

CIS

The Internationally recognised qualification that paves the way for a career as:

COMPANY SECRETARY

(or ACCOUNTING OFFICER or ADMINISTRATOR)

WHAT IS A COMPANY SECRETARY?

Every successful, well-run organisation needs a governance professional who, as part of the senior management team, can instill a culture of sound governance and act as a trusted adviser on key issues.

In a rapidly changing, increasingly complex business environment, employers and investors are demanding that those charged with governance responsibilities have the skills and expertise to promote excellence in corporate conduct and administration. This can only be achieved by a genuine governance professional.

A Company Secretary is a senior position in a company or public organisation, normally in the form of a managerial position or above. Despite the name, the role is not a clerical or secretarial one in the usual sense.

The Company Secretary ensures that an organisation complies with relevant legislation and regulation, and keeps board members informed of their legal responsibilities. Company Secretaries are the company's named representative on legal documents, and it is their responsibility to ensure that the company and its directors operate within the law. It is also their responsibility to register and communicate with shareholders, to ensure that dividends are paid and to maintain company records, such as lists of directors and shareholders, and annual reports.

In many countries, companies have traditionally been required by law to appoint one person as a company secretary, and this person will also usually be a senior board member.

Company Secretaries in all sectors have high level responsibilities including governance structures and mechanisms, corporate conduct within an organisation's regulatory environment, board, shareholder and trustee meetings, compliance with legal, regulatory and listing requirements, the training and induction of non-executives and trustees, contact with regulatory and external bodies, reports and circulars to shareholders/trustees, management of employee benefits such as pensions and employee share schemes, insurance administration and organisation, the negotiation of contracts, risk management, property administration and organisation and the interpretation of financial accounts.

Company Secretaries are the primary source of advice on the conduct of business and this can span everything from legal advice, through accounting advice on financial reports, to the development of strategy and corporate planning.

The Company Secretary may be qualified by virtue of examination and membership (CIS) of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA), which is the only qualification specifically for Company Secretaries. ICSA is the only body dedicated to the advancement and recognition of professional administration. Only a person thus qualified is entitled to be designated a 'Chartered Secretary'.

CAREER PROSPECTS

Chartered Secretaries are in demand for their range of skills, knowledge, work experience and values (especially integrity, professional discipline and the willingness to maintain knowledge currency through continuing professional development – CPD).

Southern Africa is in a period of dynamic change and growth and opportunities in the rest of Africa and Asia become more apparent every day.

In this climate, qualified and experienced Chartered Secretaries are in very short supply. Chartered Secretaries command excellent salaries, but the key to getting these top jobs is the appropriate work experience and the maintenance of records of personal integrity and ability through membership of the Institute.

Membership is vital as it provides the proof of integrity and personal good standing that the modern employer demands – a portfolio of work evidence, supported by a record of unbroken membership, provides a job applicant with the edge that is needed in any competitive environment. Membership provides a record of accountability, which is priceless if you are working in the modern Corporate Governance environment. No other degree or academic qualification can perform the same accountability function as a professional relationship with an International, prestigious professional body such as Chartered Secretaries International.

THE CIS INTERNATIONAL QUALIFYING SCHEME – a life-long career support package

The CIS course of study prepares candidates for Chartered Secretaryship. It is a tough and rigorous course, in keeping with the intense demands made on the Chartered Secretary in his or her chosen specialised field, whether it be a Company Secretary, Accountant, Accounting Officer, Administrator or Manager.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The CIS Programmes are registered as professional learning programmes on the NQF as follows:

CIS PROGRAMME	LEARNING PROGRAMME TITLE (OF THE PROFESSIONAL QUALIFYING SCHEME)
1	CIS Professional Qualification: Management and Administration
2	CIS Professional Qualification: Governance and Administration
3	CIS Professional Advanced Qualification: Governance and Administration

BOARD EXAMINATION

The Board Examination is registered as a professional learning programme on the NQF as follows:
CIS Professional Post-Graduate Qualification: Company Secretarial and Governance Practice.

The four modules that make up the Board examinations are pitched at a post-graduate level – and the expectations are definitely that of post-graduate, mature students. These examinations are a benchmark to gauge whether potential Chartered Secretaries can deal with academic content that is rigorous, difficult and tough.

MODULE NAME	CREDITS
Corporate Secretaryship	30
Corporate Governance	30
Corporate Administration	30
Corporate Financial Management	30

STUDYING AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN LAW SCHOOL

The South African Law School was established in 1996 and is an accredited training provider specialising in legal education and training. The School has been accredited by the Institute of Chartered Secretaries & Administrators (ICSA) to provide training for the CIS programme from 2009.

The South African Law School will commence in 2009 by offering training against the Level 1 Programme only. Successful learners will be able to articulate to the Level 2 programme in 2010 – when the South African Law School will provide training for CIS Programme 1, 2 and 3; as well as for the Board examination.

CIS QUALIFYING PROGRAMME – PROGRAMME 1

SYLLABUS:

The syllabus for CIS Programme 1 consists of the following 5 modules:

- Foundations of Law
- Financial Accounting
- General Principles of Commercial Law
- Communication
- Economics

Learners must have completed Foundations of Law in order to register for General Principals of Commercial Law

This programme may be completed in one academic year.

EXAMINATIONS & ASSESSMENT

- The South African Law School will conduct continuous, in-house, assessments throughout the programme in order to monitor each learner's progress. Where it is evident that a learner is struggling with any part of the programme the School will attempt to assist the learner.
- The learner is examined and finally assessed by ICOSA – who are the examining body for this course.
- ICOSA Examinations are written in May and October each year.

TUITION DELIVERY METHOD

The South African Law School offers this training as a facilitated (taught) course. Trainers are qualified and experienced professionals. The course is available on a full-time or part-time basis.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

- Senior Certificate or IBS NQF Level 4 or equivalent qualification with English and a numeracy subject (e.g. Mathematics, accountancy or science) – D symbol on Standard Grade or E symbol on Higher Grade.
- Mature entry: Subject to approval. Applicants who have not fully satisfied the above requirements may apply for entrance if they are at least 23 years of age and have obtained a qualification comparable with those mentioned above or have satisfied a substantial part of the normal educational requirements i.e. if they have passed 4 modules at Grade 12 level, or Senior Certificate or GCE "O" Level. The four modules must include:
 - English; and
 - One of either Mathematics, Accountancy, Physics, Chemistry or a Physical Science subject; and
 - The remaining two modules must be of either an academic or commercial nature.

MORE INFORMATION / REGISTRATION / FEES

For more information regarding the SOUTH AFRICAN LAW SCHOOL and the CIS Programme 1 course, including the time-table, tuition fees and ICOSA fees please call 021-4225610 or email info@lawschool.co.za. In addition please visit our website: www.lawschool.co.za

For more information regarding ICOSA and for full particulars of ICOSA membership, code of conduct etc. please visit the ICOSA website: www.icsa.co.za