

Step by step guide to becoming a financial adviser

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Financial intermediaries, also known as financial advisers, act on behalf of individuals or corporate clients to protect their financial security, investments and assets against potential harm or loss. The main role of a financial adviser is to investigate the needs of their client and provide the most appropriate insurance cover to match their client's specific needs and budget.

Those who have good interpersonal skills are very well suited for a career as a financial intermediary; the most successful are those who can develop life-long relationships with their clients. Other important skills crucial in the

role as a financial intermediary are good communication skills, self discipline, ability to work independently, an aptitude for research and some ability in mathematics.

In terms of educational requirements, an interest in subjects such as Mathematics, Accounting, Business Studies and Economics at high school would be advantageous.

There are various types of financial advisers – from those who advise on short term insurance such as home and motor policies, to health-care consultants, to qualified financial planners who provide advice on retirement planning, investments and help clients to construct their portfolios.

While one can become a financial adviser without a degree; a recognised tertiary education in commerce, finance, accounting or economics would be necessary to enter into the financial planning space.

After completing a relevant tertiary qualification, a post graduate degree to become Certified Financial Planner (CFP) is studied. A CFP is the premier financial planning qualification in the world and is recognised in 19 different countries.

Financial intermediaries are also required to pass a number of other legislation, including the Financial Services Board (FSB) Regulatory Exams following which an operating licence will also be issued by the FSB. Thereafter, the financial intermediary has to ensure they are compliant with the Financial Advisory and Intermediary (FAIS) Act.

There are various employment opportunities available for financial intermediaries – either at a specialised brokerage firm, corporate brokerages, such as those within banks and other financial organisations, or they can choose to start their own business.

Not only are the employment options vast, but this career can take you anywhere. A financial intermediary is not bound to operate in a certain country – everyone needs insurance, retirement advice and healthcare.

Working in the insurance industry is not only personally rewarding as you build meaningful relationships and add value to the lives of people, but it can also be very financially rewarding.

The earning potential as a financial intermediary is almost limitless because earnings are largely commission-based and can therefore be determined by the individual financial intermediary. Hard work and determination can make you a very successful financial adviser.

For further information on what is needed to become a financial intermediary contact the Financial Intermediaries Association on 012 665 0085.