.3 Undertake a minimum of 5 lesson observations</li> <li>1.4 Structured response to reading: Stoll, L., ‘Stimulating Learning Conversations’</li> <li>1.5 Lesson observation and the ISI Inspection Framework - reflection</li> </ol>

## 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 provides an opportunity to explore how a coaching approach can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support you as a leader and a manager to make a difference to staff performance, and</li><li>• Enable you to be proactive and confident in having 'challenging' or 'fierce' conversations</li></ul>	<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 &amp; 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"><li>• Understand what is meant by work scrutiny, the role and responsibility of the HoD, and how this links to whole-school approaches and processes</li><li>• Develop the skills to conduct effective work scrutiny and give effective feedback, making it a positive process for the staff involved</li><li>• Identify anomalies and trends across the department, that contribute to, for example, under and over achievement</li><li>• Understand what activities should follow a work scrutiny exercise, including feedback, accountability/self-accountability and development</li><li>• Take away practical strategies and approaches to work scrutiny to use in their own school</li></ul>	<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"><li>• Have an awareness of the key issues in employment law, including equal opportunities</li><li>• Have confidence and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the HoD, and their school policies and procedures in relation to employment issues</li></ul>	<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>

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

<b>Module 5: Academic managers as leaders of learning. Making a difference to teacher practice and pupil outcomes</b>	
Module 5 training sessions are delivered by the UCL Institute of Education	
<b>Content</b>	<b>Portfolio activities</b>
<p>Module 5 offers an opportunity for participants to explore and clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their role as the leader of learning in their team and the impact effective leadership has on teacher practice and pupil outcomes</li> <li>• the role of an academic manager in agreeing developmental objectives for members of their team and in holding individuals in their teams to account</li> <li>• the role of professional development in supporting individuals to reach objectives set</li> <li>• the importance of trust in leading teams effectively</li> </ul> <p>And to further develop skills in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• setting developmental, challenging SMART objectives</li> <li>• identifying professional learning opportunities to support agreed objectives</li> </ul>	<p>5.1 Structured reflection on the training session</p> <p>5.2 Applying learning from the module to lead an objective setting meeting with at least one member of the team</p> <p>5.3 Reflection on readings: Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, Herzberg’s motivator factors and McClelland’s needs based motivational model</p> <p>5.4 Optional M-level activity: Critical analysis of further readings</p>

<b>Module 6: Programmes of study and schemes of work</b>	
Module 6 training sessions are delivered by experienced HMC academic deputy heads	
<b>Content</b>	<b>Portfolio activities</b>
<p>Module 6 offers an opportunity for participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and discuss good practice in reviewing, modifying and writing SoWs/PoSs</li> <li>• Ensure that they are equipped to get the best out of their team and that any SoW/PoS refinement is a genuine team effort</li> <li>• Discuss strategies to incorporate assessment, differentiation and</li> </ul>	<p>6.1 Structured reflection on the training session</p> <p>6.2 Either: Review and modify at least two existing SoWs/PoSs, or write at least two new SoWs/PoSs from scratch, documenting the process</p>



<p>catch-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think about how to ‘create time’ within a SoW/PoS</li> <li>• Think critically in and beyond your own subject area</li> </ul> <p>This module enables participants to develop a sound knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose and effectiveness of a SoW/PoS – by scrutinising and developing a number of exemplars, presenting to the whole group and gaining feedback, and</li> <li>• How to share best practice and delegate effectively in order to produce high quality SoWs/PoSs which every member of your team subscribes to</li> </ul>	
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<b>Module 7: The use of data to improve pupil and departmental performance</b>	
Module 7 training sessions are delivered by consultant colleagues with significant experience in independent school performance data	
<b>Content</b>	<b>Portfolio activities</b>
<p>Module 7 offers an opportunity for participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand a variety of statistical data that may be used to inform target setting and self-evaluation discussions</li> <li>• Appreciate how the statistical data is generated</li> <li>• Understand what the data means and does not mean</li> <li>• Identify key aspects and patterns of data</li> <li>• Become confident in interpreting and using data appropriately, and</li> <li>• Explore the issues raised in a case study of a department’s GCSE results</li> </ul> <p>This module enables participants to understand and use data to inform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional judgement when undertaking effective target-setting and tracking, and</li> <li>• Benchmarking discussions involving the interpretation of value-added data</li> </ul>	<p>7.1 Structured reflection on the training session</p> <p>7.2 Evaluation of the effectiveness of current department target-setting and monitoring procedures</p> <p>7.3 Write a value-added report on the recent set of GCSE results, identifying strengths and areas for development</p> <p>7.4 Conduct a department meeting review of the value-added report, incorporating it into the department’s development plan</p> <p>7.5 Identify and document further personal training needs, liaising with your school’s CPD co-ordinator</p> <p>7.6 Optional M-level activity: Reflection on further key reading</p>

## 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
<p>Module 8 enables participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the differences and relationship between strategic planning and development planning</li> <li>• Understand the strategic and development planning processes</li> <li>• Understand the relationship between departmental planning and whole-school planning</li> <li>• Understand the link between Heads of Department and whole-school planning</li> <li>• Develop the skills to write, review, and modify a departmental development plan</li> <li>• Reflect and formulate the underlying values and aims of the department</li> <li>• Understand general principles and approaches to department budget planning</li> <li>• Develop the skills to produce an annual departmental budget submission</li> </ul>	<p>8.1 Structured reflection on the training session</p> <p>8.2 Consideration of the values and aims of the department, and of you as a Head of Department</p> <p>8.3 Familiarisation with the different formats used for planning in own school</p> <p>8.4 Exploring ways in which the department might contribute to the school's Strategic Development / Management Plan</p> <p>8.5 Produce a departmental development plan or review and, if necessary, update an existing plan</p> <p>8.6 Produce a departmental budget submission for the next academic year and document the process</p> <p>8.7 Optional M-level activity: Reflection on further key reading</p>