



## APPROVED TRAINING PROVIDERS

David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, explains the purpose behind the recent meeting of its Approved Training Providers held at GTC headquarters, Aldwark Manor, York.

The GTC has the responsibility to ensure the employers and greenkeepers it represents are served by its network of training providers by way of quality education, which can be delivered in a variety of ways e.g. part or full time at a college, on the job or on-line.

The choice of delivery is very much up to the student and if employed, the employer.

Some employers still consider it best that the student attends college even when they have registered them on a work-based training qualification.

I still feel there is a great deal of misunderstanding of the modern vocational qualifications and without wanting to bore regular readers I will briefly explain the structure and content of a vocational qualification.

Vocational qualifications include skills AND the related knowledge which are assessed using nationally agreed standards NOT individuals standards!

The VQ's are nationally accredited National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's) in England, Wales & Northern Ireland and Scottish Vocational Qualifications in Scotland – NOTE: the content of the N/SVQ's are exactly the same at all Levels.

Groups of skills are agreed and become Units which in turn are grouped into Levels of qualifications e.g. N/SVQ Level 2,3 or 4.

In Sportsturf there are specific N/SVQ Levels 2 & 3 with a Sports Turf Manager qualification at Level 4.

The GTC has a major input into the content of the qualification ensuring the employers either recruiting using the appropriate level of qualification or reviewing staff training requirements can use the VQ's to identify particular staff's skill and/or knowledge requirements.

The crucial element of any VQ is the quality of assessment and I don't think I need to repeat the fact that this is where much of my time is spent ensuring that Centres are delivering the various programmes at to the national standards laid down by the Awarding Bodies NPTC & SQA.

Back to the main point of this article, our providers meeting. The importance of what our providers are teaching turf students has been raised over many years and while the GTC can ensure the content of the qualifications meets employment and employers needs we also attempt to ensure the theory or knowledge is also to a national standard.

The GTC invited speakers to address the provider delegates on subjects, which are today's major issues in terms of golf course maintenance and management.

Each speaker was asked to provide notes, which the GTC can circulate as additional learning materials to turf students over and above the current set of Level 2 and 3 materials through its Approved Centres.

Subjects included, sustainable sportsturf management, climate change, waste management, pesticide thematic strategy, water regulations and environmental management were all addressed.

The GTC, while promoting vocational training, also promotes the college based Higher education qualifications such as the Higher National Certificate/Diploma, Foundation Degree, B.Sc and M.Sc.

No matter which course or qualification a greenkeeping student is registered on the GTC is looking to ensure they get a balanced education where the ideals are balanced with the reality of employer/customer requirements. We need to ensure our providers do teach and discuss all aspects of turf maintenance but at all times be in touch with the current trends in the sector hence the recent GTC workshop.

The workshop proved to be a very worthwhile event and the GTC will continue to work on raising the maintenance issues facing the sport with all parties.

Clearly the Home Unions and BIGGA are committed to the awareness campaign through conferences and seminars but we accept that each golf club has to take the responsibilities for the standards it requires.

The GTC is committed to ensure its provider network teaches best practice in aspects of course maintenance providing qualified turf professionals for the employers.

The best practice information produced for use by the providers is also available within the hard copies of the Level 2 & 3 and will be sent out with future copies of the CD Rom format.

The learning materials are available from the GTC direct –  
Tel: 01347 838640 Email: [golf@the-gtc.co.uk](mailto:golf@the-gtc.co.uk) or visit the GTC website: [www.the-gtc.co.uk](http://www.the-gtc.co.uk)

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