



Are you a security professional?

Mike Hurst brings clarity to the wide range of educational and training options available in security and how these can impact on your own professional practice.

In the UK, the regulated part of the security sector is controlled by the Security Industry Authority and affects hundreds of thousands of licensed individuals. Whilst a licence is required and needs to be renewed every three years, there is no requirement for CPD and no requirement for further education for those individuals seeking career progression. For security managers and directors there is no licence or specific qualification required at all, although many individuals are well qualified as well as experienced. A question prompted by this is 'Is security a profession?'

Definition of Profession

Professions Australia defines a profession as a 'disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards. This group positions itself as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and is recognised by the public as such. A profession is also prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others.'

For a shorter definition, Wikipedia lists it as 'a paid occupation, especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification'.

The issue is what education path to choose, assuming of course you feel that education is worthwhile: I, of course, do. There is a plethora of qualifications in the security sector, ranging from university degrees (including master's, doctorates and

postgraduate courses) through to the many security training companies offering courses in general security management, specific skills (e.g. interviewing techniques) and technical disciplines.

Security qualifications

There are also a few globally recognised certifications such as the CPP, PSP and PCI from ASIS International and CISSP from (ISC)2. Additionally, ASIS is launching a new early career certification of Associate Protection Professional (APP), with the description 'Board Certified in Security Management Fundamentals'. This is being launched in Q2 2019, but an initial cadre will start to study for this in Autumn 2018.

When considering what educational route to take, individuals need to understand what they are looking to achieve. It may be a case of assessing what additional skills and knowledge you need to undertake the role you have or hope to have and what qualification will have the optimal effect on your career. Master's degrees remain popular in security, although this is not the case with many professions, but will they help you secure that next job: are they too academic and less practical? Certifications, which can be seen as 'lagging qualifications', demonstrate knowledge, skill and competency in particular disciplines but are perhaps seen as and not having the same academic credibility as a master's. There is also the personal, internal benefit of study. When I achieved my CPP Certification, it was not for any career or financial reason, but for my own satisfaction. That said, it was nice to achieve this certification held by so many friends and colleagues globally.

The Chartered Security Professional (CSyP) designation is also worth considering for some individuals, and the Register of Chartered Security Professionals has attracted around 125 registrants since its launch in 2011. Not that it is a question of either/or when it comes to education as a

route to career development. People need to look carefully at the range of opportunities available; be aware of their own learning style; consider whether they want to work in the UK or internationally; find out what qualifications their potential peers have; what qualifications are looked for by employers and recruiters; what the CPD/CPE requirements are; and, of course, look at costs and the time commitments needed.

In 1597, Sir Francis Bacon wrote 'ipsa scientia potestas est' ('knowledge itself is power'), and I suspect this still holds true, but now, more and more, it is a question of defining and quantifying that knowledge.

Sharing your thoughts with ASIS

I have recently joined the ASIS Leadership and Management Practices Council, one of the 34 ASIS Councils whose task is to focus on specific security practice areas to increase professional effectiveness, and programming. The Leadership and Management Practices Council communicates relevant, measured and sustainable global security best practices. The Council collaboratively identifies and communicates proven people, process and asset protection strategies that address business skills, management principles and practices, and strategic programming, in an effort to help professionals interact, as well as communicate with business leaders on challenges and opportunities unique to the security profession.

We'd be keen to reach out to readers of City Security Magazine who would be interested in sharing some of their thoughts and ideas.

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