ISQAM Mentor Briefing Video Transcript

Narration
Welcome to the mentor briefing video for the Independent Schools' Qualification in Academic Management, or ISQAM as it is known. The ISQAM programme is developed and delivered by HMC in partnership with the Girls' Schools Association and the UCL Institute of Education. This video is intended to provide mentors with the information they require to support their ISQAM participants.
The ISQAM programme is designed for current and aspiring heads of department in HMC member schools. It aims to: • Improve standards • Encourage on-going professional development • Establish best practice and • Provide a qualification that is portable between schools The programme is intended to be developmental rather than judgemental in nature.
The ISQAM is a modular programme that operates at two levels, each taking a year to complete. Participants take part in two training days each year, with half a day devoted to each of the 4 modules at each level. Please encourage your mentees to attend these days in full, and not leave early. During the year, and supported by their mentors, participants are required to produce an electronic portfolio of work completed in-school, activities delivered via elearning, and reflections on these and other elements of the programme. The training days and portfolio activities are designed to be complementary, and so some elements may feature in one but not the other. Mentors are asked to review completed portfolios, and add a brief supporting statement, before they are finally submitted to HMCPD at the end of July.

Let's take a look at the portfolio structure, module themes and activities….

A Microsoft Word version of the portfolio template is available to participants via their login to the HMCPD Resources website. This must be completed electronically.

The portfolio document contains thorough briefing information concerning coursework completion and submission requirements.

There are then some brief introductory exercises to complete, and a section to keep a record of meetings with you as their mentor

Each module section contains an activity checklist, followed by sections to be completed for each activity. This example shows the activity checklist for Module 1 in 2018-19.

A full list of current module themes and activities is available in the ISQAM briefing document for schools. There is a link to this document on the webpage alongside this video.

If any of the activities are not appropriate for the context of your mentee, please contact HMCPD to discuss potential alternatives. Contact details are provided at the end of this video.

Following the four module sections there is a final 'summary activity' which should be between 1500 and 2000 words.

Word count requirements are typically not provided for other sections of the portfolio.

This is because we expect that individual participants may have a greater number of observations or reflections in different areas.

Some participants may require reassurance about this, but you can help them to consider whether they may be able to extend their thinking or responses if you feel this is appropriate.

It is certainly the case that the longer portfolios are not necessarily the better ones.

Finally, there is a section for mentors to provide a brief supporting statement.

The effectiveness of mentoring support is often reflected in the quality of portfolios, and the development of participants during the year. It is a key element of the programme.

As a minimum we ask that mentors meet with participants twice per term, and review their portfolios before they are submitted. However, many participants benefit from more frequent meetings.

Participants will receive instructions on how to access the online materials following their first training day. They will also receive a Word version of the portfolio document as an attachment to their Day 1 training joining instructions, and are encouraged to make themselves familiar with the content of the portfolio before their Day 1 training.

If you wish to access the online materials yourself, participants may share their login details with you as their mentor, or you may request your own login directly from pd@hmc.org.uk if you prefer.

All portfolios which are submitted before the final deadline are reviewed in order to provide feedback on areas of strength and potential areas to consider for future development. The review process also ensures that certificates are only awarded to those who have completed the programme to a satisfactory level.

Certificates will be withheld where there are significant omissions, although there may be the opportunity to submit revised versions in any such cases.

Portfolios are reviewed during August by a team of experienced colleagues, with certificates and feedback circulated via email in September.

Reviewers will be looking for evidence of knowledge of the content areas of the four modules, and of the ability to review current practice and lead departmental change.

High-quality portfolios tend to share the following characteristics:

- They are well organised, following the structure of the portfolio document, and using the checklists to confirm completion of all tasks
- Analysis is succinct, relevant and not too descriptive – focusing on key learning rather than detailing tasks or activities
- They contain evidence of real engagement with and reflection on key readings, and
- Demonstrate clear and valuable engagement with mentors throughout the year

The review process is approached in a constructive manner and should not be a concern for any colleagues who have genuinely engaged with the programme.

In addition to the standard ISQAM portfolio review process, Level 2 participants have the option to submit their portfolios for assessment by the UCL Institute of Education in order to gain 30 Masters level credits.

The Level 2 portfolio document provides details of the costs, process and timescales for the current year, and additional M level-specific activities must be completed as set out in the template.

These additional M-level activities may also be of interest to other participants even if they are not considering the M level option.

If you or your mentee have any questions during the year regarding the programme or accessing the online materials, please contact Pete Larkin or Sharon O'Flynn on pd@hmc.org.uk

For those interested in the opportunity to gain 30 M level credits via the UCL/IOE, Level 2 participants and Mentors can contact Carol Taylor for further information and support: Carol.taylor@ucl.ac.uk