



## Caroline Siggins

**TITLE:**  
Client Accountant

**COMPANY:**  
Irish Progressive Services  
International Limited

**QUALIFICATION:**  
Qualified as a CPA in 2016

### Why did you choose to become a CPA?

I wanted to complete a professional accountancy qualification and initially wasn't sure which route to choose. Having researched the various options I was certain that studying for the CPA qualification was the right option. I wanted a qualification with international recognition but also wanted to choose a qualification that allowed flexible study options and that my employer was willing to support. The CPA qualification also allowed me to work in any sector.

### What advice would you give to someone considering entering the accounting profession?

Be mindful of the effort that is involved to get your qualification. Depending on your situation, flexible study options can make achieving this a more manageable process. You need to know that the qualification you are choosing is well recognised both at home and abroad. In terms of your career, you need to have an open mind and look into the many career options that are open to you in the accountancy profession. Don't be put off by the old-fashioned stereotypical image of the accountant. Certainly since I qualified as a CPA I have become more aware of all of the exciting and challenging career options available to CPAs. Training and development are very important and being in a well-structured training environment helps a lot on the pathway to

# CPA Profile Caroline Siggins

qualification. I was very fortunate to have excellent mentors in IPSI who ensured that I received exposure to a wide range of competencies and experiences.

### What route did you take to become a CPA?

I studied business studies and accountancy for my Leaving Certificate, but was uncertain of my desired career path at that time. I chose to do a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mathematics and Spanish in NUI, Galway. During this time, I decided that I would love a career in accountancy and I began exploring this option. In September 2013 I began my professional studies in Griffith College Dublin.

### Can you provide a brief history of your career?

I joined Irish Progressive Services International (IPSI), a third-party life assurance administrator and part of the Irish Life Group in September 2013. I was originally employed as a trainee accountant, managing claims payments, premium collections and treasury functions for a portfolio of clients.

Over the course of my training contract, I received more exposure to the financial reporting function in IPSI and, on achieving my CPA qualification in 2016, I transferred to the financial reporting team. In this team I'm responsible for the preparation of financial accounts, management accounts and regulatory returns for clients. I also play a supporting role in product development and IPSI is a great environment for team involvement in major projects such as the implementation of Solvency II reporting. The diverse client list, in multiple territories, offers exposure to lots of varied challenges almost always against tight deadlines.

### Biggest career achievement

Well I am relatively early in my career so it's really great to be offered exposure to a new regulatory reporting framework in the Insurance Industry – Solvency II.

Being involved in the development of a solution for IPSI was both challenging and rewarding. Seeing the project through from research to implementation was a great experience and we now have a leading edge solution for IPSI and our clients.

### How has CPA helped you in your career?

The service and support from the Education and Training team in CPA Ireland was the envy of some of my colleagues pursuing other qualifications. CPA provided me with an excellent foundation in accounting and finance skills. The qualification is well recognised by employers and I have the option of working internationally. It has been financially rewarding as employers are willing to reward people with the qualification. It has given me opportunities for progression in my career that otherwise would not have been open to me. I could not have made a better choice than to pursue the CPA qualification.

### What inspires you most in business?

The ability to make an impact in the business that I am working in and clearly being able to see the positive outcome from it. Whether it is achieving tight deadlines under challenging circumstances or re-designing and implementing new processes, I receive great learning support and recognition from my employer, IPSI. It is great to be part of an organisation with such a continuous learning ethos.

### What in your view are the most pressing issues for accountants?

- Using data analytics to get more useful information in shorter timeframes from the never-ending streams of data.
- Maximising efficiencies from technology.
- Continuous learning and keeping up to date with industry developments/ accounting standards and regulatory requirements.