

A mini guide to...

the Chartered Secretary profession

What is a Chartered Secretary?

It's a PA role, right? Wrong! In this case the clue is not in the title. A Chartered Secretary is not a PA or a typist. Far from it. Think Home Secretary or Secretary General of the UN.

Chartered Secretaries are senior professionals trained in corporate law, finance, corporate governance, company secretaryship and management. They sit on the board of directors and are the focal point for independent advice about the conduct of business, governance and compliance. They are the guys who really know their stuff and who the directors turn to for advice on a range of business issues – they basically ensure the company is running in-line with laws and regulations.

What do they 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 but responsibilities may include:

- advising the board on effective decision-making, legal and regulatory matters;
- 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.



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What job roles can Chartered Secretaries perform?

Chartered Secretaries work in a variety of careers and across a range of different sectors including corporate, not-for-profit, charity and the NHS. Many work as company secretaries but there are a diverse range of other roles Chartered Secretaries can perform. Here are just a few examples:

- chief executive
- financial controller
- in-house counsel
- audit officer
- managing director
- head of secretariat
- assistant company secretary
- head of compliance
- risk controller
- corporate administrator
- head of corporate governance
- director of finance

What salary can I 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 £56,000 and £193,000 on average with top company secretaries for a FTSE 100 company earning up to £335,000 basic.*

A company secretarial assistant earns on average between £30,000 and £35,000 with top roles offering over £43,000. 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 income and gaining a professional qualification.*

How do I become a Chartered Secretary?

The first step to gaining Chartered status is to register on ICSA's Chartered Secretaries Qualifying Scheme (CSQS). The scheme comprises eight modules covering everything you need to know to be successful in this profession including corporate law, corporate governance, financial decision making and corporate secretarial practice.

To become a full Member of ICSA and a Chartered Secretary, you also need to demonstrate a certain level of professional experience. Many students study while they work and are able to gain their professional experience at the same time as studying.

How can I find out more?

If you would like to find out more about becoming a Chartered Secretary and to request a CSQS information pack, visit www.icsa.org.uk/student for further details.

*Salary information taken from Chambers and Partners Salary Survey 2009–2010.

