



CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEPARTMENT

In this article David Golding, GTC's Education Director, looks at the increasing references to CPD or Continuing Professional Department in all industries and how we can all benefit from jumping on this topical bandwagon

While I have often been accused of working in a world of acronyms and I admit education is full of them, we should all take advantage of those which can bring us great benefit.

One such acronym is CPD and as BIGGA has a CPD scheme for its members let us have a look at the opportunities open to us all. We can all sit back on our experiences, and maybe qualifications gained years ago, and think I don't need to attend seminars, exhibitions or training courses. I know from personal experience, hardly a day goes by when an invitation comes across my desk to attend a seminar, workshop or exhibition.

The key is to choose those events which will bring most benefit to me personally, my employer and colleagues. It could even be a colleague would benefit most by attending some of these events, as it is important that everybody gains some CPD at regular intervals. In greenkeeping there are always events advertised both locally and nationally, you cannot possibly attend them all.

Let us have a look at some of the opportunities for greenkeepers to gain CPD. Exhibitions, where a range of products and machinery are there for all to view and at least find out what is the most up to date available, even though you might not be able to afford it in this years budget!

More often than not, exhibitions have education programmes attached to them, when invited speakers share their knowledge and experiences with delegates, all CPD. The most obvious CPD is when you are registered on a formal training course, qualification or apprenticeship scheme, but I would encourage everybody to also look at the bite-size CPD events. Employers especially need to be aware of the minimum legislative requirements and while in the main the industry has moved forward in terms of improved working conditions for employees, we still hear of horror stories regarding maintenance facilities. Health & Safety at all levels is an integral part of all sports turf qualifications and with NPTC Certificates of Competence available through the GTC Approved Training Provider network, we really encourage employers and employees to invest in these courses - There are also specialist H&S advisors awaiting to assist you, a little investment in training may save a hefty fine.

The new GTC-HSE Guidelines are available on our website with a link to the BIGGA-GCMA Safety Management System which has all the information available to ensure you and your employer/employees are compliant. The National Register of Sprayer Operators (NRoSO), the Safe Use of Pesticides (PA 1, 2 & 6 etc) are excellent examples of CPD administered by the NPTC visit www.nroso.org.uk or www.nptc.org.uk. BASIS is a Professional Register for Managers involved in pesticides and fertiliser applications visit www.basis-reg.com for details of training courses in this specialist area. The Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) has a range of short courses including a specific Ecology course www.stri.co.uk

Another established organisation the British Turf Landscape Irrigation Association (BTLIA) has specialised courses visit www.btlia.org.uk The BTLIA works in partnership with a limited number of GTC Approved Training Providers.

The IOG, and of course BIGGA, have been the greatest promoters of CPD in the sector and their in-house courses have benefited hundreds of their members with short courses ranging from basic machinery operator use to management training.

Yes, sports turf organisations do work together when education, training and qualifications are concerned, as many readers know, the formal qualifications from National/Scottish Vocational Qualification's (N/SVQ's), National Certificate (NC), Advanced National Certificate (ANC) and Higher awards including the Degree are have SPORTS TURF in the title!

Last month we said farewell and happy retirement to Ken Richardson, BIGGA's Education & Training Manager and with Sami Collins and Rachael Duffy now forming the BIGGA Learning & Development team there will be no shortage of CPD development! Sami has administered the BIGGA CPD scheme since its introduction and I encourage all greenkeepers to register as it is a constant reminder for you to update your portfolio of CPD.

The Home Unions of England (EGU), Scotland (SGU) and Wales (GUW) have, for some years, hosted seminars and workshops all designed to engage golf club employers as well as greenkeepers in the best advice available to improve golf courses - look out for an autumn series in England and Wales. All these seminars are developed in association with the GTC and are eligible to CPD accreditation.

The R&A have also become more actively involved in golf course management through the promotion of the best practice website www.bestcourseforgolf.org, hosting seminars and ongoing support to the GTC.

There are many other examples of CPD within the sector so sincere apologies if I have forgotten any organisation or individual!

Finally the GTC website has had an update so why not pay us a visit. www.the-gtc.co.uk

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