

Singapore Legal Salary Survey & Guide 2015



Private Practice

In-house Financial Services

In-house Commerce



INTRODUCTION

Aquis Search is delighted to present its legal salary survey for Singapore 2015. The aim of this survey is to provide guidance to clients and candidates on current compensation levels and examine changing trends in the private practice, in-house financial services and in-house commerce market in Singapore. Our information has been researched and collated with the help of our clients, candidates and from our knowledge of the marketplace.

As with all surveys, the ranges represent the mainstream view and there will be situations that fall outside the ranges published here. Therefore, please use this survey as a guide and do not hesitate to call one of our consultants to discuss individual cases.

COVERAGE

Our Singapore legal survey covers the private practice, in-house financial services and in-house commerce community. Information on each can be found below.

- [Private Practice](#) [P.3](#)
- [In-house Financial Services](#) [P.5](#)
- [In-house Commerce](#) [P.8](#)



MARKET UPDATE

As Singapore continues to develop as a legal hub, competition remains strong amongst the local, international and US law firms. Four international law firms had their qualifying foreign law practice (QFLP) licence renewed for 5 years. These firms will continue to make an ongoing commitment to hiring Singaporean lawyers into their international setups.

With an additional 4 QFLP law firms operating in Singapore and several joint ventures combining international law and local advocacy, the market has stabilised in terms of new entrants with existing firms competing for the same business and cost pressures becoming a major challenge for everyone. Firms are looking for creative ways to enhance their competitive edge and some have set up regional offices to leverage off their Singapore base as a way of growing their revenues. More recently, a merger announcement to create the world's largest law firm, emphasised the demand for providing legal services to Chinese companies looking to invest overseas.

The overall growth of the legal industry across South East Asia has increased the demand for lawyers, particularly those with specialised skill sets making the search for talent a challenging one. The demand has tended to be highest for junior to mid-level associates with Singapore admission being increasingly attractive. Despite local law firms raising salaries, they face a continuing battle to retain staff and a recent move by one leading Singaporean Law firm to do away with its variable bonus component towards a more international remuneration style model is an interesting one. Also, the more recent influx of mid-market entrants to Singapore has resulted in stiff competition to retain top legal talent amongst the international firms.

Global MNC's with operations in Southeast Asia are seeking to take advantage of sustained regional growth with a recent economic survey citing appetite to acquire is at two-year high with one in two corporates saying they are pursuing an acquisition over the next 12 months, and 72% pursuing two or more deals in their pipeline. Encouraging growth rates and attractive manufacturing costs are likely to further stimulate deal flow in the region meaning continued demand for M&A lawyers.

From an IPO perspective, it was a much quieter year here in Singapore with deals hard to come by, suppressed liquidity and a preference for low interest debt over relatively high transactional costs in the equity markets. In Malaysia, overall volume in the IPO Market fell in 2014 but the market remains stable with sustainable growth prospects. Malaysia expects its Islamic capital market assets to double to \$1 trillion by 2020. In Indonesia, despite domestic political uncertainties, the stock market fared well with a strong increase in market capitalization for the JCI.

Singapore remains a popular disputes/arbitration hub both geographically and as a neutral, efficient and reliable jurisdiction for the international business community within a strong, regional, emerging market. We saw some mid-level instructions within the more established international arbitration practices. Nevertheless, it is the local players and leading international law firms that continue to dominate this market and with the development of the international commercial court which launched at the beginning of the year complete with a mediation centre, Singapore is now equipped with offering all three types of dispute resolution.

Lawyers with both contentious and non-contentious regulatory/advisory experience remained in demand. We have seen a particular increase in demand for lawyers with experience in compliance, regulatory or investigation work and we are seeing international firms developing their practices in fraud and AML within the life sciences and pharmaceutical industries.

The energy markets have remained notably active as countries in the region have continued to invest particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia and whilst there has been a sustained demand for lawyers with experience in this field, it will be interesting to see how a drop in oil prices affects the market moving forwards. As an oil producer, Malaysia has certainly seen a severe economic impact but for countries like Vietnam which is both producer and consumer, there are mixed effects.

The asset/aviation/shipping finance space also remained busy with movement amongst some of the key players here in Singapore. We have also seen a growth in the demand for Technology, IP and TMT lawyers where until recently there has

been a shortage of specialized lawyers available. We have seen a few high profile moves in this space and briefs for associates possessing specialised skill sets will continue. Similarly in the insurance sector, firms who entered the market over the last few years have been gaining traction quickly within the sector, and demand for their expertise has increased market share.

COMPENSATION

UK Firms salaries

PQE	Minimum	Maximum
NQ	125,000	150,000
1	145,000	170,000
2	165,000	190,000
3	185,000	210,000
4	210,000	230,000
5	225,000	245,000
6	240,000	255,000
7	250,000	300,000
8	270,000	320,000

US Firms (US Dollars)

PQE	Salary
1	160,000
2	170,000
3	185,000
4	210,000
5	230,000
6	250,000
7	270,000
8	280,000

Local firms (SG Dollars)

PQE	Minimum	Maximum
NQ	55,000	70,000
1	60,000	80,000
2	70,000	95,000
3	80,000	115,000
4	90,000	120,000
5	100,000	150,000
6	130,000	180,000
7	160,000	210,000



OUTLOOK

Overall, a shortage of talent remains the greatest challenge within the market and with the growth in specialised areas such as compliance, investigations, TMT as well as the sustained demand for strong corporate and banking lawyers, an appetite for looking further afield to jurisdictions like the UK and Australia will return.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Hiring in financial services picked up in Singapore throughout 2014 with much of the demand for new AVP/VP roles and replacement positions. Employers continued to consider internal candidates first even if that meant looking globally before taking a role to the market. The impact of the fair consideration framework which came into force from 1st August 2014 meant that all employers in Singapore are expected to consider Singaporeans fairly for job vacancies with roles paying less than \$12,000.

In this salary review, we review key trends and how they impact lawyers and hiring in the investment banking, asset management, private banking and insurance sectors. We also review the growing compliance and regulatory landscape and access how the market will shape up for lawyers and employers in 2015.

SKILLS IN DEMAND

Again, unprecedented levels of scrutiny from the regulators led to an uptick in hiring in the regulatory space but less so in the litigation defense space. If anything there was a shift in emphasis from 2013-2014, as banks recognized the need to put in place teams and measures that will mitigate against the recourse to disputes and banking litigation. This has meant that lawyers with local, regional and global regulatory experience have increasingly been in demand and with the implementation of the Data Privacy Act here in Singapore and companies becoming increasingly aware of their overseas exposure to emerging markets, anti – bribery and corruption skill sets have also been in demand.

Although many lawyers have traditionally preferred deal flow work, there is an increasing recognition about where the opportunities are, and this has increased interest in regulatory compliance focused roles for lawyers with cross border financial markets expertise. We have noted a number of lawyers moving into the compliance function and an increasing number of leadership positions taken up by counsels.

INDUSTRIES IN REVIEW

Investment Banking

From an investment banking perspective, we saw a decrease

in IPO's in Singapore meaning that Capital Markets lawyers were less in demand. 2014 was very much about the growth in M&A activity across South East Asia with a visible surge in the first half of 2014.

ISDA/Derivatives

Hiring within ISDA negotiation teams stabilised off the back of a busy 2013, although where banks were hiring the preference remained for ISDA negotiators with legal qualifications and some regulatory experience. Given the paucity of talent available in the market, finding legally qualified ISDA Negotiators remained challenging with lateral moves often predicated on an employer agreeing to pay a premium to secure the right candidate.

Private Banking

Singapore has continued to grow as a regional hub for private banks. According to the World Wealth Report 2014, HNWI growth continues to accelerate and whilst overall financial wealth will continue its upward trend of around 6.9 percent annually through to 2016, the Asia-Pacific region is likely to emerge as a clear leader, with 9.8 percent annual growth rate. Candidates with local qualification tend to be essential with product or regulatory experience and we have seen continued demand for lawyers with funds, derivatives or investment banking experience. Those with experience managing and advising on the regulatory landscape were busy; those in smaller banks often wore two hats – legal and compliance.

Asset Management

Opportunities within asset management have also increased with new players entering the market and demand for funds lawyers with strong product and regulatory advisory experience. However, teams tend to be lean and in some cases legal counsels reporting into regional GC's. Whilst this affords greater independence and exposure to a wider range of fund related work, in some instances lawyers looking for further career development considered more commercial roles working closer with the business. Also, some of the larger government backed funds with major operations across Asia with relatively larger legal teams were sought after by candidates.

Insurance

Singapore's insurance industry is made up of international, local and government backed insurers and reinsurers servicing the local and regional markets. Growth in the industry in recent years has led to a significant shortage of talent but demand for new hires and replacements roles remains in what has been a fairly fluid year in terms of movement. Poaching remains commonplace within the industry and clients are increasingly open to considering legal candidates with banking or financial services experience in-house or from private practice. In some cases, those with industry expertise are being relocated from international markets to take up opportunities in the city but with last year being dominated by plans to change the regulatory environment for insurance providers, mostly through new standards, local and regional experience will be increasingly sought after.

COMPENSATION

Investment Banking

Level/ No. of Years Experience	Monthly Base Salary (SGD)		Bonus
	Minimum	Maximum	
0-2 years	8,000	11,000	1-2 months
3-5 years	10,500	18,000	1-3 months
6-8 years	17,000	25,000	2-4 months
9-11 years	20,000	30,000	2-5 months
12+ years	25,000	40,000	3-6 months

ISDA Negotiators

Level/ No. of Years Experience	Monthly salary range (SGD)		Bonus
	Minimum	Maximum	
0-2 years	4,000	8,000	1-3 months
3-5 years	7,000	12,000	2-4 months
6-8 years	10,000	15,000	2-5 months
9-11 years	14,000	20,000	2-6 months
12 years	16,000	25,000	3-6+ months

Private Banking

Level/ No. of Years Experience	Monthly Base Salary (SGD)		Bonus
	Minimum	Maximum	
0-2 years	6,500	10,000	2-4 months
3-5 years	8,000	15,000	3-6 months
6-8 years	12,000	20,000	3-6 months
9-11 years	15,000	23,000	3-7 months
12+ years	20,000	35,000	5+ months

Funds/ Asset Management/ Investment Management

Level/ No. of Years Experience	Monthly Base Salary (SGD)		Bonus
	Minimum	Maximum	
0-2 years	7,000	10,000	1-3 months
3-5 years	9,500	14,000	3-6 months
6-8 years	13,000	20,000	4-6 months
9-11 years	18,000	26,000	4-8 months
12+ years	22,000	35,000	8+ months

Insurance

Level/ No. of Years Experience	Monthly Base Salary (SGD)		Bonus
	Minimum	Maximum	
0-2 years	5,000	7,000	0-2 months
3-5 years	6,500	12,000	0-3 months
6-8 years	9,000	16,000	1-3 months
9-11 years	14,000	25,000	2-4 months
12+ years	15,000	35,000	4+ months



Overall, the industry understands that consolidation and slower growth has translated into lower packages and a general downturn in total compensation over the last five years. Salary expectations have also marginally decreased in recent years reflecting the new investment banking environment and a general understanding of what the market can afford so increments of between 20 – 30% have been replaced by employers offering closer to 10 - 15%. That said, in the more specialized areas such as within ISDA/Derivatives and financial services regulatory, legal counsels operating at the top end of the market continue to attract a premium. With the growth of the private banking and asset management industries across the region, we will continue to see demand for lawyers in this space which will in turn increase competition and possibly remuneration packages. In terms of bonus, announcements have been mainly flat and in line with market expectations with the odd exception. Generally its been a tough year for investment banking with deals hard to come by and only the top performers being rewarded.

FORECAST FOR 2015

Personality and cultural fit continue to play a crucial role in determining who is chosen amongst final candidates and remains a subjective element of the recruitment process. As we have outlined above, employers face new challenges in adapting to the new fair consideration framework in a climate where regulatory scrutiny and change are evolving so fast, meaning that the search for talent across the financial services industries will remain a challenging one.



YEAR IN REVIEW

Singapore remains the largest commerce hub for the South East Asia region hosting numerous US, UK and European multinationals across multiple industries. Given the ease and cost of setting up here, the close proximity to regional markets and the strong candidate appetite to live/work here, some of our clients in North Asia have also been reviewing whether to relocate their headquarters to this city. The introduction of the Fair Consideration Framework slowed the recruitment process for junior positions as companies were pushed to source more local talent, but remained relatively unaffected for senior level hiring.

Private practice lawyers from the leading local firms remain in demand from both the in-house market and the international firms. These lawyers typically come from a handful of well known local firms where pay levels remained within reach of in-house budgets. Local law firms are competing with international law firms that can offer strong law firm training, international transactions, along with excellent salaries. As the international law firms have grown in Singapore, more locally admitted lawyers have been taken on and are now producing strong talent for the in-house markets. Associates continue to cite career path and work life balance when considering a switch in-house, however, those coming from the international law firms typically have to assess the full picture in the context of a prospective salary reduction.

Most General Counsels found hiring in Singapore far easier than the rest of the region with lengthy delays in finding talent in markets such as Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. Planning ahead for a regional search is critical and clients often gave us up to six months advanced notice. Typically the average corporate role tends to have a general commercial 'all round flavour' to them with the usual requisite mix of both private practice and in-house experience. In contrast, we have also seen some specialist positions coming into the market including employment and data privacy roles. Compliance and regulatory remains one of the hottest markets with many lawyers being asked to head the function and develop the strategic framework for the compliance function in an organisation. Despite the salaries and titles on offer for these roles, finding lawyers who are comfortable moving into these roles has remained a challenge and employers continue to seek such professionals either internally or from overseas.

Most teams are made up of a mix of local and foreign admitted lawyers and hiring managers often look for complementary skill sets to balance out capabilities including knowledge of a particular country, language or core legal skills. Those with a pan-Asia remit were particularly focused on having at least one member of the team with Mandarin or Bahasa skills. Like with most managers, personality fit and CV stability were also key determinants of any hiring decision.

In addition to law firm secondments, the contract market for legal recruitment in Singapore remains active with some of our clients taking on a project based lawyer to work on a 6 or 12 month basis. Law firm secondments remain common practice but where law firms themselves were stretched for talent, employers sought out external contractors to fill the need.

Most general corporate commercial lawyers traversed across different industries relatively easily, however, more senior mandates often came with specific industry knowledge. The IT and the Internet industry stand out as some of the larger employers in the market and typically demand lawyers from the industry complete with strong drafting and contract management experience, data privacy knowledge to the ability to negotiate complex customer agreements. The chemical industry also remains vibrant in Singapore and lawyers with strong industry knowledge who can support the business on sales, procurement and distribution agreements are in demand.

The IP market in Singapore is healthy and growing with Singapore receiving the top ranks in Asia for its comprehensive laws in patent, enforcement and trademark protection. The country is striving to further develop itself in the next decade as an IP hub making it an attractive platform for investors and technology companies. Much of the IP growth is occurring in the technology sector with companies looking for qualified patent attorneys who have strong patent and general IP legal skills to support their work in research and development.

IN-HOUSE COMMERCE

SKILLS IN DEMAND

Singapore admitted lawyers with relevant corporate commercial experience gained from private practice and in-house remain in demand. With Singapore being the hub for many MNCs, those with regional or South Asia Pacific experience are looked upon favourably. The shortage of local talent with international experience and commercial skills has meant Singapore continues to provide opportunities for foreign lawyers. However, expat packages are limited and only on offer for senior level hires at the GC or equivalent level.

With the broader portfolio that most Singapore corporate lawyers are expected to cover, we found employers have become flexible on bar qualifications but not at the expense of core skills. Given that Singapore based lawyers often have the unique challenge of providing legal services to their clients across a variety of countries; senior lawyers are expected to travel. With the legal and regulatory risk in many of the countries typically under the remit of Singapore based counsels, expectations about how to handle in-country issues has risen.

RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES

With changing government regulations, hiring managers will continue to place an emphasis on bringing in local talent as they seek to hire the most suitable candidates available in the market. The in-house budget remains the number one challenge when sourcing talent with compensation from the law firms moving at a faster rate than in-house peers creating a gap in the market. Mid level hiring remains the most popular compounding candidate expectations on salary increments. In contrast, senior hires are far less common and more manageable as candidates look for other factors in considering a move.

COMPENSATION

In recent years, many of our clients have moved up compensation given the limited talent pool of strong mid level local candidates and offer increments of 15 to 20% to attract top talent.

Candidates with high in demand skills such as IP or a regulatory background can expect to command an increment of 15 to 25%. In addition to compensation, companies are focusing on other ways to retain or attract top talent in the market by offering career progression opportunities within the organisation that may include a regional portfolio or team leading responsibilities.

PQE/ Experience	Monthly Salary Range (SGD)	Average Annual Bonus
1 – 3 years	5,000 – 8,500	1 – 2 months
4 – 7 years	8,000 – 14,000	1 – 3 months
8 – 10 years	12,000 – 18,000	2 – 4 months
11 – 14 years	17,000 – 28,000	2 – 5+ months
15+ General Counsel	25,000 – 35,000+	3 – 5+ months

FORECAST

The Singapore legal market will continue to grow and develop in line with the city's importance as a regional hub. The market will remain most buoyant for mid-level corporate lawyers and for those with specialist expertise in areas such as employment, data privacy and TMT will increasingly be favoured as legal teams further develop their in-house expertise. Counsels with strong cross jurisdictional knowledge will also be well-regarded and those with deep knowledge of countries such as Indonesia will be particularly marketable. Local qualifications are often preferred but local experience is crucial and most in-house moves with few exceptions have come from the local or regional markets.

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Scott Harrison is Co-founder and joint Managing Director of Aquis Search and heads up the firm's Legal & Compliance desks. He has more than a dozen years of recruitment experience spanning the major Asia Pacific markets. He specializes in middle to senior level assignments across Private Practice and in-house markets, including Legal, Compliance, company secretarial and government affairs roles, and regularly advises clients across the financial markets and traditional industries on recruitment strategies and talent pools.

Scott leads a team of professional recruiters who focus in these markets and recruit at all level of seniority. His indepth Asia-Pacific experience has enabled him to foster a breadth of client relationships and given him access to talent at all levels in the region.

Scott holds a master's degree in Applied Psychology and was trained as an organizational psychologist before moving into the recruitment industry.

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Edward is a Senior Consultant based in Singapore responsible for the recruitment of Legal & Compliance professionals across South East Asia. He recruits across both the Private Practice and In-House markets and holds numerous relationships with Senior Partners, Heads of Legal & Compliance and Human Resources professionals.

Previously, Edward worked as a lawyer with a boutique West London firm advising on commercial disputes before moving into the Financial Services Industry where he serviced Chinese clients investing in the UK.

Edward holds a Bachelors degree in French from the University of Exeter and an LLB from the College of Law, London, UK. He was admitted as a solicitor in 2008.

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Ansir is a Director covering In-House Legal & Compliance where he focuses on roles within the Corporate Governance and regulatory functions. He recruits for a variety of clients across both the Financial Services and Corporate markets throughout Asia. Ansir has in-depth knowledge of the talent available in Hong Kong and Singapore as well as a breath of experience placing professionals into roles across the region, including India.

He began his career in a support role with a law firm, where he gained in-depth experience of working in Private Practice.

Ansir holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Coventry University, is fluent in English, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and has conversational Cantonese.



Miriam Leung

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Miriam is responsible for the development and recruitment of Legal Private Practice for the firm. She covers all areas of practice for lawyers from entry to senior levels for leading law firms across Asia Pacific region.

She has experience working with key decision makers across the region including Partners and Human Resources professionals. In particular, her knowledge of the Greater China market has given her a great deal of success working with leading US firms in the region. She is extremely well-informed about the legal market in Asia and has also recruited on the In-house Legal desk. Prior to recruitment Miriam worked in a marketing role coordinating business related events for educational and non-profit programs and campaigns.

Miriam obtained her degree in Psychology and Sociology from the University of Toronto and holds a law degree from the Manchester Metropolitan University. She is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

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Ciaran is an Associate Director responsible for the recruitment of private practice lawyers across Asia with a focus on the major hubs in Hong Kong and Singapore. His remit ranges from newly qualified lawyers to partner level placements and he has had proven success in recruiting within various practice areas of major law firms.

Prior to joining Aquis Search, Ciaran worked as a qualified lawyer for five years at a top US law firm specialising in real estate transactions before joining a global London search firm. His background has afforded him a true understanding of the legal recruitment market and uniquely positions him to offer commercial, consultative advice to both clients and candidates alike.

Ciaran grew up in Northern Ireland and read law with French at Queen's University in Belfast. He completed his legal practice course at Nottingham Law school and was admitted as a solicitor in 2006.



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Elaine is an Associate Director covering In-house Legal & Compliance and Private Practice roles across Greater China. She has over five years recruitment experience and brings a wealth of relationships and networks to her role with Aquis. She has placed a variety of Counsels, Regulatory and Compliance professionals as well as more traditional Associate roles within major UK and US firms. Prior to her current role Elaine worked with a global legal recruitment firm and she has also previously worked in a recruitment role with a premier international law firm in Shanghai. She has spent the majority of her career working the China legal market from Shanghai and Beijing before relocating to Hong Kong.

Elaine holds an LLB degree from Shanghai University majoring in Intellectual Property Law. She speaks fluent English, Mandarin, Shanghaiese as well as conversational Spanish.

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Eileen is a Senior Consultant covering in-house legal and compliance and legal private practice with a particular focus on Greater China. She has a strong network of relationships across the PRC and actively represents a number of international businesses developing their infrastructure in the legal and compliance functions. Her experience in recruiting Counsels at all levels has given her a strong understanding of current market conditions in China and has resulted in a proven track record in a very complex market.

She completed her Bachelor's degree in Business from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and remains based in Hong Kong. She has also spent time at the Pace University in New York and is a Certified Practitioner of NLP. Eileen is a native Mandarin speaker and is fluent in English and Cantonese.



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Originally based in Singapore and working with a number of in-house corporate clients in various industries on legal and compliance recruitment, Jennifer now spends her time between Shanghai and Singapore to better serve clients who are shifting their regional operations or hiring in the Greater China market and vice versa. As a Senior Consultant in the regional team, she is also able to effectively provide recruitment support for country roles across the APAC region.

In her latest role, Jennifer focused on the Southeast Asia Market where she produced a strong track record of mid-to-senior level placements in various industries. Prior to this, she worked as a Professional Development Specialist with a international law firm in New York where she contributed to the firm in several areas of Human Resources including Learning & Development.

Jennifer is a native New Yorker with Hong Kong heritage and earned her Bachelor of Arts in English Literature at Binghamton University, The State University of New York. She has also completed courses in Chinese language at Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

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Kardia is a Senior Consultant working in the Private Practice team responsible for the recruitment of fee earners at all levels into US and UK law firms across the Asia Pacific region. She is in touch with numerous associates advising on opportunities and providing advice to employers on talent in the market, compensation and hiring trends. She is part of an established private practice team that has moved numerous Associates and Partners in Hong Kong, Singapore and China.

Kardia previously worked in Hong Kong for a leading UK recruitment firm where she gained exposure to recruitment within the Asian markets which has allowed her to build a solid network and develop a strong understanding of the legal community in Asia.

She obtained her Bachelor of Laws from the University of Manchester where she acted as a student legal advisor for the university and interned with Eversheds before moving into recruitment. She has native level English and Cantonese and combines local relationships and a global outlook.



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Tiffany is a Senior Consultant responsible for the recruitment of both private practice and in-house legal & compliance professionals in China and across Asia Pacific. She recruits fee earners to leading UK and US law firms all levels and across all practice areas. She works closely with General Counsels of multinationals advising on the recruitment of traditional legal roles along with more specialised positions including intellectual property and regulatory compliance.

Tiffany began her career as a litigator in a leading firm in Malaysia before moving in-house with a telecommunications operator and then moving into the recruitment industry. She has invaluable first-hand experience and knowledge of the needs and objectives of law firms, in-house legal departments and lawyers at different stages of their career.

Tiffany obtained her Bachelor of Laws degree from Bond University, Australia and has lived in Malaysia, Singapore, England and Australia before relocating to China. She is a native English speaker in addition to being fluent in Mandarin and Malay. She was called to the Malaysian Bar in 2001 and is Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

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Yeca is a Senior Consultant covering Legal & Compliance recruitment across Greater China. Previously based in Shanghai, and more recently Hong Kong, Yeca is currently based in Beijing as part of the regional recruitment team conducting search for talent at mid-to-director levels. She has experience working with global and national conglomerates, financial institutions and also start-up companies. Yeca has lived and worked in both Beijing and Shanghai maintaining long term relationships with clients and candidates alike, paying continuous attention to their development.

Yeca obtained her LLB Degree from Southwest University of Political Science and Law. She is a native Mandarin speaker, fluent in English.



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Joanna is a Senior Consultant based in the Hong Kong office. She recruits Legal & Compliance professionals across the in-house markets in Asia, with a primary focus on the financial services community in Hong Kong, and works with various General Counsels and Heads of Legal departments. She has a keen interest in the law and is rewarded by partnering with Legal & Compliance candidates to help them achieve their career objectives.

Before joining Aquis Search, Joanna worked with a global recruitment firm where her clients spanned from Hong Kong listed companies to global MNC's.

Joanna was educated in both Hong Kong and Canada and completed her final schooling in Vancouver before going on to complete a Bachelor's in Mathematics at the University of British Columbia. More recently she completed a Certificate in Legal Studies from the University of Hong Kong. She is a native English speaker, and is fluent in Cantonese and Mandarin.

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Sophie is a Consultant covering Legal & Compliance across Greater China from the Shanghai office. She is responsible for recruiting Legal, Risk & Compliance professionals across multiple industries, including Financial Services, Commerce and Legal Private Practice.

Prior to her current role Sophie worked for a global recruitment firm where she focused on placing professionals in Compliance, Risk and Accounting & Finance functions, and where she developed a strong network across the China market.

Sophie was born in Sichuan and gained a Bachelor degree majoring in Process Equipment & Control Engineering from East China University of Science and Technology. She is fluent in Mandarin and English.



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Richard is a Consultant based in Shanghai focused on recruitment of Corporate Governance professionals across Greater China. He is adept at building relationships and networks across the Legal, Risk, Compliance, and Finance functions in China. His remit extends across law firms, financial institutions and traditional industries.

As a recruiter he values the importance of relationship building and takes a long term view when advising candidates about the market. He is an outgoing and engaging personality whom is passionate about recruitment. He previously worked for a well known German multinational before moving into recruitment.

Richard holds a Master's degree in Intercultural Communication from Bayreuth University in Germany and a double Master's degree in English Language and Literature from Shanghai International Studies University, and a Bachelor' degree in Education from Hunan Normal University. He speaks native Mandarin and fluent English.

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Morris is a Consultant with the In-House Legal & Compliance team. He specialises in recruiting legally qualified professionals from a variety of practice areas covering the Financial Services and traditional industries throughout Hong Kong and China. He has a solid understanding of the legal space, which allows him to collaborate efficiently with candidates and clients alike whilst maintaining productive partnerships.

Prior to this, he covered the Human Resources & Corporate Services functions across Asia where he placed non-fee earners and legal/business support professionals within Private Practice Law Firms and Multinationals Companies.

Morris was born in Hong Kong and raised in Australia, he holds a Bachelor of Business in Economics & Finance from RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, and he speaks fluent English and Cantonese.

ABOUT AQUIS SEARCH

Aquis Search is a regional leader for Corporate Governance and Control functions recruitment covering roles in Finance, Human Resources & Corporate Services, Legal, Risk and Compliance. We operate from offices in Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore and Mumbai handling search assignments in numerous Asian countries.

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