

This month, Ken Richardson gives details on how to plan your career path from day one

Grass routes

Following the publication of the 1998 recommendations of the Standing Committee on Greenkeepers Salaries and Conditions of Employment, several greenkeepers have contacted me about the Greenkeeper Career Pattern. The Standing Committee sits again in May, when the salary scale for 1999 will be discussed, along with any other changes that are considered necessary, however, I thought that it would be useful to use some of the common questions posed by concerned greenkeepers to clarify some of the reasons for, and theory behind the Career Pattern.

Question. Why are National Certificate/Diploma and Higher Certificate/Diploma shown as the same qualification on the career plan?

Answer. I agree that NC/ND and HNC/HND should, perhaps have been separate to show that they are different qualifications, however, some greenkeepers go straight on to HND courses whilst others move onto HND after ND and some greenkeepers move onto HNC courses after completing N/SVQ courses. It would have been impossible to show all of the routes that could be taken and the decision was made to keep the diagram as simple as possible. However, the Standing Committee may consider changes to the Career Pattern.

Question. Why were N/SVQs selected as the qualifications for

greenkeeper, head greenkeeper and course manager.

Answer. The Committee felt that all greenkeepers entering the profession should, eventually, be assessed as competent greenkeepers. ie. prove that they can meet National Standards in the role of greenkeeper. The National Standards that show competence in a job are National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications. Other qualifications such as Higher National Certificate, may contain similar underpinning knowledge and, sometimes, greater knowledge to N/SVQs, which coupled with suitable experience may indicate competence. The Committee recognised that few, if any greenkeepers held Levels 3 or Level 4 qualifications, that very few training providers offered training courses leading to Level 4 and that, currently, there were not any industry assessors at either Level. Therefore, it was decided that the Career Pattern should include the words 'competent at' rather than 'qualified to' at Levels 3 and 4. Although this may seem a play on words, those words do have significant different meanings. 'Competent at' means that the person is capable of performing the tasks described in the N/SVQ Standards Level 3 or Level 4 Sports Turf Management ie. capable of doing the job of a head greenkeeper or course manager. This competence could have been gained from experience, attending a number of college courses, including HNC and HND or even by adapting

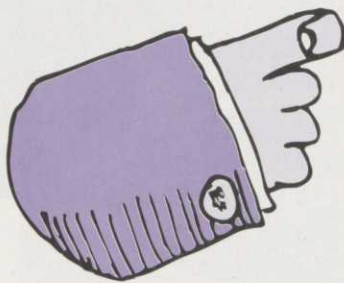
knowledge and skills acquired in a different industry, coupled with other qualifications and/or experience in greenkeeping. What the Career Pattern does not say is that head greenkeepers should hold a Level 3 qualification or that Course Managers should hold a Level 4 qualification, although this may be the case in the future.

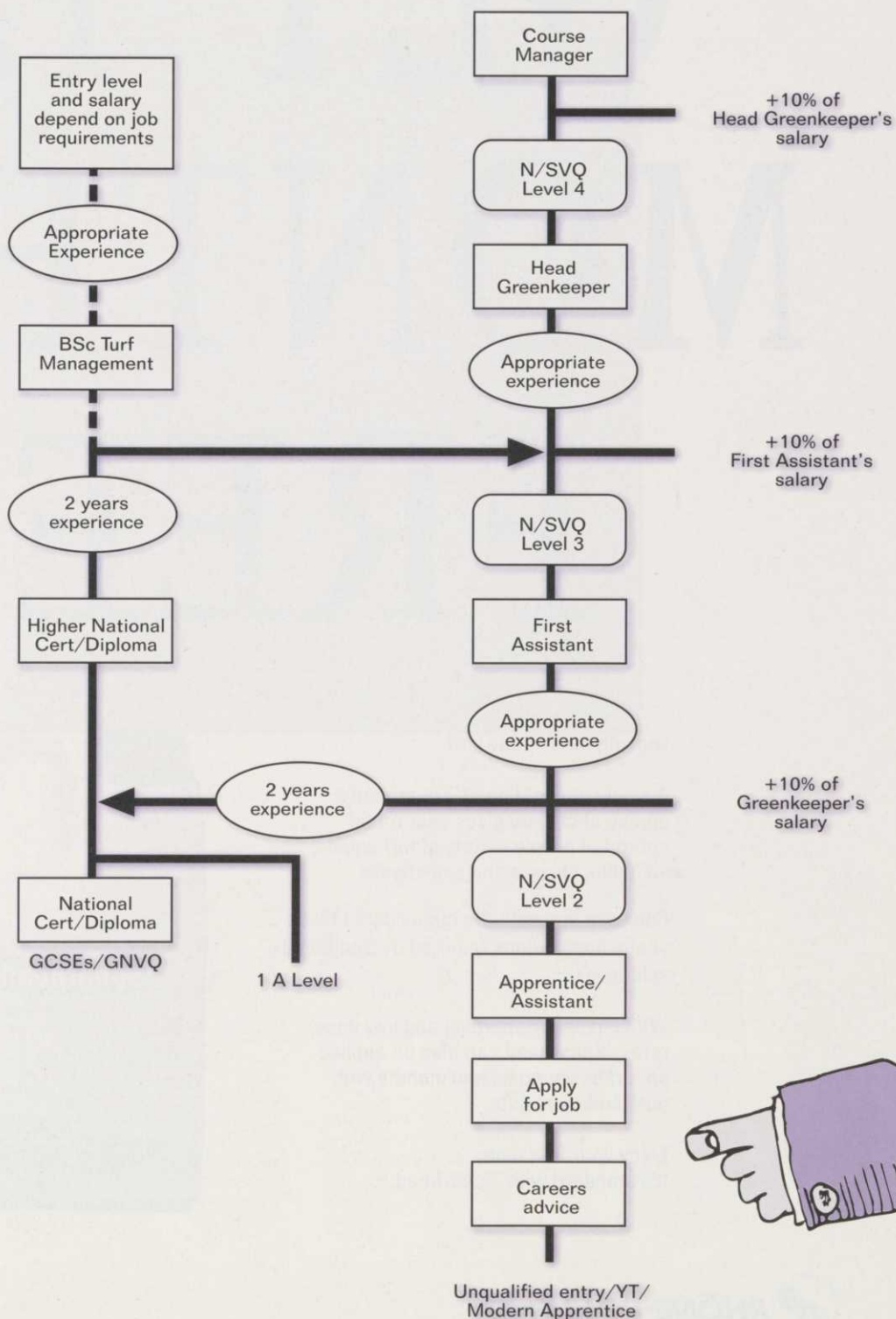
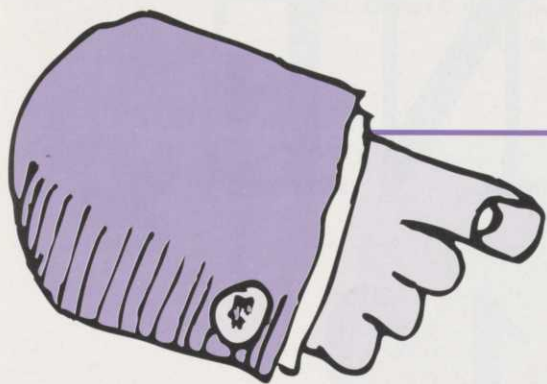
Question. Why is Higher National Certificate/Diploma and BSc shown to be lower than N/SVQ Level 4?

Answer. This was done to fit all of the qualifications onto one sheet of paper and did not imply any relative merit. Comparing vocational qualifications with academic qualifications is extremely difficult as they are two different things, but one type of qualification can lead to the other. However, whereas vocational qualifications indicate what the holder knows and can do, under working conditions, academic qualifications indicate only what the holder knows.

Question. Why does the link from HNC/HND come below deputy head greenkeeper?

Answer. This was done to show that the holder of an HNC or HND needed suitable experience before taking up post as a deputy head greenkeeper or even, as a head greenkeeper. Some people enter, and leave, HNC/HND courses with little or no experience of turf management whilst others enter, and





leave, these courses with many years of experience.

Question. Why can some people 'get' a N/SVQ by attending college for a few weeks when it takes years to get an HNC/HND?

Answer. If the N/SVQ system was running properly, it should not be possible for an inexperienced greenkeeper to prove competence in a few weeks. However, an experienced greenkeeper may be able to prove, to a qualified assessor, that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to be assessed as competent without attending college or having to reprove competence over a further extended period.

Question. Why should I send my assistant greenkeeper on an N/SVQ Level 3 or N/SVQ Level 4 course?

Answer. As I explained above, N/SVQs should indicate that the holder has proved to be competent to National Standards. The Level 3 Standards include higher level greenkeeping skills and some supervisory management skills and knowledge. The Level 4 Standards comprise business management skills and knowledge. Therefore, do not send your greenkeepers to college just because they went last year. Assess their potential career prospects and determine their training needs before paying for training that may not be necessary.

NB. Head Greenkeepers with D32/D33 assessor qualifications should receive an increment to their basic salary

