



BACK TO SCHOOL

In this month's article David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, looks at the qualifications which offer greenkeeping students a route to a Degree.

While tremendous progress has been made by the greenkeeping sector to implement vocational training and qualifications we must also continue to promote the more college/university-based awards.

The GTC, in recent years, has been invited by Awarding Bodies to be represented on validation panels to discuss qualifications ranging from the Higher National Certificate (HNC) to the Masters Degree in Sports Turf Surfaces.

We have been very aware of not approving a proliferation of qualifications, all of which may have been submitted by different institutions with a slightly different turf or golf related title.

The GTC has continually discussed the need to keep a small range of qualifications for sports turf while accepting that the institutions will offer the courses through different modes of delivery e.g. distance learning, full-time, on-line.

Greenkeepers with the work-based vocational qualifications should also consider the HN qualifications as they are designed to compliment occupational standards.

I can reassure any greenkeeper that has progressed "through the tools" that the HNC and Foundation Degree are not just for full-time students, far from it!

Just before I start to lose some of you with all the various titles of qualifications, I can confirm that England, Scotland and Wales all have a HNC and while the progression north of the border is to the Higher National Diploma (HND) in Golf Course Management, the HND in England and Wales has been re-badged as the Foundation Degree (FD) in Sports Turf.

Still with me? Some of the older readers will remember the criticism especially from employers that students entering the industry straight from full-time college with a HND had very limited greenkeeping skills.

Well Higher qualifications were never designed to be skill based (they are the more vocational qualifications such as N/SVQ's) however, the GTC has to listen to the employers and as this issue has been mirrored by other industries, the relatively new Foundation Degree takes into account both the in depth, turf related, knowledge requirements and skills.

The FD is therefore an ideal option for those greenkeepers with VQ's seeking to embark on a course with a Degree at the end of programme.

How many greenkeepers would have even dreamt of achieving a Degree when they embarked on a career having left school at the earliest opportunity!

All this can be achieved without giving up your job and several GTC Providers will be willing to discuss the various study options to achieve your goal.



This could be You!

The GTC will continue to support the HN qualifications and is fully aware that the majority of students/learners will prefer the work-based route but of equal importance are the HNC/D and B.Sc and M.Sc Degree qualifications.

Why every time there is a national debate on Degrees the media, in particular Radio 2, seem to mention Golf Course maintenance as one of the qualifications having no worth to Nations productivity, I don't know, but again the Government will continue to approve only the qualifications where industry has given its full support and the GTC certainly continue to support the academic qualifications.

The M.Sc offered by Cranfield might only have a few students registering annually on the programme but great credit to the staff and the advisory board who continually monitor the programme to meet both the students and employers needs and also the changes in technology, environmental issues and turf grass research.

This consultative process is a condition of all qualification approvals, which the GTC insists on and fortunately Government inspectors look for when reviewing programmes.

Ask your local provider how your current qualifications and experience can be accredited towards a qualification.

Why not consider the HNC/D - Degree qualifications? Visit the Training Provider page on the GTC website for more details on the various courses on offer: www.the-gtc.co.uk

If you wish to discuss independently which qualification or training course might be best suited to you, please do not hesitate to contact the GTC.

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