



 **BARCLAYS**

The complete guide  
to becoming a  
mortgage advisor

# Mortgage advisors help people with one of the biggest purchases of their lives, helping them to secure a mortgage to buy or re-mortgage property.

If you're considering a career as a mortgage advisor then we've put together a complete guide to getting the right qualifications, the skills that you'll be using on the job and what it's like to work as a mortgage advisor at Barclays.

We've split our guide into five different sections that cover:

- The qualifications you need
- How to pick a training provider
- Revision tips from people who've passed their CeMAP exams
- Essential skills every mortgage advisor needs
- What's it's like to be a mortgage advisor

It will take you through the entire process, from getting the right qualifications to understanding what it's like to work as a mortgage advisor. To put together this guide we spoke to people who are working as mortgage advisors and have taken the CeMAP exam, so the advice comes from those who are familiar with the job.

# The qualifications you need

The first step you need to take to be a mortgage advisor is to get the right qualifications. There's one qualification that you just can't do without: CeMAP or the Certificate in Mortgage Advice and Practice.

Accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and recognised by the Regulator as an appropriate qualification, CeMAP is the industry benchmark and you can't advise if you haven't passed it.

Find out about the CeMAP exam including what you'll be studying and how long it will take to study for the exams.

You get a qualification that lasts for the rest of your career and the chance to help people with one of the most important purchases of their lives.

## What do you study?

CeMAP is broken down into three separate exams:

### CeMAP 1 – UK Financial Regulation

This course will give you an overview of what the financial services market looks like in the United Kingdom. There are two units: unit one looks at tax, investments, savings and pensions as well as mortgages; unit two covers regulation on everything from money laundering to data protection.

Because the subject is so broad many students find this exam the hardest. There are 50 multiple-choice questions on each paper and you need a pass rate of 70%.

### CeMAP 2 – Mortgages & CeMAP 3 – Assessment of Mortgage Advice Knowledge

These two exams cover the same subjects, so they are usually studied and assessed at the same time. The first is divided into four subjects: mortgage law, applications, repayments and issues post-completion. Whilst they are both multiple-choice, CeMAP 3 involves assessing case studies.

People who have taken the exams say they are similar in difficulty to A level.

Many people worry about the amount of maths they'll need to do to take the CeMAP qualification. In reality, it's mostly just adding and subtracting with some percentages and division – nothing too difficult for those who have Maths GCSE.

## How long does it take to study for the exams?

Some people take six months, whilst others take two years. It really depends on what kind of progress you make. The official exam board for the qualification estimate around 200 hours to study and revise all the necessary sections.

Our colleagues at Barclays who have taken the course mention how dedicated you need to be to do it alongside a full-time job or other studies, so be prepared to give up nights out and to spend some of your weekend at your desk.

## Where do I take the exams?

There are over 150 different test centres around the UK, and you can take your test at any time that suits you. The tests are done on a computer, and take place at the same centres that are used for driving tests.

Although there is a flexibility to take the exams whenever you want, some centres will block off a week to hold CeMAP exams, so be sure to plan ahead. Booking last-minute can be difficult.

The exams take place whether you decide to study independently or sign up with a training provider. Find out more about studying for the exam in the next section.

# How to study for the CeMAP exams

Now that you've got an idea of what how the CeMAP exam is made up, you need to decide how you are going to study for it. There are two main options. Either you can use the online resources recommended by the exam board and study independently or you can use a training provider.

## Using online resources recommended by the exam board

As part of the course, the Institute of Financial Services will provide you with various study resources, including textbooks. For an extra cost, you will also be able to access exam past papers and an online forum. Some people rely solely on these materials for their study. On the plus side, it's the best-value way of studying for the exam. On the negative side, it can be a very difficult way to study and revise, particularly if you have little previous experience in the banking industry.

## Choosing a training provider

Since the exam became an essential qualification for mortgage advisors, there have been plenty of training centres opening around the UK. When you're investigating which one suits you best be sure to ask about the qualifications of the trainers and the material used on the course. Costs vary from provider to provider and some include exam costs as part of the course.

When thinking about costs, it's worth remembering that

studying without a provider is not free. The official exams cost £164 each, including study materials, and you'll need to pay a further £200 to access the online forums plus £22 for each past paper you view. So all in all, it could come to around £1,000.

## Studying with a training provider

One of the best things about using a training provider is that they offer packages to suit a variety of needs. For example, you will have the option of studying from home or attend classes.

Studying from home gives you plenty of flexibility. You can study in your own time, maybe around another job, and you can take the exams when it suits you. Another bonus is that potential employers will be impressed with your ability to work independently and show initiative.

For those who prefer to have more guidance, then attending a class is ideal. Some courses offer fast-track learning, where you can complete the course and exam in around two weeks. The advantage is that you get classroom support and you can ask questions. These classroom courses are available during the week and part-time at weekends, so you can really find a course to suit you.

If you can't afford this, then you can get one-on-one support via telephone calls to make long distance studying easier.

If you are making a career change or new to the world of banking the support of a training provider can be beneficial.

If you are completely new to the banking industry then it's worth considering using a training provider. Do some in-depth research and check online for reviews.

Whatever method you choose, you will still have to block off some free time to revise for the exams. The next section of this guide brings together some of the best revision tips from those who have studied the exams and now work at mortgage advisors.

# Great revision tips from those who've passed CeMAP

Revision is never easy but it's necessary to pass the exams and become a mortgage advisor. You'll need to dedicate time to learning and revising the information that you'll be tested on in the three exams.

The best advice often comes from those who've had the experience of revising and sitting the same exams you want to take, so we spoke to some of the people who work at Barclays as mortgage advisors. They gave us their best tips for learning, revising and passing the CeMAP exams.

## Break it into different sections

One look at the hefty tomes for each of the three CeMAP exams will give you an idea of the amount you have to study. Some students have compared each section to an A level exam, and you'll probably need to study around 200 hours to get your head around it.

Some of the text is quite dense and complex, so you'll need to have a few minutes off with each section. Read for 30 to 45 minutes and then take a short break, make yourself a cup of tea or have a walk around. It might also be worth snatching short periods of study at lunchtimes and during the commute if you can.

## Discuss your learning

If you can, try and find a study buddy who is also working towards the CeMAP exams or perhaps someone who has taken the exam recently. If there are any points that you're not sure on, then you can go over them with your friend.

If you don't know anyone familiar with CeMAP then head online. The IFS, which organises and regulates CeMAP, provides an online forum where you can ask mortgage experts questions. Paying for access to these networks also means getting extra notes and study aids.

## Make clear notes

As you go through the textbooks and learn your stuff, make sure that you take notes on what you are studying. By doing this you are adding another layer of learning and it will make it easier to memorise than simply reading. Notes are also useful when you come to revision – you can focus on a few pages every day without having to carry the large books around.

## Make time for plenty of practice papers

Exams are multiple choice, with the third CeMAP exams being slightly different because you assess cases

rather than simply answering direct questions. To make sure that you are prepared for the exam, you could buy some past papers and get familiar with the layout before doing a few examples under exam conditions. The papers are available on the IFS website.

## Plan ahead

It is recommended that you do at least 200 hours of study before taking the exam, so you will need to make a revision timetable to ensure that you manage to get everything done and have time for a break every so often as well. Leaving it all to the last minute will be stressful and it costs around £122 to re-take the exam.

## Eat well

Brain food is very important when you are studying, so try and keep as healthy as you can. This means cutting down on sugar and caffeine. Nuts and berries are good boosts for when you are reading as they are packed with vitamins. Slow-release foods such as oats and brown bread or rice will keep your energy levels balanced.

## Don't just study the easy stuff

It's an easy trap to fall into, but sometimes students focus on the topics that they already understand, because it helps them to feel more confident. Spend time trying to get your head around the CeMAP sections that you aren't so comfortable with. It might be difficult at the time, but you'll be very glad of it when it comes to sitting the exams.

Everybody revises differently so it's important to find a rhythm that suits you. Putting the work in is worth it in the long run because without this exam you can't apply for any mortgage advisor jobs. Once you've passed the exam, you can start exploring the different career options. To give you an idea of what it's like to work as a mortgage advisor we spoke to Cathy who works at a Barclays branch in London.

# What it's like to be a mortgage advisor at Barclays

If you are thinking of taking your CeMAP exams and training to become a mortgage advisor then it's important to get an idea of what the job will be like on a day to day basis. We spoke to Cathy about her experience of working in a Barclays branch in London.

"I was attracted to the job of Mortgage Advisor at Barclays because I wanted to help people buy their home and get on the property ladder. I remember how excited I was when I purchased my first house and I want to help our customers do that too.

Taking the job was a promotion and I was keen to be more involved and more focused on a specific area of the business. It's such a nice feeling helping people get their dream home, or saving them money. They often send feedback or a small note sharing how happy they are.

Most of the interviews I do are face to face, but once the application has been processed my customers will be kept updated by phone, email and even text

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messages. I will always be the main point of contact, which is why I always tell my customers to ring me directly if there are any issues. I make sure that I am there to help them from beginning to end.

You have to be enthusiastic when you're working as a mortgage advisor. You have to work hard too, it's quite involved. Sometimes you'll need to stay behind and make sure you deal with anything unforeseen. You need a certain degree of flexibility.

I am the only person in my branch who does my job, so I work closely with the other regional mortgage advisors. There's no-one here to ask questions, and it's important to share any issues in case someone else has experienced the same. We get together in person once a month, and we support each other in between times over the phone.

People on my team of mortgage advisors come from different roles. Some move from being a personal banker here at Barclays, whilst others transfer from

other banks. You don't necessarily need a financial background, but some knowledge and interest in banking would be beneficial. It's also important to be a people person and accurate with your work.

To make sure that we are doing our jobs correctly our paperwork is sometimes assessed. When Barclays introduce new products and services we'll know about them at team meetings. After that we either get trained online, or have a group workshop.

In the morning we have a meeting with everyone who is customer-facing. We discuss with our colleagues who has meetings with us in-branch that day, to see if we can help them and what products they are looking to find out about.

I love dealing with our customers. I usually have around three meetings a day. Sometimes they will book appointments directly and sometimes head office books them for us. I make sure I ring customers before they come in so they bring

the correct paperwork. A meeting can take up to two and a half hours to run checks, complete forms and confirm what kind of mortgage I can offer them. As all our branches services are becoming digital I also use a tablet computer to demonstrate to customers how they can track their mortgages and speak to us online.

I work in London and one of the biggest challenges is the house prices. But I still help customers every week. I had a customer last week who had been rejected by his everyday bank and came in to see me. I managed to find a product that worked for him and his family. They're over the moon, and they've told their friends about how great the experience was and now I'm helping them as well!"

Those who have chosen to pursue a career as mortgage advisors have plenty of great things to say about what they do, but to help those considering applying for a job as a mortgage advisor, we asked them what are the skills you need to do the job well.

# Five skills that every mortgage advisor must have

Getting a CeMAP qualification is an important step to becoming a mortgage advisor, but there are other skills that those doing the job can't do without. So, what are the five most important skills? And why do they matter so much when you are advising people on mortgages?

## Enthusiasm

Mortgage advisors are there to make sure that customers get reliable, pertinent advice that will make their life easier. This passion for helping our customers means having an interest in the products and services available from Barclays and guiding them through the initial application process.

The reward for your interest in helping people buy their home is that great feeling of knowing you've made a difference. Our customers regularly provide positive feedback on our colleagues who work as Mortgage Advisors, and they even recommend us to their friends.

## Flexibility

When dealing with such an important purchase, it's important to understand what will work for a customer and their family. Mortgage Advisors at Barclays are skilled at adapting to each individual situation, as no two customers are the same.

At Barclays we're always trying to develop products, such as our award-winning Family Springboard package, that match the needs of our customers. Your flexibility will help you to take on board the changes we make to ensure Barclays remains the most innovative and attractive high street bank for our customers.

## Communication

Those who enjoy working with people will thrive on the interaction being a Mortgage Advisor offers. From reviewing new product offerings and advising customers on market trends to informing customers that their Mortgage application has been successful the most important part of your job will always be to listen to what our customers need.

As well as listening, you'll be making sure our customers understand the products on offer and explaining the process to them. Your excellent people skills means that customers feel comfortable getting in touch when they have any issues. This is a vital character trait for Mortgage Advisors, as you will be expected to support your customers throughout the length of their loan.

## Attention to detail

When you are working as a mortgage advisor the little things really matter, from ensuring accuracy of calculations to working out how much you can be lent based on income, length of mortgage and deposit to making sure your customers know that we are supporting them in securing their dream purchase.

Having some numerical understanding is important, but taking the time to check your work is even more so. Those who've taken their CeMAP qualifications will have had lots of practice in assessing documents, and CeMAP 3 really helps to develop those precise analytical skills.

## Influencing

Helping the customer to make a decision that really suits their needs requires influencing skills. As an expert in every part of the mortgage process you will be best placed to make sure that the customer walks away with the product and protection that is right for them. Sometimes, this might not be exactly what they had in mind, so making sure they are happy when they leave the branch is crucial.

Those who have been working as mortgage advisors will be very familiar with these all-important skills. Alongside a CeMAP qualification, these skills can help you to take the first steps to becoming a mortgage advisor.

### We hope our guide was helpful

Being a mortgage advisor is a rewarding career and for those who love helping people there's no better feeling than giving them the advice and support to buy their dream property.

We hope that this guide has been useful and helped you to understand what it's like to become a mortgage advisor. Good luck with your future career.

If you are looking for a mortgage advisor job that offers excellent training and benefits where you can develop your career whilst making a difference to customers' lives then head to [jobs.barclays.co.uk/mortgage-advisors/](https://jobs.barclays.co.uk/mortgage-advisors/) and check out the latest vacancies.