

## David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, clears the mist which sometimes surrounds the "who does what" in terms of greenkeeper education and training.

Some things change for the better, some things change for the sake of change and some things never change, thankfully in greenkeeper training, work-based training remains the tried and tested method of giving staff the skills they require to maintain the golf course.

In my privileged position with the GTC I can offer any disgruntled greenkeepers a very optimistic outlook for the profession. More and more golf club employers are looking for professional Course Managers who can maintain and manage their course and are willing to pay for that talent.

The balance between spending time ensuring the course is to the required standard and the management responsibilities now demanded is a fine line.

However, I think most top Course Managers will agree that you are judged on the golf course and that might give you a strong clue as to where I see the priorities in time spent.

Hopefully most readers in recent years will have seen how the GTC has focused much of its resources in the training of Course Managers as work-based trainers/assessors and to ensure the sectors qualifications reflect the employers needs from craft to management level.

This initiative has received not only excellent financial support from the GTC's funding bodies, including the EGU, SGU, WGU, PGA European Tour, BIGGA and the R&A but also these bodies have actively promoted to golf clubs the importance of having a well trained, competent Course Manager.

In recent years we have seen the Home Golf Unions hosting seminars to inform the golf clubs they represent about many subjects, including the importance of having well trained staff, the various training schemes available and the link to legislation.

The R&A's website, [www.bestcourseforgolf.org](http://www.bestcourseforgolf.org), has clear references to the role of the Course Manager and BIGGA promotes professionalism as the key to successfully managing a golf course.

One of the most important skills a Course Manager must have is that of staff motivation or team building.

Who was it that said the manager is only as good as his team? If the team play for you, there will be more goals than own goals, but get it wrong and it will very soon reflect on the course! This cliché can also be attributed to employers; a happy staff is a productive staff.

Staff development, in terms of greenkeeping, often depends on how the Course Manager keeps the employer fully updated on the "team" and,

having identified training needs, they know exactly where these can be obtained, the costs and the benefits to both the club and the individual.

One slightly worrying aspect of the work-based training system is when I hear some headmen stating, "I'm too busy to train the staff, that's the college's job" or "the old system was the best."

Maybe at best they are not getting the right level of support from their chosen provider, but at worst they really do not see themselves as the right person to pass on their skills and knowledge to their staff.

As for the old system I presume the City & Guilds Phases is what the vocational qualifications are being compared to and, whilst I understand there will be

comparisons, we have to move with the times, hence on the job – vocational - training has been introduced to all industries.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss any issues regarding today's education system and let us not forget the colleges still offer the more academic awards such as the HNC and the Foundation Degree.

The GTC will continue to work on reviewing the turf qualifications, but the most critical part of a greenkeeper's education is what is actually being taught and, while we provide a list of Approved Training Providers, we have recently taken the decision to develop a standard set of learning materials to assist our providers.

These learning materials have been developed by sector specialists in their particular subject area and embrace the best principles and practices that are based on upholding traditional greenkeeping.

On-line learning is now an option available from a major provider and the tried and tested distance learning for a HNC still continues to be popular.

The more traditional part-time route of day-release or block release has somewhat been overtaken by the learning "on the job" option.

Many GTC providers now give the employer and Course Manager the options of which delivery system they chose in order to suit their needs, and the most successful providers are the ones who actually visit the employer to discuss these options.

The GTC is at the heart of all the developments in greenkeeper education and please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss the options and your club/staffs' training needs.

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