

# TRAINEE RECRUITMENT

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NOW that plans are well under way to up-date and improve the education system for greenkeeper trainees through the Greenkeeper Training Committee, I would like to look at what we are trying to achieve with the standard of golf greenkeepers in the future and, primarily, at what sort of people we should now be looking to attract into the profession at trainee level in order to achieve our objectives.

Golf-course management is a highly skilled profession resulting in the need for a highly skilled greenkeeping staff, with a professional image and outlook from course management level down through the various grades of assistants.

In order to produce a golf-course manager, head greenkeeper, assistant greenkeeper, all highly skilled and with a professional image and manner at whatever level of responsibility, we need three basic ingredients.

First, we need a modern training scheme aimed specifically at golf greenkeeping and course management with a strong sense of continuity, adequately financed and incorporating fully competent lecturers with a sound and up-to-date knowledge of all aspects of golf-course management.

Second, we need a knowledgeable and enthusiastic course manager/head greenkeeper to motivate and encourage the young trainee and to supervise the implementation of all greenkeeping practices and policies actually on the golf course in a working environment. He should also point the young trainee in the right direction so far as public relations are concerned with golf club members and officials, placing great importance on tact and diplomacy.

Finally, and possibly most importantly, we need the raw material—the greenkeeper trainee himself, from which we will create the course managers and head greenkeepers of the future.

So, let's take ingredient number one. As I have said, plans are now moving in the right direction to achieve a first-class education system.

On to ingredient number two. I would say that about half the senior members of greenkeeping staffs in this country could be described as knowledgeable and enthusiastic course managers/head greenkeepers. This is a situation that, hopefully, will improve in years to come through natural wastage counteracted by the introduction of highly trained young men through a revitalised education system.

This leads me on to the third ingredient—the trainee himself. Now that all the hard work has been done to provide a suitable education system, I feel it is now up to course managers and head greenkeepers to do their bit when recruiting trainees and to look seriously at what sort of standard of intake they should be looking for in order to provide the colleges with suitable material.

The lack of interest some youngsters express towards their job is typified by the difficulty some regional committees of EIGGA have experienced when trying to encourage people to attend an educational lecture in their spare time. Surely, when such lectures are set up the room should be bursting at the seams with eager young men chewing at the bit to improve their knowledge and carve out a career for themselves?

Sadly, it seems that some course managers/head greenkeepers simply employ the first chap that comes along who looks as if he can wield a spade and spend a day on a ride-on mowing machine.

So, what should we be looking for when recruiting trainees? I would like to suggest some simple guidelines for the prospective employer.

Due to the present unemployment situation, as far as the employer is concerned, it's a buyer's market when recruiting staff, so they can afford to shop around. Before recruiting trainees, they should decide what sort of person they want to employ, what qualifications they should possess and what personal characteristics they should have. Then plans to attract suitable candidates can be drawn up.

Prospective candidates for trainee

positions should be as young as possible, hopefully straight from school, therefore enabling the employer to direct the young trainee in whatever direction he requires without having to get the new employee out of someone else's bad habits.

Candidates should have reached a good level of academic qualification at school. Standards in desired subjects, such as botany, chemistry and physics and also practical subjects such as metalwork and woodwork, should be no lower than CSE grade 3—students who have reached this standard are usually capable of better grades but, due to a lack of application through immaturity and other distractions, fail to fulfil their full potential at school.

Candidates should possess a natural ability to present themselves in a clean, tidy and smart manner. This is very important as we must present ourselves in a professional manner when representing our club or profession. Candidates should be alert, have a pleasant personality, possess a good level of intelligence and have the desire to build a career.

Having decided what you are looking for as an employer, the next step is to set about attracting suitable applicants. 'Attract' is the key word. The average man in the street would probably think that the job of a golf greenkeeper consisted solely of grass cutting but, obviously, this is not the case.

We are talking about a very rewarding career, both mentally and financially, so this should be reflected in job advertisements for trainees, together with what qualifications and characteristics will be needed and what training will be given. The job must be sold properly in order to attract suitable applicants.

So hopefully, if we couple a high standard of trainee with an adequate educational system, we can produce a high standard of greenkeeping staff, resulting in better playing conditions for the golfing public of Great Britain which, in turn, will lead to greater respect and appreciation from the golfing fraternity. Hopefully, this will result in higher financial rewards for greenkeepers.