

## Frequently asked questions

As you read through the answers below to the most common questions please also bear in mind that all the important foundation blocks of the Institute will not change.

What will not change:

- The importance and profile of your Chartered Secretary qualification and designation.
- The prestige of the Institute's post nominals.
- The international recognition of your qualification.
- The portability of your qualification.
- The reputation we enjoy in advocating good governance.
- The strong focus we place on company secretarial practice.

## Overview

Many members will ask why the two initiatives are necessary and are they the best way to address the current environment. Two threshold questions come to mind:

### 1. Why has the membership been falling?

This decrease is not uniform across the 9 Divisions. HK/China, Malaysia and Singapore have maintained or increased their membership in recent years. There are various reasons for this but one is their achievement of gaining regulated status; to a greater or lesser extent, a company secretary in their individual territories must be one of our members. The other 6 unregulated Divisions have seen increased competition over recent decades from other professions, notably lawyers and accountants, and this, together with technological advances, have led to a decline in our numbers.

We remain an important and increasingly relevant profession but we need to become more attractive to potential students, broaden our base and increase our numbers.

"Good Governance" is seen as increasingly vital throughout the world and while we are the leading qualifying body in the practice of governance, we are not attracting sufficient numbers of those working in this field. Many of these people are not company secretaries and do not at present see us as their natural home.

Experience in Australia, New Zealand and the U.K. has shown that adopting the word "Governance" as part of their names or branding has been highly beneficial to their recognition and standing. By creating the new designation of Chartered Governance Professional, we are building on this experience by reserving to ourselves, as far as we are able, a definitive Governance qualification.

Some Divisions may not see an immediate need for the new qualification but others do. Remember we are an international body and we must do what is best for the ICOSA as a whole.

**2. Should we not concentrate on achieving greater recognition of the Chartered Secretary designation rather than create a new level of membership and a new Chartered Governance qualification?**

The Institute is fully committed to the Chartered Secretary qualification. We will continue to seek increased recognition for our members and the widest acceptance of our qualification as being essential for all those wishing to pursue careers in the company secretarial field. That will not change.

Your Council believes however that we must not let the opportunity slip of attracting members whose careers are in the wider world of governance. If we do not embrace these people by offering a qualification that suits them, some other organisation will and we will lose out. We must not allow that to happen.

## **Chartered Governance Professional**

**1. What is the difference between a Chartered Secretary and a Chartered Governance Professional?**

The Qualifying Programme to be Chartered (in either designation) will have a common core that will provide a foundation in governance, law, finance and risk management. From that point, those studying for the Chartered Secretary designation will continue on to study corporate secretarial practice and development of strategy. Those seeking the Chartered Governance Professional designation will further study enterprise risk management, as well as sector-specific governance subjects in areas such as health, sport or public sector governance.

**2. What do the two designations have in common?**

As outlined above, both designations will provide a foundation in governance, law, finance and risk management. Governance is at the heart of what the Institute does and stands for and so all members, regardless of their designation, are required to have a thorough understanding of this subject area.

**3. Do the two designations have the same professional obligations?**

Yes. A person must be either an Associate or Fellow to be Chartered and therefore whether they are a Chartered Secretary or a Chartered Governance Professional, they have the same professional obligations to act with integrity and to maintain their professional expertise via continuing professional development (CPD).

**4. Can a person have both designations?**

Yes, as long as they meet the educational requirements of both.

**5. Can existing members become a Chartered Governance Professional?**

All Fellows as at 31 December 2019 will be 'grandfathered' into the designation.

All Associates as at 31 December 2019 will also be grandfathered into the designation of Chartered Governance Professional when they have been an Associate member for five years, regardless of when those length of membership requirements are met.

These members will be able to use the appropriate designatory letters and may describe themselves as a Chartered Secretary or a Chartered Governance Professional, or both.

Members who are elected as Associates from 1 January 2020, and have not completed the Chartered Governance Professional Qualifying Programme but wish to attain Chartered Governance Professional status, will be required to undertake some additional study in the subjects unique to that stream.

**6. Will the market understand the difference between the two?**

Yes, there will be a comprehensive marketing campaign highlighting the difference between the two. Marketing, communication and the right messaging will be important and so the use of professional external marketing assistance, as well as feedback from members will be an essential element of the marketing programme.

**7. Will this mean that Chartered Secretaries become disenfranchised?**

No, not at all. As the practice of governance evolves the Institute needs to represent not only Chartered Secretaries but all professionals who value the practice of good governance. This change will result in a stronger organisation and all members will experience the benefits that come with this.

**8. When will the new professional designation 'Chartered Governance Professional' start being offered?**

Members will be asked to vote to approve the changes at a meeting to be held on 4 October 2017. If approved, then Privy Council formal approval is necessary and this can take a number of months. It is expected that Divisions of the Institute will be able to offer the Chartered Governance Professional designation from January 2019.

**9. When will the new subjects for this stream be available?**

The revised Chartered Qualifying Programmes – Qualifying Programme Chartered Secretary (QPCS) and Qualifying Programme Chartered Governance Professional (QPCGP) will be available to take enrolments from January 2019 in most Divisions.

**10. Will there be an additional membership fee if a person holds both designations?**

No. Membership fees are based on whether a person is an Associate or Fellow and will not be based on their professional designation.

**11. How will this success be measured, and what action will be taken if it is not achieved?**

Success will be measured by whether or not the Institute is able to increase its intake of members from a wide range of governance professions such as risk managers, compliance officers, directors and governance consultants. This will take time to evolve and will require constant monitoring of how the market perceives this initiative by the Institute.

**12. Will Chartered Governance Professionals have different post-nominals from a Chartered Secretary?**

Yes and no. As both designations require a person to be either a Fellow or Associate member they will both retain either FCIS or ACIS. However, the Council has agreed that some form of 'sub' designation will be added after FCIS or ACIS that members can use if they wish to denote their professional designation(s).

## **Affiliated Member**

**1. What are the eligibility requirements to become an Affiliated Member?**

Affiliated Members will need to complete any one of a number of courses offered by the Institute's Divisions or pass examinations for the core subjects in the Chartered Qualifying Programme (subject to any exemptions), be a fit and proper person, meet prescribed experience requirements, agree to abide by the Code of Conduct and maintain their professional expertise by undertaking CPD to stay up to date with changes in their profession.

Affiliated Members who qualify via courses other than completion of the core subjects in the Chartered Qualifying Programme cannot progress to Associate or Fellow unless they subsequently complete the Chartered Programme core subjects.

**2. Will Affiliated Members be able to call themselves Chartered Secretaries or Chartered Governance Professionals?**

No, only Associates and Fellows can be Chartered. Affiliated Members cannot be either Chartered Secretaries or Chartered Governance Professionals, nor can they be a member of the Council of the Institute.

**3. Can the ICSA discipline an Affiliated Member for unprofessional conduct and potentially take their membership away?**

Yes, they can. All members, whether Fellows, Associates, Honorary Fellows or Affiliated Members must abide by the Code of Conduct and can face disciplinary action for non-compliance.

**4. Are Affiliated Members fully qualified members?**

No, they are part-qualified and therefore cannot call themselves Chartered Secretaries or Chartered Governance Professionals.

**5. What will happen to the group of people that we now call Graduates or GradICSA?**

GradICSA will continue to exist, as it is the category for those who have completed the full Chartered Qualifying Programme but do not yet have the necessary years of experience to qualify as an Associate. Affiliated Members who have completed all of the required subjects in the Chartered Qualifying Programme will be expected to progress to the status of GradICSA.

**6. When will Affiliated Member status start being offered?**

Members will be asked to vote to approve the changes at the Annual General meeting on 4 October 2017. If approved, then Privy Council formal approval is necessary and this can take a number of months. It is expected that most Divisions of the Institute will be able to offer Affiliated Member status from January 2019.

It should be noted that it will be up to each Division as to whether they offer the new status in their local market. Divisions will consult their members on this.

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