

Are you..... thinking about becoming a celebrant..... or an established celebrant thinking about joining SICA?

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a Celebrant?

A: A celebrant is a person who leads the major ceremonies in our lives, for example, naming ceremonies, weddings, funerals, memorials. Some celebrants are qualified to conduct all these ceremonies, others prefer to specialize in one area, such as funerals.

Some celebrants align with a particular faith or spiritual tradition, others such as Humanists conduct only non-religious ceremonies. In contrast, SICA celebrants focus on the wishes, values and beliefs of the people seeking the ceremony. This allows them to include religious or spiritual elements, sometimes from diverse traditions and cultures – or to lead entirely non-religious services.

Q: Can I make a living as a Celebrant?

A: Finance is an important consideration. As a general guide, celebrants in Scotland charge from around £200 for a funeral service, and from around £400 to £500 for a wedding ceremony (this can also depend on whether or not they are registered to carry out the legal paperwork of a marriage).

But it takes time, several years in most cases, to become established as a celebrant. In most areas of Scotland there are now many celebrants and Funeral Directors are often reluctant to give work to newly qualified people with little experience.... which makes getting experience difficult! It is possible to find work as a funeral celebrant without going through Funeral Directors but this is not straightforward.

Wedding celebrants are less closely tied to a local area, and most couples find their celebrant through directory listings (including SICA!). This offers greater opportunities for work but requires substantial investment in marketing.

You will need to conduct research into the number of existing celebrants in your area in order to establish if there is a 'gap in the market' locally. You should also be clear what strengths and specific skills and qualities you will bring and which will distinguish you from others. You should also consider how many services you feel you could do in a week and whether that would be enough to generate sufficient income. It's vital to do this preparation *before* you invest time and money in an expensive training course.

Q: How do I become a Celebrant?

A: There are many different routes to becoming a celebrant and different training courses that may or may not fit your needs, your personality, your style of learning etc.

You will need to do research to find the route that best suits you and your personal circumstances. A SICA Committee member will be happy to share their individual journey with you if you would find that helpful. One of our members also offers a short and inexpensive course on "Considering Celebrancy" that may help you decide if this is the career for you and if so, how to go about evaluating training courses (see appendix).

Q: I am interested in Death Literacy and End of Life Issues, and I am currently unsure of alternative ways to learn more and contribute to developments in this area.

A: Good Life Good Death Good Grief (<https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/>) have a range of very helpful resources and updates on what is happening in Scotland. They are very supportive of SICA and aware of the work that we do.

Q: Do I need to be qualified to be a Funeral Celebrant?

A: There is currently no legal requirement in Scotland for funeral celebrants to hold a qualification, however SICA strongly advises new celebrants to undertake appropriate training. The job is much more complicated than simply writing and delivering a eulogy, and without training it would be easy to make errors that could end your career before it began.

Q: Does SICA recommend any particular courses?

A: SICA does not promote or endorse one course over another, but we support our members who offer different types of training, by noting their courses in the appendix of this FAQ document. If you are interested, you will find their contact details on their SICA listing on the website.

Q: Do I need insurance to practise as a celebrant?

A: Again, there is no legal requirement to take out Public Liability or other insurance but as you will be working in public spaces and visiting families in their homes, you are strongly advised to have adequate insurance. Membership of SICA comes with insurance cover as well as many other benefits.

Q: Can I officiate at a full legal wedding?

A: A wedding usually comprises two elements – a legal contract of marriage, and a wedding ceremony that celebrates this special rite of passage. Some couples prefer to separate these two parts and their wedding celebration can be conducted by any celebrant (though, as always, it is important to be trained). In these cases, the legalities must be conducted by a Registrar.

However, celebrants who are affiliated to a belief/faith organization that is approved by the Registrar General of Scotland (but which need not be religious) are entitled to conduct both parts of the process.

You may find this link to the National Records of Scotland useful: it includes an explanation of the requirement for celebrants to demonstrate that they are not carrying out wedding ceremonies 'for profit or gain':

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/registration/nrs-marriage-authorisation-policy.pdf>

Here is the link for the recording of the SICA Information session on Legal Weddings, recorded on 10th January 2024

<https://vimeo.com/902292504>

It's important to note that SICA is not currently one of the Registrar General approved organizations so membership does not automatically entitle you to legally marry people, but we do welcome celebrants who are also members of such groups provided this does not conflict with the codes of conduct of either organization (see also below).

Of course these legal issues are not relevant for ceremonies such as renewals of vows.



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Q: How do I become a member of SICA?

A: You will find the relevant document attached to the response to your enquiry email or on the website. Initially, you can apply to become a Provisional Member (£62.50) This confers certain of the Full Membership benefits such as insurance cover. The aim is to become a Full Member within a year (£125) following a Peer Review of one of your ceremonies by a committee member (this means that you need to be conducting ceremonies when you apply or with the expectation that you will be). You will find everything that you need, including the details of the benefits of being a member of SICA, in the document: Application for SICA Membership.

Q: I am affiliated to a belief/faith organization. Can I apply to become a member of SICA?

A: Yes. All SICA celebrants work individually, and respect one another's individuality.

"SICA embraces individuals from belief organizations as members of SICA. We understand that there may be some ambiguity when it comes to belonging simultaneously to a belief body and working as an independent celebrant, but we wholeheartedly accept and respect this unique blend of identities."

However, it is important to note that our Code of Practice states that SICA celebrants will not: "Let their own beliefs or views take precedence over the beliefs and views of the client" or "use access to clients to promote any interest, ideology or other profession they may have".

And we are sometimes approached for membership by serving ministers of particular religions/denominations (as opposed to interfaith ministers). Although there are SICA members who are retired Church of Scotland or other denomination ministers, we feel that still being a current minister is inconsistent with our ideas of independence. This would also apply to celebrants who are actually employed by funeral directors. If you're unsure, don't hesitate to contact us. We are always happy to chat and to find ways to support good celebrants.

Q: As a SICA member, what ceremonies can I offer?

A: You will see from the SICA website, that our members offer a wide range of ceremonies, and SICA support them to do so. The most common services are weddings, funerals, memorials and namings but ceremony and ritual can be valuable at all sorts of rites of passage. The only limit to the ceremonies that you can offer, is your imagination!

Q: Is SICA recognised and supported by Funeral Directors and Wedding Planners?

A: SICA is always looking for ways to raise the profile of celebrancy in general and our members in particular. For example, we are Associate Members of SAIF, the National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors. In liaising with businesses and associations, both nationally and locally, we always stress our aim of raising professional standards and the mechanisms we employ (peer support, CPD etc) to achieve this.

One way our members help to reinforce this work is to wear a SICA badge, and to include their Certificate of SICA membership in their portfolio, which they may share with Funeral Directors and Wedding Planners.



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Appendix – Training / courses offered by SICA members

(full profiles are available on the SICA website www.celebrants.scot)

If you are a SICA member and offer training please let us know and we can add your details. It doesn't have to be a celebrancy training course itself – it could be in things that celebrants require such as IT, marketing, social media skills..... Inclusion here does not constitute a SICA recommendation or accreditation but is simply a way of highlighting our members' services.

Susan Fraser offers “*Considering Celebrancy*” on behalf of SICA

This half-day course is for anyone thinking about becoming a celebrant. It's not a training course in itself but is an opportunity to look at what is brilliant about life as a celebrant along with a realistic acknowledgement of the challenges that entering the profession present.

Susan is a highly experienced celebrant and her course is an ideal way to gain a better idea of what becoming a celebrant requires. It will also help you to make informed choices about full training courses in a marketplace that is increasingly crowded.

The course covers:

- What does a celebrant do?
- Who can be a celebrant?
- What it takes to be a good celebrant.
- What is the day to day life of a celebrant like?
- What are the practical considerations to being a celebrant?
- What are the next steps to becoming a celebrant?

Please get in touch for details of the next course dates.
Susan Fraser: susan@independentceremonies.co.uk
07967 138068



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Naomi Keir, SICA member, offers a weekend intensive training course

When and Where

Naomi, a SICA member runs her course every two months or so. It's limited to 3 people per course but quite often it is 1-1. It runs over a weekend and is based in Largs.

Times: Friday 5-7pm; Saturday 9.30am to 4pm; Sunday 10am to 3pm

Included: Refreshments, including lunch; all materials and templates on USB; tuition and completion certificate, and transcript of activities.

Not included: Travel and accommodation, although recommendations can be made.

What is Covered

The course covers very practical guidance, advice and actual practice of what you need to do as a celebrant, including:

Funeral Procedures and Practice

- Funeral Processions in crematoriums, burial and unusual locations.
- Interview of bereaved clients.
- Transcript of client information to tribute.
- Delivery and management of the celebration of life.
- Committal procedures in crematoria and burial situations.
- Funeral Director conversations and support.
- Barriers to market and delivery.
- Safety and risk assessment procedures for self and client care.
- Knowledge and understanding of Wesley, Obitus and other supportive technologies.
- Self and peer reflection skills.

Wedding Procedures and Practice

- Interview process of clients, from phone call to delivery.
- Different types and styles of wedding.
- Additional elements such as handfasting, Anam Cara and oathing stones.
- Legal elements of marriage, M10 forms, communication with registrars and difference between celebrant and officiant (important note – you will not have authority to officiate after this course, it simply gives you all the details of how to go about this, if this a route you wish to take)
- Barriers to market and delivery.
- Liaison with venue providers.
- Marketing opportunities, pros and cons.
- Safety and risk assessment procedures for self and client care.

Other Celebrancy opportunities

- All elements above for each of the following: baby naming, pet funerals, divorce celebrations, vow renewals, engagements, family unions and more.

For further details and prices please contact:

Naomi Keir: naomi@convivate.com

07706 996815



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Cate Reid, a SICA member with a background in Further Education, offers a variety of Training Options

Cate draws upon her 18 years of experience in Further Education to offer a unique blend of expertise in education and the art of celebration.

About Cate

With a Degree and Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE), Cate's approach is characterised by warmth, compassion, and a positive outlook on life. She possesses a natural ability to create a safe and enjoyable learning environment, fostering a space where each participant is valued.

A Personal Journey

My personal journey into celebrancy was inspired by a profound life event—the passing of my father. Facilitating his funeral service showcased my skill in planning and creating meaningful ceremonies, guiding loved ones through a difficult time with empathy, love, and support.

Why Choose Celebrant Training with me?

Passion for Education: My deep-rooted values in education are seamlessly integrated into the celebrant training, providing a comprehensive and engaging learning experience.

Industry Expertise: Combining my celebrant role with a rich background in the wedding industry, I offer practical insights and real-world knowledge that make me the perfect guide on your learning journey.

Personalised Approach: Your learning experience is crafted with care, ensuring it reflects your unique style, values, and beliefs.

Training Options:

Immerse yourself in a 15-hour (one to one) intensive training for Wedding Ceremonies. Flexible scheduling ensures the hours fit seamlessly into both your diary and mine.

Immerse yourself in a 15-hour (one to one) intensive training for Funeral Ceremonies. Flexible scheduling ensures the hours fit seamlessly into both your diary and mine.

Immerse yourself in a 5-hour (one to one) intensive training for Naming Ceremonies. Flexible scheduling ensures the hours fit seamlessly into both your diary and mine.

For more details and prices contact: Cate Reid: info@catereid.co.uk 07494039002.



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Gillian Robertson is a SICA member with a background in Special Education

Gillian can offer advice and support to celebrants who are asked to work with families where an individual has additional support needs.

She has also collaborated with “Talking Mats” to develop a communication resource to support funeral planning. “Talking Mats is a social enterprise whose vision is to improve the lives of people with communication difficulties by increasing their capacity to think about and communicate effectively about things that matter to them. Our innovative, award-winning communication tool is based on extensive research and was designed by Speech and Language Therapists.” For more information see: <https://www.talkingmats.com/>

For more details about this resource, please contact Gillian directly: gillian@rememberlove.co.uk or 07940 484319

Angela Maughan is the Co-founder of the Open Sanctuary

Angela teaches on their two-year course. The course leads to Ordination as a Community Minister within the Open Sanctuary.

Community Ministers offer:

- Presencing – being with you through the journey of life
- Online workshops on a variety of issues
- Quarterly services of gratitude for the world, nature, each other and our Higher Power
- Retreats where we invite you to join us in consciously taking time out to spend with the Divine receiving guidance
- Creating and delivering a variety of ceremonies: Baby Blessings, Legal weddings, funerals, rites of passage, healing services etc.
- Angela is also a trainer and mentor for the Academy of Modern Celebrancy for their Wedding, Funeral and Naming courses.

As an experienced Homeopath, Bio Energy and Silent Counsellor, Angela can help support celebrants physically, mentally and emotionally, as well as helping to co create self-care plans to prevent overwhelm and burnout.

For more details contact:

Angel Maughan: info@angelamaughan.co.uk
07770 985 736



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Michael Hannah is currently Chair of SICA

Michael runs short “CPD” style courses, mainly related to web presence for small businesses and “Do you really need a website?”

Michael is also interested in the history and evolution of the celebrant movement and the modern Scottish funeral, and organizes talks and discussions on relevant topics from time to time.

For more details see Michael’s website at <http://mhcelebrant.scot/>
Or call 07712 892479

Having read through these FAQs, if you would like to chat with an established Celebrant and member of the SICA Committee, you are very welcome to do so.

All Committee members are happy to share their experiences of training and Celebrant work.

Please contact Gillian (Membership Secretary), adding a little information about yourself, at secretary@celebrants.scot and she will put you in touch with a member of the committee.