



MONITORING MATTERS

One of the GTC's main responsibilities is to monitor the delivery of education and training programmes for the greenkeeping sector.

In this article, David Golding the GTC's Education Director, explains how some of his contacts help him to ensure the quality of education and training is to the industries required standards.

For many years the GTC has maintained a list of Approved Training Providers, mainly agricultural and horticultural colleges where we suggest to employers and learners that the specialist greenkeeper courses are best delivered.

We as the industry have seen many changes in the way colleges have been managed, funded and addressed the Governments skills agenda. Fortunately the GTC has established a leading role in both developing turf specific qualifications and also reviewing the various qualifications and apprenticeships. This is a task where the GTC's technical committee adds specialist advisors, to ensure the vocational and more academic qualifications are meeting the sectors requirements.

One overall consideration through all of this groups work, is to make sure the awards relate to employment or occupational standards to use the official jargon!

We are very fortunate to have so many contacts that willingly join us and their input is invaluable. If I was to start naming them I might just happen to leave a name out and that would be unfair, so I would rather just say that the GTC do really appreciate your input.

This working group has to work within a framework established by the Lantra Sector Skills Council and Awarding Bodies such as the National Proficiency Test Council (now part of the City & Guilds Group) and the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA). It is at these meetings that the standards are discussed and now more often than not, approved due to the wide consultation process that our sector has established.

The GTC representing both the golf club employers and greenkeepers can now confidently state that we are in a prime position to ensure the content of the Sports turf vocational qualifications as well as the more college based HNC/D and Foundation Degree are as we require them. What is also very refreshing, is how the colleges, private training providers and Universities, such as Cranfield truly welcome industrial input through liaison meetings. I know that as part of the Inspection process these establishments have to show where they have industry "partnerships" and again these types of liaison meetings have been a feature for our sector since the sixties. There are some excellent personnel working for the training providers who are in regular contact with me often to support our efforts to ensure the standards within the qualifications are maintained. These people are often working either within a college or on the road, trying to implement vocational qualifications, often operating within an establishment system, which they know is far from ideal.

All I will say is that the loyalty you show to the turf sector is certainly appreciated by myself and without your tip-offs, positive feedback and overall commitment to the standards of turf courses my job and the aims and objectives of the GTC would be so much more difficult to achieve.

The GTC does feed your comments into the appropriate meetings and whilst it may take a little time, we more often than not do get a result!

The official verification and inspection of Approved Centres, is firmly the responsibility of the Awarding Bodies and the Inspectorate, but again we have forged an excellent relationship with the key personnel who operate on behalf of our sector.

All in all we do keep our eye on the ball most of the time, however we need you to work with us to ensure quality provision is available and when you feel the GTC can investigate a problem through its advisory network or indeed where excellent provision is available, please let us know.

My work with Ken and Sami at BIGGA also is great assistance, especially when the Student of the Year interviews are reviewed. It is very encouraging each year, when they report that the students who are both enjoying their work and making most progress in terms of qualifications, is when their Course Manager AND employer are involved in their training programme. If only this was the norm! Sadly too many learners on golf courses are let down by their "bosses" who still do not think that it is their job to train and educate staff!

Regular readers will know that while I do have a problem with this negative attitude and while I fully understand the current day pressures on Course Managers, I honestly believe that by becoming more formally involved in staff training you and the employer benefit tremendously and this is borne out by the students themselves. The important factor to remember in the whole concept of vocational qualifications, is that they are designed to be work-based and aimed at training staff to agreed national standards so who better to "control" the standards than Course Manager assessors? So many course managers, having attended assessor-training days, say the A1 qualification only formalises what they have been doing for years! Yes!

Many assessors feed in to me or via the GTC Liaison Officers information relating to the delivery of all the various sports turf awards. This is priceless to the GTC.

Please be reassured that the GTC will continue to work to maintain and where standards slip, improve the system for the benefit of the learner and the employer but please be part of our "honorary" advisory network, as we need your help.

Please feel free to contact the GTC on, Tel: 01347 838640
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