

Moving from a parallel role into investor relations

How IR Society courses, along with the comprehensive study guide, helped **Steph Mountifield** prepare for the Certificate In Investor Relations.

I have spent the vast majority of my 17-year career in corporate communications. I started in the defence industry, then moved into beverages, and in 2017 transitioned to the pharmaceutical sector. These roles all included delivering quarterly results communications, so while I have been in investor relations for nearly two years, I have worked alongside IR teams for a long time. I officially made the move to IR in January 2023 and have truly enjoyed every moment of the steep learning curve!

What made you take the CIR?

Coming from a corporate communications background, I had a good grasp of the basics, but I wanted to deepen my knowledge of IR and the capital markets.

I had already started taking IR Society courses while still in corporate communications, so when I transitioned to IR, pursuing the CIR felt like the natural next step. It was a great way to formalise my knowledge and provided a structured approach to understanding the complexities of IR, along with latest industry standards and regulations.



Steph Mountifield is IR director at GSK.

How did you find the process?

I hadn't studied for an exam in quite some time, but I had already attended the 'IR regulation and compliance essentials' and 'Demystifying company accounts and valuations' courses, which provided a solid foundation. I spent a lot of time with the study guide, and to mix things up, I also watched a few YouTube videos for additional insights.

I highly recommend the mock exams – I took one fairly early on, which helped me understand how the questions would be presented and where I had knowledge gaps.

Has the knowledge been useful?

Absolutely. The knowledge I've gained from the CIR has been extremely helpful. There are topics that come up daily of which I now have a better understanding, and conversely there are elements of the CIR that I don't come across regularly, so the CIR has improved my all-round knowledge.

Advice for prospective candidates

If you're thinking about studying for the CIR, I would encourage you to go for it. The study guide is comprehensive but manageable, and there's no time limit on how quickly you need to take the exam, which makes studying feel very achievable. ■

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The IR Society Job Zone

Whether you are looking for an exciting new role or have a vacancy for a world-class candidate – the **Job Zone** targets the best-qualified group of IR professionals in the UK and Europe.

www.irsociety.org.uk



Learning about international best practice from Vietnam

Hoang Ngoc Anh explains why she decided to take the International Certificate in Investor Relations, and what the qualification has taught her about how international markets operate.

I am currently serving as an IRO at the Joint Stock Commercial Bank for Investment and Development of Vietnam (BIDV), marking my nine years with the bank.

BIDV is recognised as a leading commercial bank in Vietnam, boasting the largest total assets, market share and deposits in the banking sector. At BIDV, our focus is on sustainable growth, guided by the vision of 'pioneering in creating sustainable value'. My role primarily involves enhancing and promoting the corporate governance framework within the bank, as well as participating in sustainability reporting and the annual report, all aimed at fostering ESG growth. BIDV takes pride in being the first state bank in Vietnam to publish a separate sustainability report, adhering to the GRI standards and according to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

This diverse work environment has presented many challenges but has also taught me how to address issues, manage stakeholder expectations, and ultimately unlock my potential.

Why did you decide on the ICIR?

The ICIR is a globally recognised qualification for professionals in the investor relations field. At BIDV, we are



Hoang Ngoc Anh is investor relations officer at BIDV.

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committed to developing and enhancing our technical knowledge and aim to adopt best international practices to promote governance and sustainability in our growth.

Therefore, I believe it is essential to join a professional body that offers opportunities to build broader connections with other professionals in this field. This will allow me to gain a deeper understanding of practices in developed countries and broaden my perspective by considering matters from various viewpoints.

How did you find the process?

Although examinations are typically stressful, I found the process of studying for the ICIR to be very smooth, thanks to the strong support from the IR Society team, who guided me through every step. The information provided in the study guide was extremely helpful and directly applicable to the practices I am currently engaged in.

Has the knowledge been useful?

Learning is a lifelong journey. The content covered in the syllabus has been both interesting and confidence-boosting, particularly in the context of Vietnam's rapid growth and dynamic economy.

I highly recommend this programme to our network connections, as I believe it offers an excellent opportunity to develop a more professional, transparent, and effective IR community. ■

Have an IR question? Ask the board

IR Society members may ask questions in confidence, which we will endeavour to answer through our network of experienced IR professionals.

irsociety.org.uk/resources/ask-the-board

