



QUALITY ASSURED SCHEME



In his latest article David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, explains the introduction of a GTC Quality Assured Scheme for Centres, Colleges and Training Providers.

Regular GI readers must have noticed that during recent months this column has continued to remain positive despite the trend of negative publicity both within the national media and the golfing press.

Like many organisations, the GTC now has to operate within a much reduced budget but I guess we are fortunate, we are still in business!

This is still very much down to the continued support from our supporters (shown on this page) but I only hope that during the next few months and years the GTC can now focus on what the "game" often takes for granted - well maintained golf courses.

I suppose it is credit due to many people that we have a worldwide respected structure of training, education and qualifications for greenkeepers – a structure that has something for everybody, whether you are an employer, greenkeeper or somebody considering entering the profession.

A key role of the GTC is to direct employers and students to those Centres and Training Providers who have met criteria designed to ensure that quality turf education and training programmes, are available.

It is important to understand that many colleges, organisations and individuals offer turf education, training and qualifications but the new GTC Quality Assured scheme with its own logo will increasingly become a benchmark for quality.

The introduction of a GTC Quality Assured Scheme is the result of a period of review, by the GTC's Technical Committee, of the current criteria by which a network of Approved Training

Providers has been promoted to employers and greenkeepers.

The entire current network of Providers has been invited to join the Quality Assured Scheme and from April 1 you should be looking out for the new GTC Quality Assured logo as this will be a sign that the Centre or Training Provider has met the GTC's new criteria.

The GTC will be updating its approved network of providers. There will be Centres who have met the new criteria where formal greenkeeping qualifications are offered. There will also be Training Providers who have met the new criteria introduced for companies and individuals, who offer training courses mapped to the national occupational standards but not offering nationally recognised qualifications.

The review of the Provider network will ensure the GTC in association with its supporter organisations, direct employers and students to those Centres and Training Providers who have met the revised criteria.

It should be noted that there will still be many establishments and organisations offering both qualifications for greenkeepers and informal training courses, but the GTC will promote only those who are committed to working with the GTC.

Work-based training, an apprenticeship scheme and academic qualifications including B.Sc and M.Sc are now all available, offered by a network of private providers, Colleges and Universities throughout Britain.

The fact that the GTC has continued to work within the Government guidelines on education allows us to have a major input into the national standards for greenkeeping from which the range of qualifications are developed.

The GTC, while being involved in standards and qualifications, are still working to try and ensure funding support is available to make training affordable.

We regularly see new schemes introduced to hopefully allow the Government to meet its targets for the Skills Agenda but all of this spin relies on industries, such as the GTC, with its Centres buying into the current system.

The Higher Education sector has increased fees for academic qualifications and I can only say that, while the GTC supports the Centres seeking to offer the HE courses, not all employers see the benefit of these types of qualifications.

During the last 12 months one of the GTC Centre's has recorded a dramatic increase in student numbers for the Foundation Degree (HND in Scotland) and this is encouraging as it is an excellent qualification designed to give students the opportunity to study for a HE qualification part-time while remaining in work.

The costs for this course are subsidised by the Government but nowhere near the amount of funding given to meeting the Skills Agenda.

It is therefore down to employers to support employees seeking to study but the ongoing Bursaries available through BIGGA and the R&A have helped many students.

That's all for this month folks, coming next month news on The R&A – GTC project involving Approved Centre turf staff through "S Factor" workshops throughout Britain starring the Gingerbread men, among others.

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