

Company Secretary Interview Guide

Introduction

Recruiting the right Company Secretary is about more than assessing technical knowledge. The role requires exceptional governance expertise, sound judgement, strong communication skills and the confidence to advise senior leaders and boards on complex governance matters.

This interview guide has been designed to help employers identify candidates who possess the technical competence, commercial awareness and leadership qualities needed to succeed in the role.

The questions can be adapted to suit organisations of different sizes, sectors and governance frameworks.

Technical Knowledge

1. Can you describe your experience supporting boards and committees?

What to look for:

- Experience planning meetings, preparing board papers, taking minutes and advising directors.

2. How do you ensure an organisation remains compliant with statutory and regulatory obligations?

What to look for:

- Knowledge of Companies House requirements, statutory registers, filing deadlines and governance controls.

3. What governance frameworks or codes have you worked with?

What to look for:

- UK Corporate Governance Code, Charity Governance Code, NHS governance, FCA or other sector-specific frameworks.

4. How do you stay up to date with changes in governance legislation and best practice?

What to look for:

- Professional development, CGI membership, governance publications and continuing learning.

Governance & Board Support

5. How would you advise a board where governance processes were not being followed consistently?

What to look for:

- Confidence, diplomacy and practical problem-solving.

6. Describe a time you improved a governance process.

What to look for:

- Examples of efficiency improvements, stronger controls or better board engagement.

7. How do you balance supporting the board while remaining independent?

What to look for:

- Strong understanding of the advisory nature of the Company Secretary role.

8. How would you deal with confidential or sensitive board information?

What to look for:

- Professional judgement, discretion and integrity.

Leadership & Stakeholder Management

9. Tell us about a challenging relationship you've managed with a senior stakeholder.

What to look for:

- Communication, diplomacy and influencing skills.

10. How do you prioritise competing governance deadlines?

What to look for:

- Planning, organisation and calm decision-making.

11. Have you ever managed or developed members of a governance team?

What to look for:

- Leadership, coaching and delegation.

12. How do you build credibility with directors and executive leaders?

What to look for:

- Professionalism, commercial awareness and trust.

Scenario-Based Questions

13. A board paper contains information that you believe is incomplete. What would you do?

What to look for:

- Confidence to challenge appropriately while maintaining positive relationships.

14. A director asks you to bypass an established governance process to meet a deadline. How would you respond?

What to look for:

- Integrity, judgement and understanding of governance responsibilities.

15. The board wants to introduce a new committee. What governance considerations would you raise?

What to look for:

- Terms of reference, reporting structure, delegated authority and governance effectiveness.

Closing Questions

16. What do you believe makes an effective Company Secretary?

What to look for:

- Balanced understanding of governance, leadership and communication.

17. What governance trends do you believe organisations should prepare for over the next few years?

What to look for:

- Commercial awareness and strategic thinking.

18. Why are you interested in this role?

What to look for:

- Motivation, preparation and cultural fit.

19. What questions do you have for us?

What to look for:

- Thoughtful questions about governance, strategy and organisational culture.

Candidate:

Position:

Interview Date:

Interviewer:

Interview Assessment Checklist

Following the interview, consider whether the candidate demonstrated:

- ☐ Strong governance knowledge
- ☐ Board and committee experience
- ☐ Statutory compliance expertise
- ☐ Excellent communication skills
- ☐ Commercial awareness

Interview Assessment Checklist (continued)

- ☐ Sound professional judgement
- ☐ Leadership capability
- ☐ High levels of integrity
- ☐ Organisational skills
- ☐ Ability to influence senior stakeholders

Overall Recommendation

- ☐ Strong Hire
- ☐ Hire
- ☐ Hold
- ☐ Do Not Hire

Overall Comments