



## GTC Education Director, David Golding, explains how you can have your say in the review of greenkeeper courses and qualification.

As we move into the New Year the GTC will be involved in carrying out one of its most important roles during the spring and summer and you can help us! As the independent body representing the golf club employers and greenkeepers, the GTC has been at the frontline of the development and review of all qualifications within the sports turf sector for many years.

Often I read "who is taking the lead" when it comes to greenkeeper education, training and qualifications and, while it's the GTC who are the designated body to do this, we are well respected by other land-based industries for the way we consult on all matters throughout our specialist sector. With the English, Scottish & Welsh Golf Unions, BIGGA and the R&A as the funding bodies plus additional support from the PGA European Tour we have the credibility and representation to influence the occupational standards for golf course maintenance and management.

It is this structure, which has truly put the GTC in the driving seat with the Government, and we now invite you to assist us to ensure the qualifications are appropriate for the employer and the greenkeeper. This year the GTC will be involved in the review of the N/SVQ's Levels 2 & 3 Sports Turf and the HNC/D in Scotland.

Centres approved by the Awarding Bodies NPTC (City & Guilds) and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) will be invited to contribute to the review, as they have the responsibility to deliver the programmes. However, the GTC invites you to have your say. These are typically colleges who have traditionally been the major providers to the sector.

Private Training Providers, such as GOSTA in Glasgow, will also be contributors to the review of the vocational qualifications. Also, individuals such as the leading turf lecturers can add their valued comments, but so can you! Those of you who have had any involvement in these qualifications, whether you are an employer, assessor or candidate/student please, let us know if you feel any changes to improve the qualifications should be considered by the review group.

We know that many land-based colleges have experienced difficulties in delivering vocational qualifications, as they are designed to be work-based. But the delivery of the qualifications is a separate issue to the development and review of the standards. The review focuses on the content of each qualification, the assessment requirements and with all vocational qualifications both practical skill and the related knowledge has to be assessed. Level 2 Sports Turf currently has seven Units and these are best explained in the GTC's training manual.

Those of you who are familiar with the manual will know that the GTC has also developed learning materials in hard-copy and CD format to assist the Training Providers, assessors



Converting theory from the college into practice on the course - you can have your input into greenkeeper training

and, of course, the students to access the correct information. We hope to have an exciting new learning option available very shortly. Watch this space!

Level 3 has nine Units, which range from technical skills and knowledge following on from the Level 2 plus supervisory skills. This qualification has proved the most difficult for young candidates to achieve. This is caused if they see Level 3 as a natural progression from Level 2 and their employer has not appreciated that supervisory duties are required to achieve the standards.

This 'problem' does not mean that the review group will necessarily be looking to lower the skills base at Level 3, as there are college based courses available that adequately cover the knowledge within Level 3. Plus, when the student is in a supervisory position the Level 3 qualification will be more appropriate.

The Higher National Certificate (HNC) or the NPTC (City & Guilds) Advanced National Certificate (ANC) are excellent qualifications and should be offered by Training Providers as an option to those employers/students when Level 3 is not deemed appropriate or achievable. The HN awards are the more academic route leading to the B.Sc and M.Sc in Sports Turf Science / Surfaces.

The HN review in Scotland is well under way and while the HNC and HND is a very tried and tested qualification it is important that the award is reviewed and endorsed by the employers and greenkeepers. The Scottish Industrial Liaison Committee (SILC) ensures that the review process is carried out in accordance with the Scottish Qualifications Authority's guidelines. The SILC is an excellent example of a Committee comprising representatives from the Training Providers, BIGGA, SGU, SQA and the GTC, who work together on all matters relating to greenkeeper training.

However, this is your opportunity to influence the content of the various awards. Current and past students in particular can assist us and please be assured that the review group will consider all comments and feedback.

The GTC can be contacted on 01347 838640.

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