**Top Level Greenkeeping degree**

Observant readers will have noticed an announcement, in the April edition of this magazine, about an exciting new course for greenkeepers which starts in September this year when Cranfield University introduce a Master of Science Degree in Sports Surface Technology.

The course aims to combine academic and technical skills, covering advanced principles of soil, water and vegetation management plus mechanisation, construction and business management.

The course is split into 12 modules.

- Soil/Plant/Water relationships
- Soil Science
- Mechanisation for Sports Surfaces
- Sports Surface Playability
- Irrigation and Drainage for Sports Surfaces
- Irrigation Management
- Operation Management of Sports Facilities
- Turfgrass Science and Technology
- Management Accounting
- Project Planning and Operations
- Human Resource Management
- Sports Surface Construction for Natural and Artificial Surfaces

Assessment will be two three hour examinations, continuous assessment and a project based module.

The course may be full time ie. 45 weeks of full time study or part time ie. the equivalent of 45 weeks full time study which may be distance learning. The duration of the course will normally be one year with a maximum duration of five years.

For entry to the course, candidates should hold a first or second class honours degree from a UK university or an equivalent qualification. In certain cases, a blend of qualifications and relevant experience may be accepted.

For further details contact Alex Vickers, Course Director MSc Sports Surface Technology, Cranfield University, Silsoe, Beds, MK45 4DT.

**New Learning Innovation From Myerscough College**

Myerscough College recently launched their Internet learning platform. Pioneered in Knowsley at the Greenkeeping Academy from the college’s Croxteth Park Centre. Liverpool, the system currently has over 40 students studying varying NVQ’s from level 2 to level 4 amenity management, from the UK to Williamsburg USA. Endorsed by the GTC the system can be adapted to suit everyone’s learning needs from craft level 2 to NVQ 4 for Course Managers.

The Myerscough on-line System is a web-based learning platform that helps the teaching and learning of sportsturf NVQ’s Levels 1 – 4. Students can be engaged in an effective learning process through the use of sophisticated software and interaction with other students as well as their on-line tutor. Students are supplied with their own personal password that will log them into their specific chosen qualification where they can access various relevant course materials and support packages enabling them to complete the NVQ qualification.

Information between the student and teacher is achieved by the teacher using specific web-based tools. Students can access support material, complete unit tests and quizzes, send e-mails to other students and much more. Students that submit their work on-line can have it graded and sent back along with the tutors feedback. Any problems the student may have with the course or a particular subject area can be dealt with by either using the ‘bulletin board’, where all on-line students can monitor and critique the answer or by using private e-mail with a particular student and their tutor.

The beauty of on-line learning is that course material is accessible almost any time of the day, and more so, material is often available for courses not currently being taken, giving the student the opportunity to preview them in advance. Students can also link searching for information on the world wide web with their course work, enabling more information to be analysed. Qualifications can be attained outside normal working hours which may suit certain employers, but at the same time giving the student chance to collate information from work-based experiences.

For further information on online learning from Myerscough or details on NVQ sportsturf workbooks, contact: Paul McGrail (Training Co-ordinator) Croxteth Park Centre. 0151 228 7102 or e-mail: croxteth@croxteth.fsbusiness.co.uk

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This month, BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, reports on some of the latest education and training developments available to Greenkeepers, and gives updates on the entry progress of our various competitions.