

Education Update

Ken Richardson looks at the difference between education and training, who should pay for it and the help available towards the cost of education and training.

Education and Training

BIGGA regards the training of greenkeepers as its number one priority but what is training? Training is the process of teaching or learning a new skill. In other words it gives a worker the skills and competences to be able to do their job.

Education is the imparting and acquiring of knowledge through teaching and learning. In other words it gives people a wide range of knowledge that they can use within a job and within their everyday life.

It should also give them the ability to analyse facts and data to enable them to determine 'best practice'. All training should include some education, but education may or may not include training.

WHO SHOULD PAY FOR GREENKEEPER TRAINING?

The easy answer is the employer, i.e. the golf club. The reason for this is to ensure that all greenkeepers are capable of performing their duties to the standards required by the club in a safe and responsible manner.

Moreover, the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 include a regulation that says that employers should give adequate information, instruction and training to employees to ensure that they are competent to operate work place equipment. Therefore, it is a legal requirement that all employers, including golf clubs, ensure that their staff are properly trained and are assessed as competent to operate machinery and work equipment.

However, the cost of training may be met by the government and could be offered free of charge. Contact your chosen training provider/college for details.

Should golf clubs train all greenkeepers to the highest possible level? The answer to this is no. Training should be provided to enable greenkeepers to do their current job or to prepare them for promotion.

All greenkeepers should be given Induction Training, e.g. information on Health and Safety, Working Hours, Etiquette, Uniform etc, when they commence their employment. This training can then be followed by formal, on the job, training that provides them with basic greenkeeping skills, e.g. Cutting, Raking, Brushing, Setting Up the Course etc.

Induction training need not take a long time nor need to be expensive but any costs should be borne by the golf club. As stated above, formal training can be subsidised by the government and can, in some cases, cost nothing.

Further, formal, training is available for those greenkeepers wanting to move into supervisory and management positions and this training can, in some circumstances, also subsidised by the government.

BIGGA can help its members through its Education and Development Fund. This Fund can provide a refund of up to £350 to any member who has had to pay for his/her training. However, as I have stated above, there

is no excuse for golf clubs refusing to pay for appropriate training required by law.

Formal training and assessment can lead to the award of National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications and to other qualifications such as Foundation Degrees.

WHO PAYS FOR GREENKEEPER EDUCATION?

The answer to this question is 'it depends'. It depends on the reasons for the education course, whether the course is relevant to the greenkeeper's job or future job, whether the golf club has a budget for further education and even on the greenkeeper's country of residence.

Higher education in England/Wales, in Northern Ireland and in Scotland is bound by different rules. For example, Scottish residents studying for a higher national diploma at a Scottish college may not have to pay any tuition fees, whereas students in England may have to pay.

Some golf clubs pay all tuition fees, some pay some of the fees and some pay none of the fees. Those clubs that pay some or all of the tuition fees may stipulate that they require the greenkeeper to remain working at the club for a set time after completing a course. This should be included in the greenkeeper's terms and conditions of service (contract).

WHY BOTHER WITH EDUCATION AND TRAINING?

For the golf club, education and/or training ensures that their greenkeepers are trained and competent to prepare their golf course to the highest standards within an allocated budget. For greenkeepers, education and/or training gives them the skills to prepare golf courses to the highest standards.

Education and training costs money but, as I have outlined above, financial help is available from the government, from BIGGA, from the GTC and from the R&A. All golf clubs should have a training budget, especially as Health and Safety law states that training is a must.

Remember, that if you think that training is expensive try ignorance.

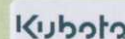


Unlock the doors to progress through BIGGA's Education and Development Fund - the key to a great future for greenkeepers, golf clubs and the game of golf.

Golden and Silver Key Membership is available to both companies and individuals.

For details, please contact Ken Richardson on 01347 833800 or via ken@bigga.co.uk

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