



AWARDING BODIES

David Golding, GTC Education Director, comments on companies such as Flybe and McDonalds having "been given the authority to Award their own certificates"

Why shouldn't Greenkeeping have similar status given our commitment to training staff using the Governments National Framework for qualifications?

Traditional Awarding Bodies are working with Blue Chip employers to accredit the standards for the various staff job profiles and while it was great publicity for the companies involved there is nothing new in this development!

The GTC has worked with the established Awarding Bodies for many years. This partnership approach has been of great benefit as the GTC representing the golf club employers and greenkeepers has ensured there is a range of formal qualifications specific to the sector.

The GTC seized the opportunity when Government introduced vocational qualifications in the late '80s and has been instrumental in ensuring the content of the qualifications incorporates the skills and knowledge at the various levels. No longer can individual establishments accredit what they think industry wants by way of qualifications, as they have to be approved by industry through the Sector Skills Council - in our case the Lantra SSC.

The development, review and accreditation process of greenkeeping qualifications is very transparent through both the GTC and Lantra SSC. The GTC has a major input to all matters relating to training programmes and qualifications. The consultation process is open to anyone who cares to assist the industry to ensure the learner and the employers interests are catered for. While the GTC technical committee has representation from greenkeeper, employers and training providers we encourage a wider input through the consultation process. How can you get involved? The GTC website will post any qualification which is due for review and this will help to ensure we get as much input as possible to feed into the consultation process.

This industry control of the standards and qualifications came about after much lobbying by greenkeepers in the '60s, '70s and '80s on behalf of both their fellow greenkeepers but also the golf club employers who supported the battle for specific greenkeeping qualifications.

Greenkeeping and Groundsmanship are united as Sports Turf at meetings to discuss standards and qualifications and while we might be included into broader industry groups within the Lantra SSC eg Amenity Horticulture or, worse still, Landscape, rest assured there is not a better-organised specialist sector than Golf Greenkeeping.

The GTC is introducing an email alert service which will keep you informed on all matters that the GTC is involved. To register for this just visit the GTC website www.thegtc.co.uk

Why does the GTC still remain loyal to the Government's policies for

education and training? The Government is encouraging employers to become actively involved in developing National Occupational Qualifications and supports them with funding subsidies through various schemes.

The GTC has claimed a recent success with the Qualifications & Curriculum Authority (QCA) the regulating body for England in association with other countries co-ordinating a test and trial project with the SSC's aimed at introducing a Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

What is a QCF? In simple terms it will be a database of UNITS. Each unit will have learning outcomes and have a credit value based on the number of hours learning a learner would be expected to need to reach competency including the required knowledge.

The Government Inspectors, in the main, have judged our Centres/ Approved Training Providers on how many Level 2's, Level 3, 4 candidates have achieved the FULL qualifications or apprenticeship frameworks. Any learner who has achieved six or seven Units but has failed to gain say one Unit of the N/SVQ Level 2 the Centre is seen as failing! Something has to change.

Unit certification is an obvious way forward to correct this crazy situation and it will also have the huge benefit of receiving funding Unit by Unit instead of only full qualifications at the various Levels receiving funding support.

The QCF has the potential to be a great opportunity for our sector and in partnership with our Approved Training Provider Centres and Awarding Bodies short courses in 1,2 or more Units will receive funding support and, at long last, our Centres will be able to offer what the learners and employers have been requesting.

Not every greenkeeper needs to achieve a full qualification, albeit by grouping the appropriate Units we will still be able to have full Greenkeeper, Supervisor and Manager qualifications, but maybe at long last Unit funding is imminent.

We sincerely hope the QCF will be introduced and with our pan-European initiative on greenkeeping standards reaching a critical stage, all EU countries will have to map their current qualifications to ensure they fit into a European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Contact David to discuss any of the developments: david@thegtc.co.uk or: 01347 838640

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