



## GOLF TAKES THE LEAD

David Golding, GTC's Education Director, invites golf club employers and greenkeepers to have an input into the review of the work-based vocational qualifications, N/SVQ Levels 2 & 3.

The GTC has had representatives at meetings arranged by the Lantra Sector Skills Council to review the current Sports Turf work-based qualifications. It is important that our sector is well represented at these meetings to protect the content of these increasingly popular awards. Regular readers of the GTC articles will know how important we see skills training within the range of turf programmes and qualifications. The review group initially reviews the skills employers require to maintain, supervise and manage a golf course or sports facility.

At this stage I should point out that the VQ's are Sports Turf and developed for both greenkeepers and grounds persons, it just so happens that our specialist sector have adopted the VQ's while the other "side" of turf have not.

Personally I believe this is a shame as there is such similarity in the professions however, the GTC has a responsibility to golf and we must remain focused on encouraging the employers we represent through the English, Scottish and Welsh Golf Unions to invest in staff training.

BIGGA is well represented at all meetings relating to development and the reviews of turf qualifications, with leading training providers in attendance the GTC ensures the group work towards ensuring employers needs are met in the standards.

The National Occupational Standards (NOS) are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the range of skills required by employers are identified.

In simple terms the group looks to the skills required by a greenkeeper right through to the manager.

Having identified the long list of skills these are then grouped to develop vocational qualifications and awarded a N/SVQ Level which the Governments accreditation authorities Qualifications & Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) approve.

While there is a Level 1 qualification, this includes a broad range of horticulture skills and can be useful for certain learners, I would suggest to the majority of staff either starting off as greenkeepers or spending the majority of their work maintaining the golf course, the Level 2 Sports Turf is the qualification they should be registered on.

It should be noted that the apprenticeship for greenkeepers embraces the N/SVQ Level 2 Sports Turf as well as the key skills of numeracy, literacy and communication.

The current Level 2 Sports Turf includes all the skills a greenkeeper should be competent in as well as the knowledge relating to each skill.

The level of knowledge and understanding required within a vocational qualification is often overlooked, however, please be reassured that the turf review group ensure all the basic information required is included.

The GTC, as the basis for the Level 2 review, invite comments on the current Training Manual sometimes referred to as the Black Book, which has been the main recording document by GTC Approved Training Providers since its introduction in 1994.

If you have any comments on the GTC's Training Manual please contact me direct.

The Level 3 Sports Turf is where the group is suggesting a mix of more technical and supervisory skills are brought together and aimed at providing employers with at least a person competent to supervise the maintenance of the golf course and the first line of management.

The list of skills grouped into units include Managing Information, Estimating resource requirements, Health and Safety, Irrigation, Drainage, Create grasses and planted areas, Managing sports turf areas.

In addition to the above, the review group are recommending at least two optional units be included at Level 3 - Carry out an ecological survey of the golf course and Plan the maintenance of equipment and machinery.

The ecology unit will require the candidate to walk the course to identify plants, animals and habitat types, report on the condition of the environment and record the data.

The planning of equipment and machinery maintenance will require the candidate to prepare a maintenance schedule/plan whether the work is carried out "in-house" or by an outside servicing agent.

The Advanced Apprenticeship includes the N/SVQ Level 3 Sports turf as well as the numeracy, literacy, communication and IT skills.

The consultation process will be co-ordinated by the Lantra SSC - [www.lantra.co.uk](http://www.lantra.co.uk) - but if you would like to discuss the present Sports Turf vocational qualifications please do not hesitate to contact the GTC direct.

The management standards have recently received accreditation and new a new Level 4 Sports Turf qualification is now available.

I will discuss the revised Level 4 qualification in detail in a future article.

Finally, both the QCA and SQA in partnership with industry through Lantra are ensuring that all other qualifications relate to the National Occupational Standards.

For the Sports Turf sector this involves the GTC being involved in with Lantra and the Awarding Bodies, City & Guilds/NPTC, SQA and Ed Excel to ensure all awards are relevant for our sector.

The formal qualifications for greenkeeping range from N/VQ's- Apprenticeships (work-based), to the National Certificate /Advanced NC, Certificate of Higher Education/HNC, Higher National Diploma/Foundation Degree and the B.Sc and Masters Degree which are the college/university based programmes.

The GTC staff and Board representatives will be in attendance at the Harrogate Week exhibition - so please come and visit us, but before that enjoy the festive season!

You can contact David direct at the GTC on Tel: 01347 838640 or email: [david@the-gtc.co.uk](mailto:david@the-gtc.co.uk)

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