

QUALITY EDUCATION



The GTC's annual workshop for its Approved Training Providers was held at Aldwark in late June and the event once again (as you would expect) focused on the quality of greenkeeper education, training and qualifications.

David Golding, the GTC's Education Director gives us a report on the event and explains how this annual event is so much more than a talk shop.

The GTC invited guest speakers from ENTO Direct, Lantra SSC, NPTC/City & Guilds and the R&A to compliment a workshop theme, which always generates debate but concludes with recommendations aimed at ensuring an improvement in the delivery of current courses and qualifications.

The mood for the workshop was set when Steve Hyatt from ENTO Direct gave delegates a timely reminder on the facts within the NVQ Code of Practice (COP).

Steve stated how so many Centres seem to interpret the COP incorrectly and he gave examples which certainly started delegates whispering and before long the questions started and given the importance of the COP, an excellent presentation led us into the next speaker Rod Jones, the Verification and Services Manager for the Awarding Body NPTC, part of the City & Guilds Group.

Rod and three of his External Verifier team are very much at the heart of the standards for the delivery and quality assurances within Centres offering Vocational qualifications including Sports Turf.

Breakout sessions followed when delegates

looked at learner portfolios and discussed all matters relating to the delivery of VQ courses.

So what did this session mean for the future learner on VQ courses?

Rod and the NPTC Verification team agreed that they would certainly be continuing the supportive role to their Centres and portfolios should only contain relevant documents which should be authenticated by assessors with far more use of signposting to where the ACTUAL evidence is and that is on the golf course!

In summary, it is not the quantity of paper in the learner's portfolio it is the quality of the work and a clear audit trail, which does not need to include reams and reams of paper!

Good news or what?

I am sure all the Centre representatives present will be now viewing visits from their External Verifiers with a greater knowledge of how learners knowledge and skill can be shown without a wheelbarrow full of photographs, candidates written statements, assessor and witness testimonies, questions and answer sheets...

A good Internal Verification system is key to any successful system and trust in the assessor paramount - this is often the Course Manager watch this space.

Any golf club with a qualified assessor on site has a great asset and they are key to greenkeeping staff development.

So how could we follow such an interesting session? Easy. Feed and water the delegates let them discuss matters into the early hours (does this sound familiar greenkeepers?) when so much is gained from the informal discussions!

Bright and early next morning we discuss the future of qualifications and Liz Pridgeon from the Lantra Sector Skills Council gave delegates a comprehensive update on how in each country was reviewing qualifications to ensure they met employers requirements and how National Occupational Standards had been reviewed and the GTC had been very pro-active at all meetings held by Lantra to ensure the golf course sector

had a range of qualifications both vocational and academic.

Liz also explained how bite-size learning would also suit some employers and learners who did not require a full qualification albeit it would still be for industry bodies like the GTC to cluster Units into full qualifications to match job profiles e.g. Greenkeeper, GC Supervisor and GC Manager.

Liz continued to encourage the Provider representatives to continue to work with organisations like the GTC to ensure the delivery methods meet industries needs.

In conclusion delegates accepted how qualifications would fit into a credit framework and that a European Qualification Framework would allow for transferability of skills.

Just as Liz was spelling out the future the final speaker Nick Park representing the R&A also explained a new tool to which Course Managers could use to their advantage. A Benchmarking System very much in its infancy is available through the R&A's website www.bestcourseforgolf.org and Nick encouraged delegates to view the site and incorporate the use of the service into all levels and courses of greenkeeper training at their Centres.

Note: Further information on both Liz's and Nicks subjects can be viewed in the latest On Course newsletter, June 2008.

Please visit the GTC website www.the-gtc.co.uk or for a free hard copy contact the office on 01347 838640.

Within the workshop Nick Bisset, Chair of the GTC Technical Committee, and I gave delegates an update on the priorities for the GTC and how everybody with a passion for greenkeeper education and training has the opportunity to influence the future by keeping in touch with the GTC.

For a list of Approved colleges, private providers including BIGGA and STRI visit the GTC website www.the-gtc.co.uk

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