



Greenkeepers Training Committee



David Golding, Education Director,
with a monthly update from the GTC

The last few months have been hectic in trying to protect the greenkeeping sector as the Government are determined to introduce a new system for vocational - work based qualifications for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

I will try to explain the changes highlighting the key titles which will be worth remembering.

Firstly, every country within the European Union is been encouraged to review and align ALL qualifications into a EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (EQF).

Each country will have a slight variation on titles to align to the EQF:

England has the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

Scotland has the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

Wales has the Credit and Qualifications for Wales (CQfW)

On behalf of the sector I attend meetings to ensure the National Occupational Standards (NOS) are consistent across all countries, in other words the skills sets and knowledge requirements are the same.

The National Occupational Standards for greenkeeping are set at three levels:

Golf Greenkeeper – Golf Course Supervisor – Golf Course Manager

It is from these standards that the various qualifications are developed which can either be work based (vocational) or academic, college based.

For many years the GTC has battled at the highest level of Government to ensure our specialist sector has relevant qualifications. We must never fall back into a “by- product” of horticulture or even worse agriculture in terms of education, training and qualifications.

GTC Approved Centres are currently adjusting their various programmes to the changes which are as follows:

SCOTLAND: This is the easy bit (for now), work to align the SVQ's,

NC, HNC-D is underway but there are no current changes to any of these qualifications.

ENGLAND & WALES: From September 2009 NVQ's are being replaced in the majority of industries by new work based Diplomas.

Learners currently registered on NVQ's will have time to complete their qualifications but all new learners will be registered on the new qualifications.

WHY do we have to change titles I hear you ask?

Any readers who have been involved in NVQ's may have experienced issues with some learners struggling to achieve the full qualification due to a variety of reasons.

Well one of the main reasons for the changes (as highlighted in the Leitch report to Government) is that many employers require short courses for their staff, therefore the Government has promised funding will be made available to Centres-colleges to offer short courses, using the Units from the new Diplomas as well as the full qualifications.

The NVQ Level 2 Sports Turf (Greenkeeping) will be known as the Diploma in Greenkeeping

There is no change to the content of the new qualification and the gtc training manual will still be the appropriate document to record learners evidence. A new index has been developed for centres in England and Wales.

Every Unit within the new Diplomas has been given a CREDIT VALUE, each Credit equates to 10 hours. This is the average number of hours it should take to train a new learner, support/mentor and assess them as competent e.g. Prepare and operate a tractor and attachments Unit has a CREDIT VALUE OF 5 (50 HOURS).

Depending on the Units CREDIT VALUES learners will gain an Award or Certificate for achieving Units from within the Diploma qualification.

The NVQ Level 3 Sports Turf (Greenkeeping) will be known as the Diploma in Golf Course Supervision

There are changes at this level

In Brief

After nearly 20 years of industries trying their best to adopt and implement National & Scottish Vocational Qualifications (N/SVQ's) the Government has decided to change the title NVQ. David explains why it is an absolute minefield, especially now as devolution of power to the various countries and Parliaments within the UK, is starting to affect education.

The GTC is funded by:



designed to give better flexibility to employers and learners by the introduction of mandatory and optional Units to make up the full Diploma.

Rather than list all of the new Units and Credit Values here I will post them on the GTC website.

The N/SVQ Level 4 Sports Turf Management remains unchanged but will become the Diploma in Golf Course Management once the Units have been through the review of content and credit value process.

All of the more academic higher qualifications within Sports Turf, HNC-D in Scotland and the Foundation Degree & B.Sc remain unchanged.

I feel I should apologise for what for many might feel is an unnecessary change in qualifications and could easily lead to confusion for employers, learners and even Centre staff but the GTC will continue to try and maintain standards of education, training and qualifications and make the transition as painless as possible.

Finally, whilst there should be more flexibility with the forced changes there is even more reason for employers to seek the subsidised courses.

Please be reassured, the GTC will continue to maintain standards for our sector in partnership with its representative bodies, the British Home Unions and BIGGA and through its Approved Centres network.

I will close as I started by mentioning Europe, it is the new revised Units which have been adopted by the pan-European greenkeeping standards working group and this is true recognition for all of those involved in supporting the GTC with its ongoing work.

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