



# Greenkeepers Training Committee

In a new series, the GTC has invited representatives from its Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers to discuss their particular specialism within the sports turf sector



This month the GTC has invited Andy Wight, Head of Work based Training at Oaklands College, to share his knowledge and experience on delivering the Apprenticeship Scheme for greenkeepers and why employers and Course Managers should consider recruiting or registering staff on this Government accredited scheme

**“Apprenticeship” is the current buzzword and the government’s vision for the future of training in the UK. The numerous apprentice frameworks are currently under review and once again, industries are set for more changes. The government’s view is that apprenticeships should be a choice for young people i.e. equal to that of a college Further Education qualification or in the case of higher apprenticeships, Degree level.**

## What is an apprenticeship and how does it work?

An apprenticeship is a formal, agreed framework of education and training which has been set by a lead body on behalf of industry. In the case of greenkeeping, the Lead Body is LANTRA. The GTC represents both golf club employers and greenkeepers and have ably, for many years, ensured both employers and apprentices have a “fit for purpose” apprenticeship scheme which has become an exemplar for other sectors.

The framework includes:

- \* **the main work based qualification (Level 2 or 3 Greenkeeping)**
- \* **functional skills in maths and English**
- \* **personal thinking and learning skills**
- \* **employer rights and responsibilities**
- \* **on and off the job training**

This list includes some on the job and independent assessments. On the job training happens

every day at work - learning to use a mower, lay turf etc. Off the job training does not necessarily mean the apprentice has to attend college. It could be at work using an office but it must not be part of the apprentice’s normal routine. It could also be studying online using the employer’s computer.

Many apprentices enjoy the flexibility of the scheme but a key component is that there must be an agreement between the employer, the apprentice and the Centre, of who does what and when.

This is done through an agreed Individual Training Plan. Equally it could be part of a day or block release course at a local college, which has been the traditional delivery method for many years. Modern technology and the important role Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers have in the apprenticeship scheme has given employers and the apprentices choices on their preferred delivery method.

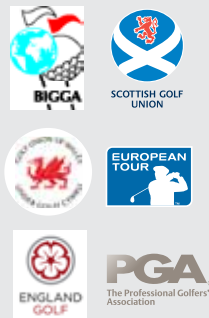
Greenkeeping apprenticeships are available on two levels; one includes the Level 2 work based diploma, SVQ in Scotland qualification and one includes the Level 3 Sports turf qualification. Young apprentices will always commence on the Level 2 apprenticeship as the Level 3 includes supervisory skills.

## Why are apprenticeships good for the employee?

The employee has employment for the duration of the framework and gains a set of skills and qualifications that they can use to progress in the industry.



The GTC is funded by:



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## Why are they good for the employer?

Government funding support is often available for apprenticeships. Employers in England can currently receive a grant of up to £1500 for each apprentice they take on.

Scotland and Wales often have funding incentives and support to encourage an employer to recruit a young person who will bring fresh ideas and skills into the workplace.

Apprentices can make an organisation more effective, productive and competitive by addressing its skills gaps directly.

Apprenticeship training for 16 to 19 year olds is free of charge to the employer. Note – the funding of apprenticeships is subject to

change and it is advisable to check with your chosen GTC Quality Assured Centre for the latest information.

## Is an apprenticeship for everyone?

In essence yes, there are no age restrictions on apprenticeships at present (although currently only 16 to 19 year olds are fully funded).

The only requirement is that the apprentice must pass the English and Maths requirement of a framework.

In a few cases, where the person may have a learning issue such as dyslexia or extremely low English or Maths skills, a Centre will offer additional learning support before signing up an individual onto the apprenticeship scheme.

## How apprenticeships can work well - a case study

Simon Torr, a greenkeeper at Bearwood Lakes Golf Club, is a mature level 3 apprentice, studying with Oaklands College. For Simon, the apprenticeship offered him and his employer a cost effective method of gaining his level 3 Sports Turf work based Diploma qualification (formerly NVQ).

Simon uses the Smart assessor e-portfolio to upload his evidence. He likes the freedom this gives him to monitor his own progress and see what tasks he still has to cover. In addition, he can communicate with his assessor and have his work assessed at any time by his tutor without the need for a face to face meeting.

The key to ensuring an apprentice progresses well through the scheme is a good initial assessment by a Centre. For example, Simon completed English and Maths tests as well as a skills scan to look at the areas he was competent in and those he was not. This initial assessment and close liaison between his tutor and Dan Lightfoot, his Course Manager, meant that everyone was aware which skills he needed to gain.

This allowed the Centre and Dan to ensure Simon received the training and practice to become competent in the areas of work required by the Standards within the qualification. School exam certificates can assist greatly in this initial assessment and prevent duplication of training within the scheme.

Simon commented: “An apprenticeship has enabled me to get the qualifications I need and the functional skills remind me of some skills I have not used fully for a while but will require as I progress up the career ladder”.

Dan added: “Apprenticeships offer me a suitable way of reducing training costs and I benefit from giving a valued member of staff a career enhancing experience”. So the message from employers and apprentices is that when it works well an apprenticeship is a valued experience.



**“An apprenticeship has enabled me to get the qualifications I need and the functional skills remind me of some skills I have not used fully for a while but will require as I progress up the career ladder”**

**Simon Torr, Bearwood Lakes GC**

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