

course



MODULE ONE



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MODULE ONE:
INTRODUCTION
TO CELEBRANCY

01

01 YOUR ROLE AS A CELEBRANT

In one sentence, the role of a celebrant is to write and officiate personalised ceremonies in the location of the couples choosing.

It is a role that allows a person to create the ideal ceremony for a couple and then deliver it on one of the biggest and most significant days in their life together.

After the couple find you, or you find them through whatever means, such as marketing, an advert, referral or recommendation or the many other ways, you will begin to build a relationship with them. If they book you, it may be because they will like your competitive or relevant pricing strategy, your availability, presence, style or perhaps your personality will match with what they're looking for. Maybe a combination of many factors.

The celebrant is one of the most important people at the wedding ceremony and takes centre stage right alongside the happy couple.

You are at the front of the congregation, leading, directing, performing a professional service to make their day the most memorable and special occasion.

Your role

01

The process begins by meeting with the couple either in person, on the phone or by video/WhatsApp/Skype calling. This gives you the opportunity to get a feel for the couples wants and ideas for the big day. You quite often immediately get a good understanding of what kind of couple they are, professional, funny, serious, quirky, or all of the above.

It's the most exciting time in the whole process as you start to build rapport.

And this is key to becoming a celebrant, building rapport. They will want to like you, as you become a significant person in their lives over however long it is until their big day. Its not uncommon to get to know a couple over the course of a year or two with multiple interactions and engagements with them.

Typically, the next step is to discover more about the couple in a more formalised way through the use of a questionnaire or of course more meetings. The purpose of the questionnaire and all the meetings is to build a deep understanding of what they want from their wedding ceremony.

You want to fully get to know them and their journey to marriage, so you can properly, passionately and efficiently reflect their wishes in an amazing, personalised ceremony.

Upon receipt of the completed questionnaire and after the necessary number of times to meet them, talk with them, exchange ideas etc, you will be ready to write a bespoke ceremony for the couple.

You will usually always include their journey to the big day, what they have experienced together, their aspirations, why they got together, anything significant they want to talk about and much more, and then officiate it in a location they love.

As a celebrant, you'll be immersed in the love stories of others and sit creatively crafting a ceremony that truly reflects them as a couple. No two ceremony scripts will be the same.

your role

01

You may get involved in some of the ceremony prep and a rehearsal should you/the couple wish, which would all form part of the ongoing discussions.

During the day of the wedding, a celebrant's role is to ensure the ceremony itself goes smoothly.

This includes checking on the music, the photographer, the florist, the venue planner or point of contact, the audience chair set up and any equipment you may need such as a microphone or props for symbolic rituals. The role of a celebrant is very much one centred around organisation and presentation.

Many celebrants also become a major player in the wedding ceremony itself, you get to know them so well, they can also become friends!

Ultimately being a celebrant means ensuring the ceremony is stress-free for the couple and it is personalised to reflect the couple's unique relationship.



Your role

REFLECTION

Answer the below and spend some time reflecting on the role of a celebrant and how you will fit into this role.

01

IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE THINGS A CELEBRANT SHOULD DO?

02

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR COUPLES TO HAVE A PERSONALISED CEREMONY?

REFLECTION

Answer the below and spend some time reflecting on the role of a celebrant and how you will fit into this role.

03

WHY DO YOU THINK ARE THE MAIN REASONS COUPLES CHOOSE A CELEBRANT?

04

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO CONSIDER WHEN WORKING WITH A COUPLE?

02

WHY CELEBRANCY?

To start this course in the most positive way, it is important to focus and get a clear understanding of why you've decided to take this new direction.

You need the answers to this exercise with you when working on your business to keep you motivated, on track and focused on the prize – becoming a celebrant!

Answer the following:



why celebrancy

WHY CELEBRANCY?

Answer the below and spend some time reflecting on the role of a celebrant and how you will fit into this role.

01

WRITE FIVE REASONS WHY YOU HAVE DECIDED TO TRAIN AS A CELEBRANT

02

WHAT DOES A CELEBRANT MEAN TO YOU? INCLUDE PERSONAL, FINANCIAL AND AMBITIONS.

WHY CELEBRANCY?

Answer the below and spend some time reflecting on the role of a celebrant and how you will fit into this role.

03

HOW WILL YOUR LIFE CHANGE WHEN YOU START YOUR CELEBRANT BUSINESS?

04

WHAT IS YOUR ONE MAIN GOAL THAT YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE?

03 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CELEBRANT PROFESSIONS

What type of celebrants are there in the UK?

In the UK, there are five types of celebrant; Humanists, Interfaith Ministers, Registrars, Clergy and Independent Celebrants. All types perform ceremonies for couples.

HUMANISTS

Humanists believe that human experience and rational thinking provide the only source of both knowledge and a moral code to live by. They reject the idea of knowledge 'revealed' to human beings by gods, or in special books so their outlook on the content of a ceremony is different to that of an independent celebrant.

The Humanist organisation describes Humanist Celebrant ceremonies as a non-religious service that are tailored to the couple. Some Humanist Celebrants do include religious passages if read by a member of the congregation.

In the UK, humanist marriages enjoy legal recognition in Scotland, Northern Ireland, but not yet in England and Wales.

celebrant types

Humanist weddings have been legally recognised in Northern Ireland since 2018 and in Jersey in the Channel Islands since 2019.

INTERFAITH MINISTERS

Interfaith ministers offer a mixture between religious and faith-based ceremonies and those of no faith also. Interfaith ministers are ordained, and most are not affiliated to any church or organisation. They do create personalised ceremonies for couples.

REGISTRARS

Registrars are employed by the council and are not independent or self-employed. They offer ceremonies within designated rooms at the council buildings and come out to venues that have wedding licenses (for specific rooms or parts of a venue).

Ceremonies do not usually exceed fifteen minutes.

The wording of the ceremony is not personalised and cannot deviate from a script that is the same for each couple.

Registrar ceremonies are forbidden to include any mention of God, or anything that is overtly spiritual.

CLERGY

If you are a member of a church, you may be more inclined to get married in that setting by a church minister. The content of the ceremony will be set out formally and couples are allowed to choose music, hymns and readings. However there is little flexibility in regard to the service itself and of course the location is limited.

INDEPENDENT CELEBRANTS

Independent celebrants cover a whole range of beliefs and backgrounds.

celebrant types

From pagan to celebrity, there is a mix of celebrants available, with different styles, pricing, approaches, personalities, brand types, looks and every other aspect. There should be no reason why a couple cannot find the 'right' celebrant for them. And that celebrant could be you.

Independent celebrants are not affiliated to, not constrained by any particular requirements, to any organisation. They are free to perform ceremonies in any style or location and have no limitation on content or timing.

WHY DO COUPLES CHOOSE A CELEBRANT OVER A REGISTRAR?

Times are changing. It could be argued that a less secular society is inclined to seek alternative options, rather than what was 'traditionally' offered in the past with simply a church (or registry office) ceremony.

More and more couples want something that is modern and truly reflects them. Something personalised. A ceremony that is memorable rather than a script that has been performed over and over to the same couples.

A celebrant gives couples the chance to say their (own) vows in their own garden, a woodland or any outdoor space (even castles!). The options are limitless.

There are also limitations to a ceremony with a registrar such as the choice of wording and the requirement to be in a permanent licensed structure with little or no flexibility.

One of the other huge benefits of having an independent celebrant is that the couple will actually build a relationship with and get to know the person who will actually deliver their special ceremony.

Having the ceremony in a location without a wedding license (from the local authority) often also cuts the overall cost of a wedding dramatically too.

celebrant types

03

Many licensed venues have high rates to (officially) hold a (registered) wedding. This cost, of course, is passed on to the couple(s) getting married in their venue.

Whereas with a celebrant, the couples are free to choose locations that aren't necessarily traditional or typically wedding venues at all. The couple has complete location freedom.

Timings and dates are an important consideration as well. Registrar services often cost 1/3 more at the weekend and are strict with timings as there are many services in one day. Generally, celebrants conduct just one or two ceremonies in a day, providing much more flexibility to the couple.

Celebrants also meet their couples before the ceremony, in contrast to registrars who just turn up on the day with no knowledge of the couple. Having a celebrant is special.



celebrant types

DIFFERENCES IN CELEBRANT PROFESSIONS

01

WHAT ARE THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A CELEBRANT AND HUMANIST?

02

WHY WOULD A COUPLE CHOOSE A CELEBRANT OVER A REGISTRAR?



04 THE LEGALITIES OF CELEBRANCY

Currently in England and Wales, celebrants are unable to bind couples in a legal marriage. They are also advised not to 'pronounce' a couple 'husband and wife' as this contravenes the legal act of marriage – you cannot replicate a wedding in its legally perceived way.

In Scotland, Interfaith Ministers, Humanists and members of a religious group can legally marry couples. Celebrants that are not affiliated with this type of organisation cannot legally marry a couple but can still offer wedding 'celebrations' or 'blessings'.

In Northern Ireland, you are also allowed to legally marry couples if you are a Humanist.

The Wedding Celebrant Commission made up of the heads of training organisations in the UK are lobbying to extend the rights of celebrants to legally bind couples. There is ongoing work here and the key organisations in this exciting industry you are joining, will always work together to seek positive change for everyone.

For celebrants that cannot perform legal ceremonies, there are many things to consider.

Legalities

04

DOES A VENUE NEED A LICENSE TO HIRE A CELEBRANT?

In the UK, many venues apply for, pay for and so have a wedding license that gives them the right to hold legal marriages by registrars. This license is specifically awarded to a room or multiple rooms/parts of a venue. The cost of a venue licence is not cheap at all.

However, this does not mean that same venue cannot have celebrant led ceremonies and that they are restricted to registrars. Far from it. In these instances, there may be opportunities to present a prospective venue with options and alternatives for outdoor or unlicensed parts of their building to hold ceremonies.

Many couples still choose a celebrant even in a licensed venue due to the personalised nature of the role combined with the fact that they may simply like the venue and what it has to offer. Its very common for an independent celebrant to conduct a ceremony in a licensed venue.

As the location options are limitless for a celebrant, the location of a ceremony could be anything from minimally decorated, small room in a licensed venue, to a tree house in the middle of an enchanted forest and all in-between. It makes for a very exciting business as there is lots of variety.

CAN AN INDEPENDENT CELEBRANT REGISTER A MARRIAGE?

For those celebrants who do not have the legal right to marry, a couple will need to attend the registry office before or after the ceremony. This is a very simple process and many couples go alone with two witnesses or with a small party.

Legalities

04

Ring exchange and vows are not legal requirements, so these can be left for the wedding ceremony with the celebrant. Therefore, the couple can sleep easy knowing that the significant parts of their 'wedding' ceremony are conducted by a professional celebrant, in their chosen setting, amongst their loved ones.

HOW DO COUPLES REGISTER A MARRIAGE IF THE CEREMONY IS CONDUCTED IN EUROPE?

The same requirements apply if the ceremony or minister does not have the legal right to marry in the country they wish to have their wedding in.

Sometimes it is easier for UK couples to perform the legalities before they leave the country.

WHERE CAN CELEBRANTS OFFICIATE CEREMONIES?

You are not restricted by location, an independent celebrant can officiate a ceremony anywhere, even in licensed venues.

CAN I PRONOUNCE A COUPLE HUSBAND AND WIFE?

A new law was recently set to stop any person from 'replicating a legal marriage'. This means you should avoid 'I now pronounce you husband and wife' or anything that makes you sound like you are legalising their marriage.

DO I NEED INSURANCE?

It is recommended that you have professional indemnity insurance as well as public liability insurance for your business. This will cover you should anything happen to you or your couple during the ceremony and celebrant process.

Legalities



04

CEREMONY STYLES

Although independent wedding celebrants can officiate personalised ceremonies in any location, they cannot legalise the marriage itself.

This isn't necessarily a bad thing! This means couples get ceremonies that truly reflect them as a couple and their journey to their wedding day.

Ceremonies with celebrants can be as unique as the couple want them to be. From Star Wars themed, fancy dress and festivals to traditional high-end hotels and elopements. There is such a fantastic mix of couples and ceremony requirements. This is where the role gets exciting!

Many celebrants also specialise in including symbolism in their ceremonies such as pagan traditions, hand-fastings and broom-jumping (more detail in module 3).

Many wedding celebrants also perform Naming Ceremonies and Renewal of Vows Ceremonies for couples wanting to reaffirm their relationship or celebrate the birth of their child.

Legalities

CEREMONY STYLES

01

WHAT TYPE OF CEREMONIES DO YOU WANT TO OFFICIATE?

02

WHY HAVE YOU DECIDED THAT THIS IS THE DIRECTION FOR YOU?

CEREMONY STYLES

03

WHAT EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE TO GIVE YOU CREDIBILITY?

04

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND EXPERIENCE THAT MAKES YOU UNIQUE?
