



CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL MEDIATORS AND ARBITRATORS



A CIMA Primer on Opportunities for Introductory-Level Arbitration Associates (ACIMArb)

1. Domestic Arbitration Panels and Rosters

- Many arbitration institutions in Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East maintain panels of arbitrators, mediators, and tribunal secretaries. As an ACIMArb, you may be eligible to serve in entry-level or assistant roles, gaining valuable experience and exposure to real disputes.

2. Tribunal Secretary & Case Management Roles

- For new entrants, acting as a tribunal secretary is one of the best ways to learn arbitral procedure in practice. This involves assisting the tribunal with case organization, drafting procedural orders, and managing evidence.

3. In-House ADR Resource Person

- As an in-house counsel, compliance officer, or corporate adviser, you can become the “go-to” ADR resource within your organization, advising on arbitration clauses, managing external counsel, and overseeing dispute resolution strategies.

4. Sector-Specific Niche Opportunities

- ACIMArb holders can focus on arbitration in specialized industries such as:
 - **Commercial** – commercial agreements, business disputes.
 - **Construction & Infrastructure** – FIDIC contract disputes, delay claims.

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- **Energy & Natural Resources** – oil, gas, and renewables disputes.
 - **Telecommunications & ICT** – regulatory and contractual disputes.
 - **Banking & Finance** – loan agreements, investment disputes.
 - **Maritime** – maritime agreements, maritime disputes.
 - Specialization builds credibility and visibility faster than generalist practice.
5. **Cross-Border ADR in the AfCFTA Era**
- The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will increasingly rely on ADR, including arbitration, to resolve cross-border commercial disputes. Early involvement and visibility in AfCFTA-related matters could position you as a continental player.
6. **Networking and Profile Building**
- Associate Membership opens doors to professional communities, conferences, and training programmes. Regular participation in these spaces builds your visibility and credibility as an ADR professional.



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A CIMA Primer on Building Your Arbitration Career from the Introductory Level

1. Treat This Training as a Launchpad, Not a Capstone

The ACIMArb is your entry ticket – but mastery requires continuous learning. Plan for higher-level courses, advanced workshops, and mentorship.

2. Prioritize Practical Experience Early

- Volunteer as tribunal secretary.
- Assist senior arbitrators in research and drafting.
- Observe real hearings when possible.

The more proceedings you see, the faster your procedural instincts will develop.

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3. Master the Soft Skills

Arbitration is not only about the law. Listening, negotiation, cultural sensitivity, and drafting clarity are equally important. These will distinguish you from peers with similar credentials.

4. Build a Sector Niche

From the outset, align your arbitration practice with your existing professional sector or interest area. Specialization attracts targeted appointments and referrals.

5. Contribute to the Community

Write short articles, case notes, or commentary on arbitration developments. Speaking and publishing, even at the early stages, will set you apart as someone invested in the field.

6. Leverage the CIMA Network

The connections you make at the Summer School – peers, faculty, and alumni – are invaluable. Keep in touch, collaborate on projects, and refer work to one another.

7. Keep Your ACIMArb Active

Stay compliant with any continuing professional development (CPD) requirements. Participation in CIMA events not only maintains your status but deepens your skills.



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A CIMA Primer on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

About CIMA

- 1. What is the Center for International Mediators and Arbitrators (CIMA)?**
The Center for International Mediators and Arbitrators (CIMA) is a global provider of online ADR training and certification headquartered at Oxford, Oxfordshire in the United Kingdom. It is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing excellence in arbitration, mediation, and other forms of alternative dispute resolution (ADR).
- 2. Is CIMA recognised internationally?**
Yes. CIMA collaborates with global ADR institutions, law firms, and academic partners, and its qualifications are respected in multiple jurisdictions.

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3. **What is the vision of CIMA?**

To be Africa's leading and globally respected ADR training and membership body, producing world-class arbitrators and mediators.

4. **What is the membership structure of CIMA?**

CIMA has various grades of membership including Associate (ACIMArb), Member (MCIMArb), and Fellow (FCIMArb), plus specialist panels for mediators, arbitrators, and tribunal secretaries.

About the Programme

5. **What is the purpose of the Introductory Arbitration Course?**

It provides foundational knowledge and practical skills in domestic and international arbitration, equipping participants to act confidently as counsel, tribunal secretaries, or junior arbitrators.

6. **How long does the training last?**

The 2025 Summer School is an intensive programme delivered over several days, combining lectures, workshops, and mock arbitration exercises.

7. **Is the programme suitable for non-lawyers?**

Yes. While many participants are lawyers, professionals from other sectors (banking, engineering, project management, traditional leadership, law enforcement) also benefit greatly.

8. **Will I need to sit an assessment?**

Yes. Participants are assessed through practical exercises, participation, and knowledge checks to ensure competence for ACIMArb membership.

Progression

9. **What is ACIMArb?**

ACIMArb stands for *Associate of the Center for International Mediators and Arbitrators*. It's the entry-level membership grade recognizing successful completion of the introductory course.

10. **What comes after ACIMArb?**

You may progress to **Member (MCIMArb)** through further training, experience, and assessments, and eventually to **Fellow (FCIMArb)**, the highest professional grade.

11. **How long does it take to progress to Fellow?**

Timelines vary depending on experience, casework, and further training. With active practice and CPD, this can be achieved within a few years.

12. **Does ACIMArb membership expire?**

No, but it must be maintained through CPD, adherence to professional standards, and payment of annual membership fees.

Opportunities

13. **What opportunities are available after this course?**

- Tribunal secretary appointments
- Entry onto institutional rosters
- Advisory roles in drafting arbitration clauses
- Case management for law firms and corporates
- Progression to industry-specific arbitration panels

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14. Can I work internationally with ACIMArb?

Yes, especially when combined with sector expertise and further CIMA or partner-institution training.

15. How can I find arbitration appointments?

Through networking at CIMA events, joining institutional panels, publishing in ADR forums, and leveraging sector-specific contacts.

16. Will CIMA assist in networking?

Yes. CIMA offers alumni networks, mentorship, conferences, and connections with domestic and international ADR bodies.

Who You Are After our Training

17. How will this training change my professional profile?

You will be recognised as having formal arbitration training, positioning you as an Arbitration Associate - an emerging ADR professional in dispute resolution. Use your ACIMArb post-nominals.

18. Can I present myself as an arbitrator immediately after ACIMArb?

You can present yourself as an Arbitration Associate, for smaller-scale and lower-value matters, though most members initially serve as counsel or tribunal secretary before moving into sole or co-arbitrator roles.

19. Will my current employer benefit from my ACIMArb status?

Absolutely. You can add value by reducing reliance on external arbitrators, ensuring more effective contract drafting, and managing disputes efficiently. Use your ACIMArb post-nominals.

20. What's the single best thing I can do after the course?

Apply your skills immediately—whether by reviewing arbitration clauses, seeking tribunal secretary roles, or engaging with CIMA's professional community. Use your ACIMArb post-nominals.

21. Why is my practice certificate dated with a one-year validity period?

Your practice certificate reflects the year in which you successfully met the requirements for ACIMArb eligibility. The one-year date encourages timely application for practicing membership and ensures that your training remains current when you present it to panels, employers, or institutions. Arbitral practice evolves, and this approach keeps practicing members aligned with up-to-date standards.

22. What happens after the one-year validity period?

The major international arbitral bodies issue annual practicing certificates with a one-year stated validity period because the practicing membership certificate is subject to annual renewal. This ensures that practicing members remain in good standing, pay their annual membership fees, and continue to have access to CIMA's benefits, resources, and professional network. After the initial year, the certificate holder must renew their CIMA membership by paying the applicable renewal fees and, where required, updating their professional profile.

Upon renewal, practicing membership continues without interruption, and a new certificate reflecting the updated validity period is issued. The certificate does not “expire” in the sense of nullifying your achievement. If a practicing member does not renew, their name will be

removed from the official membership register and they will lose the right to use the post-nominal “ACIMArb.”

23. Is CIMA recognised internationally?

Yes. The **Center for International Mediators and Arbitrators (CIMA)** is an association of ADR practitioners and Fellows with a growing international presence. Headquartered in Oxfordshire, in the United Kingdom, CIMA has members in **33 countries** across Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and North America. Its training and membership framework are built on globally accepted arbitration and mediation standards, with a domestic focus and contextualization. A CIMA certificate demonstrates that the holder has:

- Successfully completed structured, competency-based training in domestic and international arbitration
- Met the academic and practical standards required for **Membership**

CIMA certification is valued because it:

- Provides an **entry point to professional arbitration practice**
- Is recognised by a professional society with **active members in 33 countries**
- Opens opportunities for tribunal secretary work, advisory roles, sector-specific arbitration panels, and cross-border dispute resolution.
- Serves as a **stepping stone to advanced membership grades** and potential dual recognition with other leading global ADR institutions

In short, the CIMA certificate positions you as a trained ADR professional with credentials respected locally and internationally, supported by a fast-growing network of practitioners worldwide.



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A Primer on the Value of CIMA Membership & Fellowship

1. Professional Credibility and Global Recognition

- **The Post-nominals (ACIMArb, MCIMArb, FCIMArb)** signal that you meet internationally recognised professional standards in arbitration, mediation, or adjudication.
- The CIMA is a world's leading association for dispute resolution practitioners, with recognition in 33 countries.
- Being listed on CIMA's global membership register makes your expertise visible to potential clients, law firms, arbitral institutions, and governments.

2. Career and Practice Opportunities

- **ACIMArb:** Arbitration Associate -Demonstrates foundational knowledge and skills in dispute resolution, positioning you for early-stage arbitral and ADR roles.

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- **MCIMArb:** Arbitration Member - Shows practical competence and experience, making you eligible for appointments as tribunal secretary, arbitrator in lower-value disputes, or ADR panelist.
 - **FCIMArb:** Arbitration Fellow - Marks you as a senior practitioner capable of chairing arbitral tribunals, handling complex, high-value cases, and securing leadership or expert witness roles.
 - Access to **exclusive appointment panels** and potential nominations for arbitration, mediation, and adjudication cases.
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3. Continuous Professional Development

- Priority access to CIMA training courses, masterclasses, and advanced modules (including specialised sectors like construction, energy, maritime, and investment arbitration).
 - Discounts on CPD courses, conferences, and networking events worldwide.
 - Structured career progression from **Associate** → **Member** → **Fellow** with clear competency pathways.
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4. Networking and International Exposure

- Membership opens doors to a **global community of dispute resolution professionals**, including judges, senior lawyers, academics, and expert witnesses.
- Invitations to local branch events, global conferences, and international arbitration competitions.
- Opportunities to collaborate with bar associations, arbitral institutions, and UN/World Bank dispute resolution initiatives.

5. Access to Resources and Research

- Full access to CIMA's **Professional Hub** — including case law summaries, model clauses, practical guides, and journals.
- Use of the CIArb's model procedural rules and guidance notes to strengthen your professional practice.
- Updates on global arbitration trends, legislative changes, and emerging ADR practices.

6. Reputation, Prestige and Business Advantage

- Enhances trust with corporate clients, governments, and international organizations.
- Demonstrates commitment to ethical practice and adherence to the CIMA Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct.
- Adds value to your law firm, consultancy, or private practice branding — signaling elite-level ADR expertise.