



Best of breed

With a lengthy pedigree in the provision of courses for financial professionals, Reed has been developing an equally robust offering for the advisory market over the past two years. Its hands-on, interactive approach has paid dividends, with good participation and pass rates. Tom Hewitt, a tutor on the financial adviser courses offered by Reed, talks through the group's offerings

HEWITT SAYS REED differentiates itself on its relaxed and interactive style of teaching. With class sizes of 10 to 15 people, he aims for good participation from attendees. He believes this makes learning easier and more interesting, adding: "We focus on the key things that advisers need to know to get the result." And it appears to work. The last two sets of CF1 attendees both got 100% pass rates.

Reed is also one of the only training providers to offer residential courses. Hewitt says: "These are in a lovely setting in the Cotswolds. We have designed the environment to be peaceful and conducive to study." Hewitt believes that these residential courses promote higher pass

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TOM HEWITT

Hewitt's career has been based on the training of sales and administration staff, including professional qualification training. He qualified as an Associate of the Chartered Insurance Institute in 1996 and set up his own training company in 2001 working both offshore in India and Dubai and in the UK. He is involved in designing materials and lecturing on many Financial Services qualifications.

rates because attendees are exclusively focused on the task in hand. The group also run courses on Saturdays, which many companies prefer because it means their advisers don't have to take time out of the office to attend.

The group offers the new Chartered Insurance Institute exams. These exams – CF1 to 5 – aim to offer more than the original FPC exams. CF1 covers regulation, CF2 investment and risk, CF3 financial protection, CF4 retirement planning, CF5 integrated financial planning and CF6 mortgage advice (see table one).

The group plan to offer other courses as demand grows. The former Advanced Financial Planning Certificate (AFPC) will change to a diploma from October this year and the group plan to offer the new course when it starts.

Hewitt says that the group prides itself on the flexibility of its approach. It offers courses on a monthly basis and around 10 training days per month. See table two for an illustration of the different types of course available and table three for an



TABLE ONE: EXAMS OFFERED BY REED

Units	Study hours	Exam format	Length of exam	Nominal pass mark
CF1 – UK financial services regulation and ethics	60	100 multiple choice questions	2 hours	70%
CF2 – Investment and risk	70	100 multiple choice questions	2 hours	70%
CF3 – Financial protection	40	50 multiple choice questions	1 hour	70%
CF4 – Retirement planning	40	50 multiple choice questions	1 hour	70%
CF5 – Integrated financial planning	70	Two written case studies	2 hours	55%
CF6 – Mortgage advice	70	100 multiple choice questions and five scenario-based questions	3 hours	70%

TABLE THREE: TIMETABLE

Module	Date	Date	Date	Date
CF1	May	July	Oct	Nov
CF2	June	July	Dec	–
CF3	July	–	–	–
CF4	July	–	–	–
CF5	April	July	Oct	–
CF6	June	Aug	Dec	–

TABLE TWO: COURSE ILLUSTRATION

Flexible Course Programme: Suitable for students with only a few modules to take, or for those who want flexible learning.

Guaranteed Pass Bundle: This is for students who would like to book all Certificate in Financial Planning courses with Reed. They will receive a discount for doing this. Also, if they do not pass the exams first time, they will receive a free revision and re-sit course.

Certificate in Mortgage Advice: This offers intensive revision courses and onsite exams for the Certificate in Mortgage Advice.

Retake centre: If students fail an exam at the national sitting, Reed offers revision courses and in-house exams at the end of the week (not available for CF5).

indicative timetable. Reed has a strong connection with the Chartered Insurance Institute, which markets all the group's courses among its members.

Hewitt says that the make-up of participants has changed significantly since he started training advisers.

He adds: "Previously many advisers were pushed onto the courses by an employer or regulator, but that has changed. Advisers are now seeing the value of having a qualification. It means they can perform the job better. We are also seeing a greater diversity of participants. There are a lot more female advisers coming through as the market for female advisers grows and grows. There is also an age difference. We are getting younger people – some as young as 19 – on these courses."

Reed offers an interactive learning environment that focuses on the most important points to get advisers through their exams. It is expanding its range of courses in preparation for the new breed of modern adviser, who recognises that training is key to his ability to give the best service to his clients.

