Assessment plan: Golf Greenkeeper

1. Introduction and Overview

This apprenticeship is designed to operate as the professional standard for people working as a Golf Greenkeeper within the industry.

The model has been driven by an employer steering group, and then refined through the Technical Working Group consisting of employers, training providers and assessment experts including the Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) and BIGGA. The GTC is an employer led organisation representing 1900 golf clubs through England Golf and also has the full support of BIGGA the Professional Body for Greenkeepers and Golf Course Managers.

The principles driving the design of the assessment plan are as follows:

- 1. Maximum relevance to the job wherever possible
- 2. Integration with day-to-day responsibilities wherever possible
- 3. Added value to the apprentice's journey, both during and at the end of the apprenticeship

2. Assessment Methods

The methodology has been designed taking into account that this is a practical standard which is underpinned by technical and scientific knowledge that will allow the apprentice to develop the skills and knowledge across different types and set ups of courses.

Recommended training

We recommend learning is based on the GTC's Training Manual, which is the recognised standard for operating in the sector. The manual is in the public domain and is available at www.the-gtc.co.uk. It is recommended that centres delivering the apprenticeship standard use the training manual. The Training Manual sets out all the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to be a competent golf greenkeeper and can be used as a Learning Journal for the apprentice. Appendix 2.

- The Employer can use the Training Manual to develop a training plan, to discuss and monitor progress on the apprenticeship, provide feedback and guide development, with the support of the training provider.
- Regular check points between the Employer and the training provider will take place to ensure that the apprentice is on track to complete the learning, and agree how any issues will be addressed.

The training provider will play an important part in supporting this by:

- i) Working with the employer (prior to the apprentice starting the apprenticeship) to understand the detail of the planned learning journey and their respective commitments
- ii) Delivering the knowledge requirements of the apprenticeship outlined in the training plan

- iii) Supporting the apprentice throughout the learning journey by providing advice and guidance on learning strategies and tools that will support the apprentice's preferred learning style and improve their learning agility
- iv) Supporting the employer in their commitments to the apprenticeship and by providing any additional training if required.

The formative assessment of the apprentice will be the joint responsibility of the employer and the training provider.

Final Assessment

The Final Assessment forms 100% of the assessment of achievement of the apprenticeship standard. The assessment will be developed by the partner Awarding Organisation(s), and delivered by the partner Awarding Organisation(s), working with the GTC, employers, and training providers and deliverers. Successful completion of the three component parts of the Final Assessment will lead to the award of a certificate by the Awarding Organisation(s) and then issuing of the Apprenticeship Certificate by FISSS (Federation for Industry Sector Skills & Standards).

The focus of the Final Assessment is on the apprentice being able to prove their competence in the role of Golf Greenkeeper. This entails demonstrating sufficiency of skills, knowledge and behaviours derived from the competencies set out in the standard. The final assessments will be mapped against the learning outcomes in the Apprenticeship Standard to ensure that all the learning outcomes are covered.

The Final Assessment will contain 3 components – **all components must be passed for the apprentice to be deemed competent.**

a **synoptic underpinning knowledge paper** made up of a combination of multiple choice and structured answer questions to be sat towards the end or at the end of the apprenticeship programme, in controlled conditions. This will be available on line to learners. The paper would be developed and administered by the Awarding Organisation(s). This will be graded pass/merit/distinction/fail. The paper will be developed against an agreed test specification and will be mapped to the knowledge learning outcomes in the Apprenticeship standard. The knowledge paper will contribute 30% to the overall grade of the golf greenkeeping certificate.

a **synoptic practical assessment** assessed by an independent assessor that requires the apprentice to complete a range of core practical activities, in controlled conditions. The activities will be chosen from a bank of tasks developed by the Awarding Organisation(s). The tasks will cover the range of essential skills that a golf greenkeeper is expected to demonstrate. The assessment will include a professional discussion with the independent assessor that will allow the apprentice to demonstrate knowledge of different conditions, seasons and course set up through a structured discussion. This assessment will cover both skills and knowledge requirements in the Apprenticeship standard, and will be mapped to these learning outcomes. This will be graded pass/merit/distinction/fail. The practical assessment will contribute 50% to the overall grade of the golf greenkeeping certificate.

a **personal statement** – the apprentice will use source material collected through the learning journey to develop a personal statement. The personal statement enables apprentices to reflect on their development over the apprenticeship period reviewing the impact of own activities and behaviours on (a) the business and (b) the team.

This personal statement will be assessed by an independent assessor, appointed by the awarding organisation. It will be assessed against grading criteria established by the awarding organisation to

the standard set during standardisation meetings, using standardised documentation and assessment guidance provided by the Awarding Organisation(s).

This will be graded pass/merit/distinction/fail. This will contribute 20% to the overall grade of the golf greenkeeping certificate.

The practical assessment will take place on the apprentice's own golf course.

Key requirements in the final assessment:

The different components in the final assessment will be graded (pass/merit/distinction/fail) and weighted. These weightings and grades will contribute to the final overall grade for the apprenticeship certificate. A certificate for achievement in the Final Assessment will be awarded jointly by the Awarding Organisation(s) and the Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) Ltd. This certificate, together with evidence of achievement in maths and English will then be presented to the Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards (FISSS) to issue the overarching apprenticeship certificate.

The end assessment will sample the skills, knowledge and behaviours as set out in the standard and will cover all of the outcomes set out in the apprenticeship standard. An assessment specification will be developed to demonstrate this coverage by the Awarding Organisation(s).

The apprentice has to pass all 3 elements of the end assessment to be awarded the final certificate. Where employer opt to use the GTC Training Manual, the apprentice will be required to demonstrate the skills, knowledge/understanding and behaviours of a competent greenkeeper, set out in the GTC Training Manual, **before** undertaking the synoptic knowledge test, practical assessment, and producing the personal statement. If unsuccessful, feedback will be provided and remedial action would be required by the apprentice before progressing to the final assessments.

Final Assessment timings and activities:

The process of setting up the Final Assessment will begin around 3 months before the completion of the apprenticeship as shown in the table below:

Timescale	Activity
Ongoing	Review progress and ensure on track as part of regular tracking of progress
	Employer and Training Provider identify any gaps and create a plan for the final 3 months to complete the learning
Up to 3 months before Completion (The Gateway)	Employer to decide timing of the end assessment based on the outcomes of the formative assessment process, with the guidance of the Training Provider, if required.

The training provider role:

The training providers will play a key part in the delivery of the apprenticeship by:

- 1. registering the apprentice with the Awarding Organisation(s) and providing the GTC with the details of the apprentices registered.
- 2. supporting the Employer to organise and coordinate the training and delivery.
- 3. providing training in the assessment process (including use of tools and application to ensure consistency) for staff (employer and training provider) involved in the formative assessment.
- 4. contacting the Awarding Organisation(s) to secure the services of an appropriately qualified independent' assessor from the Awarding Organisation(s) in consultation with the employer, informing the GTC of the timings.

Training Providers have been involved in the development of this assessment plan, and this is an area where they can bring their experience to bear and really add value to the employer. The exact balance between employer and training provider support is down to negotiation between the employer and training provider on service and price.

3. Ensuring Independence/Impartiality

The approach that we are taking is one that demonstrates clear **impartiality**, with the inclusion of a third party assessor, providing an **independent** view. **Impartiality** is delivered through the fact that **no** single party who has been involved in delivery can make the sole decision on competence.

The independent assessor will be recruited, trained and standardised by the Awarding Organisation(s). The independent assessor will be allocated by the Awarding Organisation(s) from a pool of approved assessors maintained by the Awarding Organisation(s). The independent assessor must have met the criteria for independent assessors defined by the GTC, BIGGA and the Awarding Organisation(s). These include:

- i) current occupational competence or
- ii) previous recent occupational experience in the role
- iii) proven competence in assessment

The independent assessor will be truly independent of the apprentice with no prior involvement with the apprentice, and will not be employed at the golf club that employs the apprentice.

Assessor roles:

1. Employer	Brings an overview of the apprentice working with them in the workplace through the apprenticeship
	Participates in consensus decision with training provider on the behaviours of the apprentice
	Decides on the timing of the final assessment with the support of the training provider
	Works with the training provider to carry out a continuous review of the evidence generated by the apprentice as part of the formative assessment process

2. Training Provider	Brings a view of the apprentice from supporting them through the apprenticeship
	Participates in consensus decision with the employer on the behaviours of the apprentice
	Supports the employer on deciding the timing of final assessment
	Works with the employer to carry out a continuous review of the evidence generated by the apprentice as part of the formative assessment process
3. Independent assessor	Independent view as they will not have had any prior involvement in the apprenticeship or with the apprentice
	Brings added rigour and consistency to the assessment through their wider industry perspective, knowledge & experience
	Scores all components of the Final Practical Assessment independently of the other assessors
	Assesses against Pass, Merit and Distinction criteria
	Participates in annual standardisation events run by the Awarding Organisation(s)
	Recruited and trained by the Awarding Organisation(s) from golf clubs and training providers
4. Awarding Organisation(s)	External and independent assessment of knowledge and practical competence through the examination requirement
	Independent view as they will not have had any prior involvement in the apprenticeship or with the apprentice
	Brings added rigour and consistency to the assessment through their wider industry perspective, knowledge and experience
	Supplies assessor guidance and templates for use in the formative assessment process
	Assesses against Pass, Merit and Distinction criteria
	Recruits independent assessors from golf clubs and training providers
	Trains, and hosts annual standardisation events with the GTC for, independent assessors

4. Delivering Consistent (Reliable) Judgements

At the core of ensuring that judgements on role competence are consistent will be the Apprenticeship Standard which defines what is required for each of the knowledge and skills areas to be assessed.

A robust grading scheme will be created that will be used by all independent assessors in the assessment of each of the assessment components cumulatively against the learning outcomes detailed in the Apprenticeship Standard. This scheme will contain detailed guidance on what is required to pass the assessment component, what constitutes a merit, and a distinction.

Consistency of approach by assessors will be achieved through training and standardisation of all assessors involved in the assessment process. This will cover an understanding of the overall apprenticeship; knowledge of the detailed standard; the grading standards; examples of relevant evidence and sample scoring exercises.

The synoptic knowledge assessment will be developed and marked by the Awarding Organisation(s). The questions will be developed by technical experts and moderated by experienced assessment staff. Each paper will be developed against an agreed test specification to ensure consistency over time, and will be mapped to the learning outcomes in the Apprenticeship standard. Markers will be standardised to ensure consistency of judgement in marking the papers. Markers will be independent of the apprentice taking the assessment.

The end practical assessment will be developed by the Awarding Organisation(s) against the assessment specification developed by the Awarding Organisation(s), and will be assessed by independent assessors. The pool of independent assessors will also attend an annual standardisation event to ensure consistency of judgement. The assessment will mapped to the Learning Outcomes in the apprenticeship standard.

The assessment of the personal statement will be carried out by the independent assessors using standard documentation and assessment guidance. The pool of independent assessors will also attend an annual standardisation event. The guidance and documentation will be mapped to the learning outcomes in the Apprenticeship standard.

The Awarding Organisation(s) will provide external quality assurance, sampling the delivery and assessment of the end practical assessment, and the assessment of the apprentice's personal statement.

The training provider will act as the assessment 'expert' in any assessments associated with the GTC Training Manual where used, whilst the internal quality audit within training provider models, adds a further level of robustness to reliability and consistency.

5. Delivering Accurate (Valid) Judgements

The entire Final Assessment is focused on the competence of the apprentice in the role, as evidenced by their ability to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours as set out in the Standard. Each of the three components of the Final Assessment builds a cumulative picture of competence against the detailed Standard. In addition, where the use of the GTC Training Manual is used during the apprenticeship this will drive a focus on building competence throughout the duration of the apprenticeship.

Training Providers involved in the formative assessment of this role would have to be specialists in the

field of Greenkeeping. This would be a key requirement for any employer in selecting a training provider partner.

The independent assessor must have met the criteria for independent assessors defined by the Awarding Organisation(s) and the GTC. These include:

- i) current occupational competence or
- ii) previous recent occupational experience in the role
- iii) proven competence in assessment

6. Synoptic Assessment

The three components of the Final Assessment and the assessment tools being used in this apprenticeship all require the apprentice to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and behaviours in an integrated manner to deliver the learning outcomes required to meet the standard. The Final Assessments will be synoptic in their design, sampling a sufficiency of skills and knowledge across the training programme, and apprenticeship standard.

This will build a cumulative and holistic picture, from all the components of the Final Assessment, of how well the apprentice meets or exceeds the standard.

An assessment specification will be developed to demonstrate how each of the component parts of the Final Assessment map into, and cover, the learning outcomes in the Apprenticeship, and the indicative learning.

Gateway for progressing to Final Assessment

Apprentices will be entered for the Final Assessment when the employer, in consultation with the training provider, considers the apprentice has demonstrated the skills, knowledge/understanding and behaviours required of a competent green keeper. This would be based on a continuous review of the apprentice which would involve ongoing learning/assessment against the training plan, with the employer and training provider regularly discussing the apprentice's performance and progress.

The apprentice must have been on the apprenticeship programme for a minimum of 12 months before being entered for the Final Assessment.

7. Graded Assessments

The standard states that there will be 3 levels of achievement within this apprenticeship: Pass, Merit and Distinction.

A grading profile will be developed by the Awarding Organisation(s) in consultation with the GTC, employers, and training providers to articulate the skills, knowledge and behaviours expected of a pass, merit and distinction level apprentice, and the characteristics of a fail candidate. This profile will then be used to inform the grading descriptors used in the assessment of the 3 final end assessments.

The grading profile will be created against the following criteria:

Occupationally related performance/behaviours
Performance of techniques/methods/skills
Knowledge and understanding of concepts, theories and processes

Practical application of knowledge and understanding

A pass candidate is capable of carrying out well defined tasks and can handle straight forward problems. They can use the range of tools of the trade in a safe manner to achieve acceptable standards, and are suitable to begin employment in the trade with overall supervision.

A merit candidate, in addition to meeting the pass criteria, can be expected to demonstrate a confidence in their work, and self motivation. They are able to achieve the required standard efficiently and accurately especially for straight forward aspects of the task.

A distinction candidate, in addition to meeting the pass and merit criteria, are confidently capable at completing tasks and are self starting and pro-active in their work and their development. They have developed a high level of understanding of materials and their uses. Workplace behaviours are second nature, and their standard of work is accurate and skilled. They are able to achieve a high level of finish.

The overall final grade will be calculated depending on the weighting and the grade achieved by the apprentice for each of the end assessment components.

8. Affordability & Flexibility

In developing this assessment approach with employers we have consistently sought to keep the approach simple but effective, to use existing work-based training methods wherever possible and to avoid duplication or the need for adding additional burden into the assessment process.

This has led to a well-defined, cost-effective and deliverable process that employers will find easy to understand and apply to their own environment. Where additional support is required, the training provider can step in to offer their expertise.

The **flexibility and affordability** built into this assessment model is critical to its ability to cater for all types and sizes of golf courses. The following key points deliver this:

- Use of evidence generated by the apprentice gathered during the training programme to inform the timing of the final assessment
- Use of the apprentice's work place for the end practical assessment
- On-line end knowledge assessment
- Option to flex the amount of support required from the training provider. This can be discussed and tailored (utilising the training provider's expertise) during contract discussions

This flexibility, plus the additional payment that the Government is proposing to provide to small businesses offering apprenticeships, will make this an affordable apprenticeship model for small and large clubs.

Furthermore it is anticipated that costs will be minimised by the use of remote learning and assessment where appropriate (both in training the assessors and working with apprentices).

The decision has been taken not to include any qualifications as part of the apprenticeship training to

manage the costs of delivery, assessment and quality assurance during the training programme. In addition, by not including qualifications we are not detracting from the primacy of the final assessment, and the apprenticeship certificate.

9. Manageability / Feasibility

This apprenticeship has been designed to be viable for both large and small sized golf clubs. This means that there could be large numbers and/or a wide geographical take up.

- the end Practical Assessment will take place at the apprentice's place of work
- Independent Assessors will attend a standardisation event before they commence any engagement with the Final Assessment process. This will be face-to-face or virtual, depending on the location of individuals.
- Independent Assessors will travel to the location of the Final Assessment on the day

The training provider will have a key role to play, working with the employer, providing training as required, and working with the employer to organise the Final Assessment.

10. Professional Body Recognition

BIGGA and the GTC have been involved and contributed to the design of this apprenticeship throughout the development process. Each has confirmed their support of this standard and assessment plan through letters of endorsement which have been submitted to BIS.

Appendix 1

APPRENTICESHIP STANDARD FOR A GOLF GREENKEEPER

Occupation: Golf Greenkeeper

Duration of Apprenticeship: An apprentice commencing on a golf course would typically take 24 months to complete their education and training. However, this maybe reduced if an apprentice has already gained knowledge and skills working on a golf course or a sports turf facility.

Entry Requirements: Entry requirements will be determined by individual employers but typically potential apprentices will have a minimum of 5 GCSE's at Grades A-D (including Maths and English and Science) or other equivalent vocational qualifications. Employers, who recruit apprentices without the above levels of qualifications, will have to ensure they achieve level 1 in English and maths as part of their Apprenticeship.

Introduction:

A Golf Greenkeeper is responsible for the maintenance, care and overall appearance of a golf course in line with employer's requirements. It is their job to maintain a good quality playing surface and ensure the course offers a consistent challenge and an enjoyable experience for golfers.

There are four key turfgrass areas on a golf course – greens, tees, fairways and areas of rough, each of which requires a different type of maintenance. Using a range of equipment and machinery safely and competently will play a major part within an apprentices training programme. Golf Greenkeepers will also be involved in hazard, environmental and ecological operations which may include bunker maintenance, planting turf, trees, shrubs and developing wildlife habitats. The **skills** required to become a competent greenkeeper will be acquired whilst working on the golf course.

By the end of the programme, the apprentice will know when, how and why the range of maintenance operations are carried out.

The career as a Golf Greenkeeper can take you wherever the game of golf is played. Working outdoors in a healthy environment and as new countries are embracing the sport and more golf courses are being built, there is no better time to consider joining this great profession.

Maintenance Skills:

A Golf Greenkeeper must be able to:

- Maintain good standards of health and safety for self and others
- Preparing the golf course for play which will include removing early morning dew and debris from the greens, raking bunkers, moving tee markers, cutting new holes on greens
- Preparing and using equipment and machinery to maintain and renovate all turf surfaces within the golf course, including the use of tractors, ride-on machines, and specialist equipment
- Apply turf treatments to help produce quality playing surfaces, including fertilisers and top dressing
- Using a variety of integrated methods to control weeds, fungal diseases, pests and turf disorders
- Maintain and renovate bunkers and other hazards such as water features
- Maintain drainage and irrigation systems
- Preparing ground to establish turf and plants when maintaining, renovating and constructing golf course features

Knowledge and Understanding:

A Golf Greenkeeper must understand the following technical knowledge:

- Identify their role in monitoring and maintaining health and safety within the workplace
- Identification of a number of grasses, weeds, pests, diseases, turf disorders, plants and trees
- The primary aspects of soil and plant biology to include the process of germination photosynthesis, respiration and transpiration
- The principles of mowing and machine maintenance and their operation
- The need and implications of rolling, verti-cutting, scarification and aeration
- The strategies for controlling weeds, pests, diseases and turf disorders
- How fertilisers, top dressing and chemicals affect playing surfaces
- How course maintenance practices affect the environment
- Basic information technology
- Be aware of the importance of the Rules of Golf and golf course etiquette
- Recognise the importance of environmental and ecological best practice
- The operation of irrigation, drainage systems and their maintenance

The Behaviours of a Golf Greenkeeper:

Golf club employers are very customer focused and require their apprentices to have a set of personal skills and behaviours that will ensure success in their current and future roles as an individual and in meeting the company's aims and objectives.

The behaviours required by golf club employees will be:

- Have a strong work ethic including pride in work, attention to detail, integrity and time management
- Have a flexible positive attitude to work
- Ability to work as a lone worker and as a member of a team
- A willingness to learn and contribute to their own continuing professional development
- Having a safety mindset for self, colleagues and golfers
- A clear and effective communicator who can use a variety of communication methods to give/receive information accurately and in a timely and positive manner
- Problem solving and effective decision making

Professional Recognition and Career Progression:

This standard is recognised by the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA), the Professional Body for Greenkeepers. At the start of the apprenticeship the apprentice will be registered with BIGGA. Upon completion of this standard the apprentice will be eligible to join BIGGA as a full member and become a BIGGA Accredited Greenkeeper.

The successful apprentice will have the opportunity to progress on to a higher level apprenticeship standard.

Job opportunities will also be enhanced for those apprentices who have completed the programme with promotion to more senior positions within a golf club facility or the option to progress by working in other sports facilities such as a Grounds Maintenance Operator/Technician.

Nominal Level: 2 reviewed after 3 years

Appendix 2

THIS IS PROVIDED FOR INORMATION WHERE AN EMPLOYER CHOOSES TO USE THE GTC TRAINING MANUAL

GTC Training Manual

GOLF GREENKEEPER STANDARD Cross Referencing of Greenkeeper Standard to Training Manual Tasks

MAINTENANCE SKILLS

A GOLF GREENKEEPER MUST be able to:	MAPPED AGAINST TASK NUMBER:
Maintain good standards of health and safety for self and others	004A, 004B, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 201, 202, 203, 205, 301A, 301B, 302A, 302B, 302C, 303, 401, 501
2. Prepare the golf course for play which will include removing early morning dew and debris from the greens, raking bunkers, moving tee markers, cutting new holes on greens	101,108, 109, 113, 114, 119, 120, 202, 203, 205, 301A, 301B
3. Prepare and use equipment and machinery to maintain and renovate all turf surfaces within the golf course, including the use of tractors, ride-on machines and specialist equipment	101, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 119, 120, 203, 302, 303
4. Apply turf treatments to help produce quality playing surfaces, including fertilisers and top dressing	109, 110, 111, 116, 117, 118
5. Use a variety of integrated methods to control weeds, fungal diseases, pests and turf disorders	116, 117, 118
6. Maintain and renovate bunkers and other hazards such as water features	203
7. Maintain drainage and irrigation systems	114, 115
8. Prepare ground to establish turf and plants when maintaining, renovating and constructing golf course features	401, 501

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A GOLF GREENKEEPER **MUST** understand the following technical knowledge:

MAPPED AGAINST TASK NUMBER:

1. Identify their role in monitoring and maintaining health and safety within the workplace

004A, 004B, 101, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 202, 203, 301A, 301B, 302A, 302B, 302C, 401, 501

2. Identify of a number of grasses, weeds, pests, diseases, turf disorders, plants and trees

401, 501, 601, 602

3. The primary aspects of soil and plant biology to include the process of germination – photosynthesis, respiration and transpiration

501

4. The principles of mowing and machine maintenance and their operation

108, 301A, 301B, 302A, 302B, 302C, 303

5. The need and implications of rolling, verticutting, scarification and aeration

109, 110, 120

6. The strategies for controlling weeds, pests, diseases and turf disorders

110, 116, 117, 118

7. How fertilisers, top dressing and chemicals affect playing surfaces

111, 112

8. How course maintenance practices affect the environment

108, 112, 116, 117, 118

9. Basic information technology

003B, 004A

10. Be aware of the importance of the Rules of Golf and golf course etiquette

202, 203, 205

11. Recognise the importance of environmental and ecological best practice

108, 109, 112, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 302A, 302B, 302C

12. The operation of irrigation, drainage systems and their maintenance

114, 115

THE BEHAVIOURS OF A GOLF GREENKEEPER

Golf club employers are very customer focused and require their apprentices to have a set of personal skills and behaviours that will ensure success in their current and future roles as an individual and in meeting the company's aims and objectives.

The **behaviours** required by golf club employees will be to have:

- 1. A strong work ethic including pride in work, attention to detail, integrity and time management
- 2. A flexible positive attitude to work
- 3. An ability to work as a lone worker and as a member of a team
- 4. A willingness to learn and contribute to their own continuing professional development
- 5. A safety mindset for self, colleagues and golfers
- 6. Clear and effective communication skills and can use a variety of communication methods to give/receive information accurately and in a timely and positive manner
- 7. An ability to problem solve and make effective decisions

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