Greenkeepers Training Committee

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"Apprenticeship" is the current buzzword and the government’s vision for the future of training in the UK. The numerous apprentice frameworks are currently under review and once again, industries are set for more changes. The government’s view is that apprenticeships should be a choice for young people i.e. equal to that of a college Further Education qualification or in the case of higher apprenticeships, Degree level.

What is an apprenticeship and how does it work?

An apprenticeship is a formal, agreed framework of education and training which has been set by a lead body on behalf of industry. In the case of greenkeeping, the Lead Body is LANTHA. The GTC represents both golf club employers and greenkeepers and have ably, for many years, ensured both employers and apprentices have a “fit for purpose” apprenticeship scheme which has become an exemplar for other sectors.

The framework includes:

* the main work based qualification (Level 2 or 3 Greenkeeping)
* functional skills in maths and English
* personal thinking and learning skills
* employer rights and responsibilities
* on and off the job training

This list includes some on the job and independent assessments. On the job training happens every day at work - learning to use a mower, lay turf etc. Off the job training does not necessarily mean the apprentice has to attend college. It could be at work using an office but it must not be part of the apprentice’s normal routine. It could also be studying online using the employer’s computer.

Many apprentices enjoy the flexibility of the scheme but a key component is that there must be an agreement between the employer, the apprentice and the Centre, of who does what and when.

This is done through an agreed Individual Training Plan. Equally it could be part of a day or block release course at a local college, which has been the traditional delivery method for many years. Modern technology and the important role Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers have in the apprenticeship scheme has given employers and the apprentices choices on their preferred delivery method.

Greenkeeping apprenticeships are available on two levels; one includes the Level 2 work based diploma, SVQ in Scotland qualification and one includes the Level 3 Sports turf qualification. Young apprentices will always commence on the Level 2 apprenticeship as the Level 3 includes supervisory skills.

Why are apprenticeships good for the employer?

The employer has employment for the duration of the framework and gains a set of skills and qualifications that they can use to progress in the industry.

Why are they good for the employer?

Government funding support is often available for apprenticeships. Employers in England can currently receive a grant of up to £1500 for each apprentice they take on.

Scotland and Wales often have funding incentives and support to encourage an employer to recruit a young person who will bring fresh ideas and skills into the workplace.

Apprenticeships can make an organisation more effective, productive and competitive by addressing its skills gaps directly.

Apprenticeship training for 16 to 19 year olds is free of charge to the employer. 

change and it is advisable to check with your chosen GTC Quality Assured Centre for the latest information.

Is an apprenticeship for everyone?

In essence yes, there are no age restrictions on apprenticeships at present (although currently only 16 to 19 year olds are fully funded).

The only requirement is that the apprentice must pass the English and Maths requirement of a framework.

In a few cases, where the person may have a learning issue such as dyslexia or extremely low English or Maths skills, a Centre will offer additional learning support before signing up an individual onto the apprenticeship scheme.

How can an apprenticeship be put in place for a new employee?

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How can apprenticeships work well – a case study
Simon Torr, a greenkeeper at Bearwood Lakes Golf Club, is a mature level 3 apprentice, studying with Oaklands College. For Simon, the apprenticeship offered him and his employer a cost effective method of gaining his level 3 Sports Turf Work based Diploma qualification (formerly NVQ).

Simon uses the Smart assessor e-portfolio to upload his evidence. He likes the freedom this gives him to monitor his own progress and see what tasks he still has to cover. In addition, he can have a learning issue such as dyslexia or extremely low English or Maths skills, a Centre will offer additional learning support before signing up an individual onto the apprenticeship scheme.

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**Read more at**
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www.towardsstandards-and-qualifications/Apprenticeships.aspx