



**THE INSTITUTE OF
Company Secretaries of India**

भारतीय कम्पनी सचिव संस्थान

IN PURSUIT OF PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

Statutory body under an Act of Parliament

(Under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Corporate Affairs)

EXPANDING PROFESSIONAL HORIZONS

**Benchmarking of
Company
Secretaryship Course
by UK NARIC**

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) with a view to expand the opportunity base of its students and members beyond the national territory had engaged National Recognition Information Centre based at UK (UK NARIC), to conduct an independent benchmarking study, and evaluate comparability of the Executive and Professional Programmes of the Company Secretaryship Course in the context of UK and UAE education systems. UK NARIC is responsible for providing informed advice and guidance on vocational, academic and professional qualifications from over 190 countries worldwide.

UK NARIC has made the following comparability recommendations to the UK and UAE education systems :

STAGE	UK QUALIFICATIONS	UAE QUALIFICATIONS
CS Executive Programme	RQF Level 6 [Bachelor degree standard]	QF Emirates Level 7 [Bachelor degree standard]
CS Professional Programme	RQF Level 7 [Masters degree standard]	QF Emirates Level 9 [Masters degree standard]

Intended benefits:

- Recognition of skills and qualifications by institutions, employers and key stakeholders
- Both national and international mobility for students
- Cross border movement of CS professionals
- Globalization of the profession of Company Secretaries

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India – Executive and Professional Level Programmes

UK NARIC Benchmarking Study - Executive Summary

Submitted to the Institute of Company Secretaries of India by UK NARIC

The National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom

The national agency responsible for providing information and expert opinion on qualifications and skills worldwide

August 2018



*UK NARIC title has become UK ENIC since 1st March 2021

UK NARIC has been commissioned by the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) to conduct an independent benchmarking study, evaluating the comparability of the ICSI Executive and Professional Programmes of the Company Secretaryship in the context of the UK and UAE education systems.

To place the study in context, ICSI is a professional body for company secretaries with a global membership of 55,000. The ICSI Executive and Professional programmes are primarily taught by distance learning, and assessed through eight and nine three hour written examinations respectively. Passing the Executive Programme is a prerequisite for progression onto the Professional Programme, whereupon successful completion individuals can apply to become an Associate Member of the Institute and work in the role of Company Secretary in India, a role recognised under the Companies Act 2013.

A well-established methodology was employed to conduct the study, including review of the ICSI Executive and Professional Programme core components: duration, entry requirements, learning outcomes, content and structure, mode of learning, assessment and associated outcomes. The main reference point for comparison to the UK education system is the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), supported by level descriptors which define key skills and knowledge expected at each level. The newly revised ICSI syllabus, for first assessment in 2018, was used for the purposes of this evaluation. The process combined desk-based review of documentation, including the ICSI syllabus and past exam papers, with interviews with key personnel involved in the assessment and curriculum development.

A detailed comparative analysis was conducted of learning outcomes, content depth and breadth and assessment to the RQF level descriptors and selected UK similarly focused qualifications. Quality assurance processes, including the measures for curriculum development and review, assessment development and administration, marking and standard setting, external recognition are examined and support the comparative analysis.

In conclusion, the ICSI Executive Programme learning objectives, content and assessment demonstrate similarities with the level of skills and knowledge at RQF Level 6. In particular, the ICSI learning objectives focus on developing application and problem solving skills in addition to advanced conceptual knowledge and understanding, corresponding to RQF Level 6. Review of assessment highlighted linkages to RQF Level 6 related qualifications in areas of law, finance and management in respect to assessed skills.

The ICSI Professional Programme components relate to the knowledge and skills at RQF Level 7. The relevant competencies developed and assessed by the Professional Programme include being able to use specialised skills to solve complex problems with many interacting factors as well as to engage critical analysis and evaluation of information, ideas and concepts. In the Professional Programme, being able to understand the latest developments in the area and determine and use relevant methodologies to solve industry based problems are developed and assessed through extended case studies, reflecting assessment methods used in similar professional qualifications at RQF Level 7.

The quality assurance mechanisms which underpin the programme were found to be sufficient, and support the overall finding of comparability. The curriculum review process involves multiple stakeholders to ensure relevance of the curriculum which is subject to final approval by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, furthermore the assessment development is conducted to ensure the validity of the skills and knowledge assessed in relation to the curriculum. The marking and moderation process facilitates the reliability of assessment, indicating that broadly consistent standards required to pass are applied from cohort to cohort. Processes are in place to ensure the effective administration of the examinations across ICSI approved centres.

The following comparability recommendations to the UK education system can therefore be provided:

Qualification title	ICSI Executive Programme
Country:	India
Awarded by:	Institute of Company Secretaries of India
Comparison	
UK framework level:	RQF Level 6
Comparable UK qualifications:	Bachelor degree standard

Qualification title	ICSI Professional Programme
Country:	India
Awarded by:	Institute of Company Secretaries of India
Comparison	
UK framework level:	RQF Level 7
Comparable UK qualifications:	Master's degree standard

In terms of comparability in the context of the UAE system, UK NARIC's work comparing levels of the QFEmirates to the former QCF¹, found that QCF Level 6 and QFEmirates Level 7 were comparable to QCF Level 6; as were QCF Level 7 and QFEmirates Levels 8 and 9. On the basis of this, the Executive Programme is considered broadly comparable to QFEmirates Level 7; while the Professional Programme demonstrates comparability with Level 9, given the focus on developing advanced level professional skills and competencies.

¹ The eight level QCF was replaced by the RQF from 2015 onwards. Each of the eight levels on the RQF relate directly to the eight levels on the previous QCF.

On this basis the following QF*Emirates* comparability guidelines can be summarised:

Qualification title	ICSI Executive Programme
Country:	India
Awarded by:	Institute of Company Secretaries of India
Comparison	
QF <i>Emirates</i> framework level:	Level 7

Qualification title	ICSI Professional Programme
Country:	India
Awarded by:	Institute of Company Secretaries of India
Comparison	
QF <i>Emirates</i> framework level:	Level 9

It should be noted that the framework referencing, on which this is based, is not intended to imply the recognition of qualifications on the QF*Emirates* from one system to the other; nor to comment on the status of implementation of the QF*Emirates*.