Independent Schools' Qualification in Academic Management (ISQAM) Pilot – Level 1 HMCj 2024-25

1. Overview

This guidance document provides an overview of the *Independent Schools' Qualification in Management* (ISQAM) for Heads of Academic Departments (HoDs), Primary/ Prep Subject Coordinators, Subject Leads and aspiring HoDs or Primary/Prep Subject Coordinators, Subject Leads, 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/ Subject Leads, aspiring Heads of Department, Subject Leads 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. This academic year, Level 1 is being offered as a bespoke programme to colleagues in the HMCj Network:

- **Level One:** An introduction to some of the key skills required by HoDs/ Subject Leads/ Coordinators:
  1. Improving learning through effective lesson observation and post-lesson dialogue

> *"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-*

ISQAM Overview: 2024-25
Please note that there may be minor changes to programme content following completion of the annual review cycle each year

1

2. Coaching approaches and challenging conversations
3. Establishing and developing standards in student assessment, marking and feedback
4. Employment issues and employment law

- **Delivery**

The ISQAM Level 1 programme for HMCj, comprises of training sessions relating to four modules (with two in person training days in London), completion of an electronic portfolio of activities undertaken during the school year, and support from an in-school mentor[1].

- **Portfolio Review**

All portfolios which are submitted before the end of July 2025 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.

4. **Delegate Fees and How to Book Places**

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

Delegates fees are £650 per level for schools in membership of HMC, and £675 for other delegates for face-to-face courses.

Fees include participant access to the training days / sessions 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 and to register online: Independent Schools' Qualification in Academic Management ('ISQAM') - HMC (The Heads' Conference)

---

[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**.

ISQAM Overview: 2024-25
Please note that there may be minor changes to programme content following completion of the annual review cycle each year

2

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: Explore and clarify: • 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 Further develop skills in: • Evaluating learning and teaching and triangulating evidence, and (with reference to Module 2) • Using a coaching approach to enhance post lesson dialogue This module enables participants to develop a sound knowledge and understanding of: • 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	1.1 Structured reflection on the training session 1.2 Online lesson observation practice exercise 1.3 Undertake a minimum of 5 lesson observations 1.4 Structured response to reading: Stoll, L., 'Stimulating Learning Conversations' 1.5 The triangulation of evidence regarding learning and teaching - reflection

ISQAM Overview: 2024-25
Please note that there may be minor changes to programme content following completion of the annual review cycle each year

3

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: • 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	2.1 Structured reflection on the training session 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/ Subject Leads/ Subject Coordinators) 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 HMCj academic deputy heads/heads	
Content	**Portfolio activities**
Module 3 enables participants to: • Understand what is meant by work scrutiny, the role and responsibility of the HoD/ Subject Lead, 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/ subject area, 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	3.1 Structured reflection on the training session 3.2 Planning a departmental/ subject area work scrutiny 3.3 Work scrutiny of at least one year group and creation of an action plan as a result

ISQAM Overview: 2024-25

Please note that there may be minor changes to programme content following completion of the annual review cycle each year

Module 4: Employment issues and employment law	
Module 4 training sessions are delivered by an experienced senior legal practitioner	
Content	**Portfolio activities**
Module 4 enables participants to: • 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/ Subject Lead, and their school policies and procedures in relation to employment issues	4.1 Structured reflection on the training session 4.2 Locating key school policies, processes and colleagues 4.3 Responses to questions relating to recruitment and capability 4.4 Reflection on training session case studies 4.5 Discussion with key colleagues on employment issues and safeguarding

REGISTRATION

To register for the ISQAM Level 1 Junior cluster, please click HERE

ISQAM Overview: 2024-25

Please note that there may be minor changes to programme content following completion of the annual review cycle each year

5