Early indications are that Apprenticeships will remain although the new Government has yet to confirm where funding support, if any, will be focused to benefit employers and learners.

The GTC has ensured the Apprenticeships at both Levels 2 and 3 include the skills and knowledge required by employers and whilst these frameworks are available for all ages, when it comes to funding support, it is the young 16-19 age group, where priority funding is guaranteed.

I am sure we all agree that funding should be made available to ensure youngsters either receive support through their employers registering them as an apprentice with a Centre, or on a full-time college based course/qualification such as a National Certificate when they are unable to gain employment.

However, what about the over 19’s and the mature career changes who would love to follow qualifications and National Occupational Standards as these underpin all of the formal qualifications and National Training Providers must be instructed its funding bodies to ensure youngsters either receive funding should be made available to them.

Not only has the GTC continually lobbied for support funding for all formal qualifications but has also encouraged the take up of Continual Professional Development (CPD) by greenkeepers and employers for short courses which must be the next target.

These short courses could easily be funded if the government instructed its funding bodies to allow Centres, including colleges to offer courses using Units grouped together, which can give the learner a certificate of achievement.

In my opinion there has been far too much emphasis on full qualifications and this has been to the detriment of many greenkeepers looking to press their skills and knowledge in association with their employers.

The GTC, in partnership with the new Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers must be prepared to deliver short courses as these underpin all of the formal qualifications and National Occupational Standards.

If we could just get the Government to recognise the demand and popularity for short courses and at least put some funding towards this area of training, I am sure we will see the Centre more fairly quickly.

Whether we call it CPD or progression, learners will soon get used to this and the GTC will put its weight behind this matter at every opportunity.

At a very recent meeting I heard that “progression” would become a government buzzword for learners. If I do have to assume this is just what the GTC has been lobbying for since its SVQ’s were introduced in the early nineties.

Employers are part, through their Course Managers should keep up to speed with the various courses and qualifications, as there is no substitute for having a well trained workforce.

Finally, from the 31st August there will be a new look to the GTC Approved Training Provider section on the website.

As part of its ongoing commitment to quality the GTC has written to all of its current approved providers with a revised criteria and an invitation to join the GTC’s Quality Assured Scheme.

Colleges and Private Companies meeting the criteria and offering the formal qualifications will, in future, be promoted as providers and learners as GTC APPROVED CENTRES.

A new criteria and category for individuals and organisations will be GTC APPROVED TRAINING PROVIDERS.

Watch out for the GTC Quality Assured Scheme logo from September, as it will be the kitemark by which education and training will be measured in the future.

There are far too many apprentice success stories to list in this article but it is still as important today as it was when I first became an apprentice in the mid-sixties. Not that I am claiming to be one of the success stories!

Let us hope that within all the promised funding cuts, training doesn’t receive any and our employers continue to invest in their staff of all ages.

**The “How To...” Guides**

**Do you ever ask yourself these questions?**

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- How do I write a job description?

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15. Prepare for an Appraisal
16. Promote Equal Opportunities
17. Recruit the Right Staff
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19. Conduct a One-to-One Meeting

The “How To...” guides are short, handy guides providing practical, step by step guidance on the listed subjects. The guides can be down loaded and used to help you develop your knowledge and implement new processes in your workplace.

Introduced exclusively for BIGGA Members, you’ll find the guides by accessing Member Resources in the members area of the website.

The “How To...” guides are brought to you thanks to the continuing support of the contributors to the Learning and Development Fund.

The most recent scholarship has been awarded to Andrew Reason – HNC Golf Course Management

Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development, with an update on education issues

Thank you to our Golden and Silver Key Sponsors

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Stephen Thompson from Bearsted Golf Club, representing Hadlow College.

My thanks to our RAs Peter Boyd, Jane Jones and Clive Osgood and to our greenkeeping representatives Ruan Grant, Gary Cunningham, Chris Isles, Tony Smith, Gerald Bruce and Cameron McMillan who, along with the Toro representatives selected our eight National Finalists.

The National Finals will take place at BIGGA House on 12 and 13 September. If you would like to join me in wishing all of the finalists the very best of luck.

**Higher Education Scholarships**

Supported by Ransomes Jackson.

The most recent scholarship has been awarded to: Andrew Reason – HNC Golf Course Management

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**In Brief**

This month, as the new Quality Assured Scheme comes in, the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year regional interviews, the introduction of the new national membership benefit, the “The How To...” guides, there is no let up in August as the Continue to Learn education programme hits the top of the “To Do” list!

**Learning and Development**

Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development, with an update on education issues.

The funding provided to improve training remains a government buzzword for many employers who would love to follow new initiatives are announced.

Ideally we would see funding cuts, training encouraged the take up of Continual Professional Development (CPD) by greenkeepers and employers for short courses which must be the next target.

The GTC, in partnership with the new Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers must be instructed its funding bodies to easy be funded if the government instructed its funding bodies to allow Centres, including colleges to offer courses using Units grouped together, which can give the learner a certificate of achievement.

In my opinion there has been far too much emphasis on full qualifications and this has been to the detriment of many greenkeepers looking to press their skills and knowledge in association with their employers.

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