

This month, **BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson**, highlights qualifications and training courses

EDUCATION UPDATE

Education and Training - May 2000

This month sees the deadlines for entry to three of BIGGA's major competitions, ie the TORO Award for Greenkeeping Excellence and Student Greenkeeper of the Year Competitions, which have an entry deadline of 31 May and the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition in association with Amazone Ground Care which has an entry deadline of 26 May.

Make sure that your entry is sent to BIGGA HOUSE by the closing date.

Education and training qualifications

The number and range of qualifications for greenkeepers and golf course managers has grown over the past several years and still seem to cause some confusion. There are three types of qualification currently available and these are:

- Work based qualifications.
- Work related qualifications.
- Qualifications awarded by professional bodies.

Work related qualifications

These qualifications which include National Certificate (NC), National Diploma (ND), Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND) and First Degree Courses in subjects such as Golf Course Management, Groundsmanship and Greenkeeping and Turfgrass Science are usually offered as full time courses, although some colleges offer part time HNC/HND. For example, an HND course studied full time over three years, includes two years in college studying subjects such as Irrigation, Construction, Pests and Diseases, Cultural Practices etc and one year on work placement. Assessment is by assignments, report writing, case studies and examinations.

Work based qualifications

These qualifications comprise Scottish Vocational Qualifications, in Scotland and National Vocational Qualifications in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. These courses are

offered at three Levels ie. Level 2 Sportsturf, Level 3 Sportsturf Maintenance and Level 4 Sportsturf Management. Candidates are assessed continually and are awarded a certificate when they can prove competence to National Standards in all Units of the Qualification. Much of the practical assessment is done at work on the golf course by qualified greenkeeper assessors. These courses include subjects such as Maintaining Sports Turf Surfaces, Maintaining Equipment and Machines, Managing Drainage and Irrigation Systems and at Level 4, Facilitating Meetings and Managing the Use of Financial resources.

Qualifications awarded by professional bodies

Many professional bodies award their own qualification eg the Professional Golfers Association, the Institute of Personnel and Development, the Institute of Marketing and BIGGA is no exception. BIGGA awards the Master Greenkeeper Certificate to those Head Greenkeepers/Golf Course Managers who have:

- Accumulated 200 credits through formal and informal education and training plus experience as greenkeepers.
- Had their golf courses inspected by current Master Greenkeepers to assess competence in a range of greenkeeping and management skills.
- Passed a two stage examination to assess knowledge of a wide range of subjects from soil science to personnel management.

Equivalence of qualifications

A question often posed is 'How can I compare the different types of qualification?' The answer is, unfortunately, not very easily as the qualifications are different ie Work related qualifications are mainly based on what someone knows but has not proved they can do the work on the job and work based qualifications show that someone can do the job at work and has an underpinning level of knowledge. The holder of a Master Greenkeeper Certificate has shown that they have accumulated skills knowledge and experience. A good test is to look at competence

For example:

Greenkeeper X holds a National Certificate in Greenkeeping and has one year of greenkeeping experience. He/she is qualified but has little experience and may or may not be competent to perform all assistant greenkeeper tasks.

Greenkeeper Y holds an NVQ Level 2 Certificate in Sportsturf and has been working as a greenkeeper for 3 years. He/she is qualified and should be competent to perform all assistant greenkeeper tasks.

Greenkeeper Z holds an HND in Golf Course Management and has worked on a golf course for one year. He/she is qualified but will not be competent to perform all Headgreenkeeper/Course Manager tasks without gaining much more experience.

Greenkeeper A holds an HNC in Golf Course Management and has been working as a greenkeeper for 10 years and for 3 years as a Head Greenkeeper. He/she is qualified and should be competent to perform all Head Greenkeeper tasks.

Greenkeeper B is a Master Greenkeeper. He is qualified and is competent to perform all Course Manager tasks.

Greenkeeper C holds a BSc in Turfgrass Science and has worked as a greenkeeper for 2 years. He/she is qualified and has gained very detailed knowledge, however his/her competence at a level higher than assistant greenkeeper has yet to be proved.

Greenkeeper D holds a Masters Degree in Turf Grass Science and has worked in greenkeeping for 10 years of which five years was as a Golf Course Manager. He/she is qualified and is fully competent to perform all Course Manager tasks.

Therefore, the way to assess one qualification against another is to look at competence. Vocational Qualifications indicate competence, Work Related Qualifications plus experience equals competence and experience can give competence without a qualification.

BIGGA is fully committed to maintaining high standards of greenkeeper education and training and through its membership of the GTC monitors and controls training standards. If you are concerned about training standards in general or at a particular training provider then please contact me at BIGGA House or David Golding at the GTC.

Review of Apprenticeships

Just when employers, employees and your Education and Training Manager were beginning to understand National Traineeships and Modern Apprenticeships, the Government has decided to review the schemes to bring them into line with other industrialised economies. Two- year Foundation Degrees will be introduced to link higher education to the world of work and all 13 to 19 year olds will be allocated a mentor to help ease the transition between education and work.

There will also be a new apprenticeship structure with National Traineeships becoming Foundation Modern Apprenticeships and Modern Apprenticeships will become Modern Advanced Apprenticeships. The aim is to improve the structure of the schemes and make major improvements in the skills and knowledge requirements.

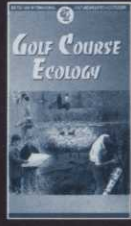
Specified off-the-job learning and specific minimum periods of learning will also be included. The Government has pledged an extra £30M to the scheme which it says will help to train 250,000 young people in 2001 (not all of them greenkeepers!)

STRI training courses

STRI will be running a five days of training course for golf greenkeepers from 13 to 17 November 2000. The programme comprises five consecutive one day courses on Grasses, Fertiliser, Diseases, Ecology and Irrigation. The cost of each one day course is £88 + VAT per person and £78 + VAT for STRI Subscribers. Discounts are available for those booking two or more sessions. Full details are available from Amy at STRI on 01274 565131.



ON COURSE WITH BIGGA EDUCATION



Golf Course Preparation Video
 £14.95 to BIGGA members
 £29.95 to non-members

Golf Course Reconstruction Video
 £14.95 to BIGGA members
 £29.95 to non-members

Ecology Book
 £3.00 to BIGGA members
 £7.00 to non-members

Ecology Video
 £14.95 to BIGGA members
 £29.95 to non-members

Raising the Standards of Mowing Management Video
 £14.95 to BIGGA members
 £29.95 to non-members

Setting the Standard in Spraying Application Video
 £14.95 to BIGGA members
 £29.95 to non-members