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CHARTERED
SECRETARIES

Add
some colour
into your 
 **career**

A guide to becoming a **Chartered Secretary**

Becoming a Chartered Secretary offers a wealth of colourful career opportunities.

The Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA) is the international qualifying and Membership body for the Chartered Secretary profession. Our Chartered Secretaries Qualifying Scheme (CSQS) is one of the broadest-based professional qualifying schemes available, therefore equipping you for a variety of different career paths from corporate administrator to head of corporate governance. CSQS is internationally recognised and highly valued by employers worldwide, offering you the passport to a variety of challenging, versatile and well-rewarded careers in both the UK and overseas.

What is a Chartered Secretary?

Chartered Secretaries are high-ranking professionals with a diverse set of skills unique amongst many professions. Trained in corporate law, finance, governance and corporate secretarial practice, Chartered Secretaries are the focal point for independent advice about the conduct of business, governance and compliance. They can also offer legal and accounting advice and manage the development of strategy and corporate planning.

As well as broadening your skill-set by becoming a Chartered Secretary, other benefits include:

- access to a wide variety of different job roles;
- diversity of responsibilities;
- a fast-track to top-level roles working with the board;
- the option to move across different sectors;
- stand out to potential employers;
- the status of having a Chartered profession;
- top earning potential;
- an internationally recognised qualification; and
- the opportunity to work overseas.

As a Chartered Secretary, you can work in a number of different sectors including corporate, not-for-profit, charity and the NHS. Many work as company secretaries but there are a wide variety of other roles Chartered Secretaries can perform. Here are just a few:

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| ▪ assistant company secretary | ▪ head of corporate governance |
| ▪ audit officer | ▪ head of resourcing |
| ▪ chief executive | ▪ head of secretariat |
| ▪ corporate administrator | ▪ in-house counsel |
| ▪ director of finance | ▪ managing director |
| ▪ director of legal services | ▪ managing partner |
| ▪ financial controller | ▪ risk controller |
| ▪ financial services contracts manager | ▪ trust and companies manager |
| ▪ head of compliance | ▪ trust secretary |

You may also have the opportunity to work in practice, offering business and legal services to a range of clients.

What does a Chartered Secretary do?

The specific responsibilities of a Chartered Secretary vary depending upon the job title, the level of the job role, the size of the organisation and the sector in which it operates. However, responsibilities may include:

- advising the board on effective decision-making, legal and regulatory matters and risk management;
- developing and managing strategies to ensure compliance with legal and statutory requirements;
- identifying areas for improved corporate governance;
- implementing changes in relevant legislation;
- managing board, shareholder and trustee communications, reports and meetings;
- liaising with auditors, lawyers and tax advisors;
- leading on issues essential to business performance, such as negotiation of contracts, finance, accounting, insurance and property; and
- interpreting and advising on financial reporting.

Visit our website to read a selection of case studies to give you a real life insight into the different roles and sectors that our students and Members work in.

What salary can a Chartered Secretary expect?

Salaries vary greatly depending on job role and organisation type. As a guide, a fully qualified Chartered Secretary working in the private sector earns anything between £55,000 and £180,000 on average with top company secretaries for a FTSE 100 company earning up to £305,600 basic.* A company secretarial assistant earns on average between £28,000 and £42,000 with top roles offering £45,000 working in the private sector.* Some of our students start their career in a secretarial assistant role and study for the ICSA qualification at the same time, so they gain valuable professional experience as well as earning an income and gaining a professional qualification.



ICSA's Chartered Secretaries Qualifying Scheme (CSQS)

The Chartered Secretary profession attracts a wide variety of people including new graduates looking for a rewarding career and a fast-track route to a board-level role and those currently working in the legal, accounting or corporate governance professions who want to take their career to the next step.

CSQS comprises two levels, each with four modules, outlined below. You may need to study all eight modules or, depending on your existing qualifications, you may be exempt from some modules.

Level 1 modules

Financial Reporting and Analysis
Applied Business Law
Corporate Law
Corporate Governance **or**
Health Service Governance**

Level 2 modules

Financial Decision Making
Strategy in Practice
Corporate Secretarial Practice
Chartered Secretaries Case Study

Studying for CSQS

Due to the flexibility of study options available, the timeframe to complete all modules can vary. As a guide, qualification typically takes between one and four years.

You can study via a variety of routes including:

- self-study;
- distance-learning delivered by registered tuition providers;
- part-time attendance at classes delivered by registered tuition providers; and
- collaborative Masters courses at partner universities (for joint ICSA/university postgraduate Masters awards only). These post-graduate collaborative courses mean you gain the university's postgraduate award in addition to the ICSA graduate status (GradICSA).

Once you have successfully completed your exams, you will be given graduate status and designated the title GradICSA which you can use after your name. To become a full Member of ICSA and a Chartered Secretary, you also need to demonstrate a certain level of professional work experience. Many students study while they work and are able to gain their professional experience at the same time as studying.

ICSA has designated **BPP Business School** as its preferred tuition provider for the delivery of CSQS. BPP offer online and distance-learning courses across the UK and face-to-face revision courses. Visit the BPP website www.bpp.com/icsa for further details.

For further information regarding how and where to study and for a list of registered tuition providers and collaborative universities, visit www.icsaglobal.com/welcome.

How can I find out more information?

For further details on ICSA's Chartered Secretaries Qualifying Scheme including fees information, syllabus details and to order an information pack, visit www.icsaglobal.com/welcome.

* Information taken from Chambers and Partners Salary Survey 2010–2011.

** Please note the Health Service Governance module will be available in 2012.

Don't just take our word for it...



Patricia Johnston is in the third year of her training contract with Deloitte and Touche Ireland as a Company Secretary.



As part of the Corporate & Legal Team at Deloitte, I work closely with my colleagues in audit, tax, corporate finance and other specialist areas, as well as external advisors on complex arrangements and transactions.

Chartered Secretaries are highly valued and, once qualified, a Chartered Secretary has many opportunities to work in top-level companies and on very interesting projects. Chartered Secretaries also have the opportunity to travel internationally as ICSA operates globally.



David Thompson is Associate for the Financial Services Authority and Chairman of the ICSA Edinburgh Network.



The skills and qualities required for this role include being able to analyse information to identify and persuasively present the key issues to firms and seek from them suitable strategies to make progress. Good market knowledge is important to understand trends and developments. My ICSA training has given me a very broad-based knowledge allowing me to still make a contribution even when dealing with specialists in other areas.

The ICSA qualification's diversity is a key benefit and that always brings opportunity. It can open up a range of careers, including traditional company secretarial roles, local government, practice management, some legal positions, the NHS and so on.



Visit our website to read more of our case studies that give you a real life insight into the different roles and sectors that our students and Members work in.

Here are a few examples of job roles advertised on our website:

Company Secretary

London • Up to £85k

Role description:

Heading up the company secretarial team, this is a great opportunity for a qualified Chartered Secretary who wants to broaden or develop their Company Secretarial skills into a Listed Role as well as assist investee companies.

Company Secretarial Assistant

Edinburgh • £25-28k

Role description: To provide a full and professional legal and administrative support service to the Legal Counsel & Company Secretary.

Assistant Company Secretary

London • £40k

Role description: To assist the Group Legal Counsel in the administration of the Company's Board and Committees and to take day-to-day responsibility for compliance with certain statutory obligations (principally under the Companies Act).

Deputy Group Secretary (maternity cover)

Dublin • €80k PA (pro-rata)

Role description: A large professional services group based in Ireland are looking for an experienced Company Secretary to provide maternity cover for the Deputy Group Secretary. The role will involve varied tasks in managing the company secretarial affairs of Irish and non-Irish corporate subsidiaries.