

# Independent Schools Qualification in Academic Management (ISQAM) 2021 – 2022

## 1. Overview

This guidance document provides an overview of the Independent Schools' Qualification in Academic Management for Heads of Department and aspiring middle leaders in schools in membership of the GSA and HMC. This qualification is designed and delivered in partnership with the Centre for Educational Leadership, UCL Institute of Education.

The annual fee for the GSA-run cohort is £625 per person for GSA/HMC schools or £650 from other Association schools. This fee includes the mentor training. The next programme will run from October 2021 – July 2021.

## 2. The Aim

The aim of 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 ongoing continuous professional development of Middle Leaders
- establish best practice and define a sector-wide standard in relation to these skills
- 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 in the department
4. Employment issues and employment law

### 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

## 4. Course Structure

Levels 1 and 2 are each standalone, though it is highly advisable for participants to complete them sequentially. 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, though this is desirable
- It is a pre-requisite of commencing Level 2 that the candidate has sufficient ICT skills, competence and experience in basic software packages and the use of the school management system

## 5. 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:

### Online tutorials

Delegates will take part in four face-to-face training sessions (delivered by zoom) for Level 1 offered in the autumn term 2021 and Spring term 2022. A one-hour training session for in-school Mentors will be held in the autumn term.

### Reflective and distance-learning resources

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

### In-school mentoring

An in-school mentor, who may be an experienced HoD or the Deputy Head /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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*"Our candidates flourished professionally and gained such a lot from working through the modules." (ISQAM Mentor)*

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## 6. Assessment

Participants will be asked to keep an electronic portfolio of evidence and reflections from the various training events and in-school activities that they undertake on the qualification. At the end of the programme portfolios should be emailed to GSA Professional Development ([pd@gsa.uk.com](mailto:pd@gsa.uk.com)) for assessment.

All portfolios 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 Programme Director from the Centre for Educational Leadership, UCL/Institute of Education and participants will receive feedback and a certificate of completion.

Level 2 participants also have the option to submit their portfolios for assessment by the UCL/Institute of Education (through HMC PD) in order to gain 30 Masters-level credits. This option attracts an additional fee payable to UCL/IOE. These Masters level credits could count towards a post-graduate qualification. For further details about the Level 2 programme – offered as a blended programme for 2021-2022 - visit the HMC website - <https://hmcpcd.org.uk/isqam-2021-22>

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*“[ISQAM] has given me the time this year to grow into my role as a Head of Department. It has helped me to develop a more structured approach to the day to day running of the department..., and has increased both my confidence and effectiveness.” (ISQAM Level 1 participant)*

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## 7. Venue, Costs and How to Register

Delegate fees are £625 for GSA/HMC schools and £650 for colleagues in other Association schools. This fee is inclusive of all training for participants, training for mentors, online and distance-learning materials, assessment and moderation of the portfolio and certification.

### Level 1

GSA Level 1 training days will take place at the Hallam Conference Centre (44 Hallam Street, London, W1W 6JJ).

- Modules 1 and 2 – Tuesday 5 October 2021 - 9.15 am – 5.00 pm
- Module 3 and 4 - Tuesday 1 February 2022 - 9.15 am – 5.00 pm

Participants must attend all training sessions.

The Mentor training will be held online on Thursday 7 October, 4.15 – 5.15 pm.

If GSA is unable to host the face-to-face training days due to Government restrictions, the delivery will be moved to online, you will be notified of these changes if they occur.

To reserve your place register via the GSA website – [www.gsa.uk.com](http://www.gsa.uk.com) or contact [events@gsa.uk.com](mailto:events@gsa.uk.com).

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

## Level 1

Level 1 consists of the following 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/Assessment
<p>Module 1 offers an opportunity to explore: explore and clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>how to ensure that the monitoring of effective learning and teaching makes a difference to teacher practice and pupil achievement</li> <li>how using a coaching approach can have an impact on the culture around lesson observation and ensure a focus on teacher development.</li> </ul> <p>further develop skills in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluating learning and teaching and triangulating evidence and, <i>(with reference to Module 2)</i></li> <li>using a coaching approach to enhance post lesson dialogue.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structured reflection on the training session</li> <li>Online lesson observation practice exercise</li> <li>Undertake a minimum of 5 lesson observations</li> <li>Structured response to reading: Stoll, L., ‘Stimulating Learning Conversations’</li> <li>Lesson observation and the ISI Inspection Framework- reflection</li> </ol>

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
- The relationship with ISI inspection

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*“ISQAM has opened [my mentee’s] eyes to wider issues and the need for and value of lesson observation, appraisal and work scrutiny.” (ISQAM Level 1 Mentor)*

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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/Assessment

Module 2 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’ or ‘fierce’ conversations

1. Structured reflection on the training session
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)
3. Reflection on reading: ‘Systems Thinkers’ (Brown & Isaacs)

## Module 3: Establishing standards in student assessment, marking and feedback

Module 3 training sessions are delivered by experienced GSA senior leader

### Content

### Portfolio activities/Assessment

Module 3 enables participants to:

- 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

1. Structured reflection on the training session
2. Planning a departmental work scrutiny
3. Work scrutiny of at least one year group and creation of an action plan as a result

## Module 4: Employment issues and employment law

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

### Content

### Portfolio activities/Assessment

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, and their school policies and procedures in relation to employment issues

1. Structured reflection on the training session
2. Locating key school policies, processes and colleagues
3. Responses to questions relating to recruitment and capability
4. Reflection on training session case studies
5. Discussion with key colleagues on employment issues and safeguarding

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*“I feel inspired and motivated by all four of the modules.” (ISQAM Level 1 participant)*

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## Level 2

Level 2 consists of the following four modules with optional M-level activities as indicated.

### 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/Assessment
<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 team 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>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Structured reflection on the training session</li><li>2. Vodcast and structured questions: Appraisal and dealing with underperforming staff</li><li>3. Complete at least one appraisal</li><li>4. Reflection on readings: Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's motivator factors and McClelland's needs based motivational model</li><li>5. Optional M-level activity: Critical analysis of further readings</li></ol>

### Module 6: Programmes of study and schemes of work

Module 6 training sessions are delivered by experienced HMC academic deputy heads

Content	Portfolio activities/Assessment
<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 catch-up</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Structured reflection on the training session</li><li>2. Either: Review and modify at least two existing SoWs/PoSs, or write at least two new SoWs/PoSs from scratch, documenting the process</li></ol>

## Module 6: Programmes of study and schemes of work

Module 6 training sessions are delivered by experienced HMC academic deputy heads

### Content

- Think about how to 'create time' within a SoW/PoS
- Think critically in and beyond your own subject area

This module enables participants to develop a sound knowledge and understanding of:

- 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
- How to share best practice and delegate effectively in order to produce high quality SoWs/PoSs which every member of your team subscribes to

### Portfolio activities/Assessment

## 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

Module 7 offers an opportunity for participants to:

- Understand a variety of statistical data that may be used to inform target setting and self-evaluation discussions
- Appreciate how the statistical data is generated
- Understand what the data means and does not mean
- Identify key aspects and patterns of data
- Become confident in interpreting and using data appropriately, and
- Explore the issues raised in a case study of a department's GCSE results

This module enables participants to understand and use data to inform:

### Portfolio activities/Assessment

1. Structured reflection on the training session
2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of current department target-setting and monitoring procedures
3. Write a value-added report on the recent set of GCSE results, identifying strengths and areas for development
4. Conduct a department meeting review of the value-added report, incorporating it into the department's development plan
5. Identify and document further personal training needs, liaising with your school's CPD co-ordinator



## 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

- Professional judgement when undertaking effective target-setting and tracking, and
- Benchmarking discussions involving the interpretation of value-added data

### Portfolio activities/Assessment

6. Optional M-level activity: Reflection on further key reading

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

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

### Content

Module 8 enables participants to:

- Understand the differences and relationship between strategic planning and development planning
- Understand the strategic and development planning processes
- Understand the relationship between departmental planning and whole-school planning
- Understand the link between Heads of Department and whole-school planning
- Develop the skills to write, review, and modify a departmental development plan
- Reflect and formulate the underlying values and aims of the department
- Understand general principles and approaches to department budget planning
- Develop the skills to produce an annual departmental budget submission

### Portfolio activities/Assessment

1. Structured reflection on the training session
2. Consideration of the values and aims of the department, and of you as a Head of Department
3. Familiarisation with the different formats used for planning in own school
4. Exploring ways in which the department might contribute to the school's Strategic Development / Management Plan
5. Produce a departmental development plan or review and, if necessary, update an existing plan
6. Produce a departmental budget submission for the next academic year and document the process
7. Optional M-level activity: Reflection on further key reading

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*“It is a privilege to be a Head of Department in a school, and with that privilege comes the responsibility to develop one's professional and managerial practice. The two years of ISQAM has really helped me to do that.” (ISQAM Level 2 participant)*

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