

# ON COURSE

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**PAGE 1-2 TRAINING BUDGET**

**PAGE 2-3 NROSO AND NSTS**

**PAGE 4 WORK-BASED TRAINING**

GTC is supported by:



## Need a bigger training budget?

**As we all know, budgets are not getting any larger and the drive to reduce costs for a more efficient running operation is the demand at most golf clubs. In this highly competitive arena one of the early casualties has tended to be the training budget, says Andrew Wight from Oaklands College.**

HOWEVER, WHAT IF I said much of the training for your staff could be free?

How is this so you ask? Well the government has set up a number of training initiatives for employers over the last few years and many of these are open for use by greenkeepers and their employers. I hope to give an overview of these schemes and their benefits below.

**16 to 18 Training:** Employees in this age group are entitled to free training by law and therefore are well suited to an NVQ Level 2 route as run by their local GTC approved provider.

**Train to Gain:** This is an initiative set up by the Government for England; its intention is to place training back into the hands of the employers. The scheme is set up to give workers who do not hold a full Level 2 qualification the chance to train for one. The training is free of charge to the employer and can consist of two routes:

**Option 1** gives the employer the option of 20 hours of training from the provider as well as assessment.

**Option 2** gives the employer assessment visits only.

What are the advantages to the employer of Train to Gain? The training is free of charge for those over 19 and there is no requirement to attend college etc. This makes the scheme suitable for greenkeepers who have been doing the job for a while and have all the skills and knowledge required but have no formal qualification. The greenkeeper can start on an NVQ 2 and have their skills recognised with assessments being carried out in the workplace. The system is made even easier if there is a qualified assessor at the club.

The GTC has a recognised network of qualified assessors within the industry and for those golf clubs looking at training their staff, but who have not got a qualified assessor at the workplace, please contact Fiona at the GTC for further information on the assessor programme Tel 01347 838640 or e-mail [fiona@the-gtc.co.uk](mailto:fiona@the-gtc.co.uk).

### Who qualifies for Train to Gain?

The training is designed to allow workers to gain their first Level 2 qualification, therefore anybody with a Level 2 qualification (including 5 GCSEs at grade C or above) does not qualify for Train to Gain funding. There is no upper age limit for Train to Gain but employees must be 19 or over. Note it is possible for workers who meet the criteria for Train to Gain to jump straight to a Level 3 qualification these people are known as "Level 3 jumpers".

*Continued on Page 2*

### Andy Wight believes strongly in work based learning as well as assessment



Continued from Page 1

***“The modern apprenticeship scheme gives the employer a great training package. The apprentice receives the technical knowledge from the college tutor, which is then backed up by the practical skills training from the qualified Course Manager. A combination of the knowledge and skills rewards the trainee with an NVQ in Sportsturf and also the apprenticeship framework includes First Aid and Spraying Certificates.”***

**John Moorhouse**, Course Manager, Brocket Hall

**Apprenticeship schemes\***

The body that develops and reviews these frameworks is Lantra, which is the Sector Skills Council for the land-based sector including the Greenkeeping industry. The Apprenticeship schemes are the Government’s preferred route for training, especially for youngsters.

There are two types of apprenticeship:

**1 The standard**

**apprenticeship includes:**

- a NVQ Level 2 Sportsturf
- b 4 Key Skills (Communication, Application of Number, Working with Others and Improving own Learning and Performance all at level 1).
- c First aid certificate (1 day)
- d 2 Legislative or competence certificates e.g. PA1, 2 or 6 spraying certificates etc.

**2 The advanced**

**apprenticeship includes:**

- a NVQ Level 3 Sportsturf
- b 5 Key Skills (Communication at L2, Application of Number at L2, Working with Others at L2, Improving own Learning and Performance at L2 and Information Technology at L1)
- c First aid certificate (4 day)
- d 3 units of the Advanced National Certificate (Amenity Horticulture – Sportsturf option).

Hopefully, you will now have identified some areas of training that are available for your staff. The next step is to contact your local GTC approved provider for help and advice.

David Golding, GTC’s Education Director: said: “As part of the GTC’s work we are aware of local and regional variations in terms of funding support for employers to access through our Approved Training Provider network and it is often difficult for us to keep up with the Government’s funding agencies’ priorities.

“The GTC can direct employers to their local Approved Training Provider but, with some providers securing national contracts, it is important that you check with the GTC just where the various training initiatives are operating and how contact can be made,” he added.

■ For further research on Train to Gain and apprenticeships visit:

[www.traintogain.gov.uk/](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk/)

[www.lantra.co.uk/products/ApprenticeshipsEngland.asp](http://www.lantra.co.uk/products/ApprenticeshipsEngland.asp)

[www.lantra.co.uk/modernapprenticeships/ModernApprenticeships-Wales.asp](http://www.lantra.co.uk/modernapprenticeships/ModernApprenticeships-Wales.asp)

[www.lantra.co.uk/ModernApprenticeships/ModernApprenticeships-Scotland.asp](http://www.lantra.co.uk/ModernApprenticeships/ModernApprenticeships-Scotland.asp)

\* Note there may be small fees such as registration, materials cost etc.

***Flexible learning***

**NRoSO: What is it an**



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THE NATIONAL REGISTER of Sprayer Operators (NRoSO) was formed in 2003 as part of the Voluntary Initiative (VI) within landbased industries. Its aim was to prove safe and responsible use of pesticides. The NRoSO scheme was developed to help demonstrate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) – such as update training, seminars and conferences – in a way that farmers, groundsmen and other sprayer operators could understand and use.

Changing the behaviour of pesticide users is a central pillar of the VI and this is frequently facilitated by training. NRoSO is a “professional register” designed around CPD and training, thus helping to raise standards for all sprayer operators and advisors. Training helps to provide a better understanding of application of sprays, a better understanding of the environmental effects of crop protection, and to ensure that they are used safely and effectively. Pesticides are powerful tools and can be used to great benefit, but misuse can have devastating effects. Training gives the confidence to all concerned that their use will be to best effect.

The public who have access to golf courses probably has little understanding of the products you use, and tend to have a negative view towards any form of pesticide treatment. Being a member of NRoSO will be a useful message for golfers and other members of the public to prove your professionalism in showing that you are taking your duties as a sprayer operator responsibly, and are sufficiently interested in the effects of the products you use to keep up to date and to continue to develop your skills.

The VI is now in its sixth year and has continued to meet or exceed the targets set for it. NRoSO membership was part of the VI plan, but has developed a real purpose of its own in helping sprayer operators access the sort of training that is relevant to their needs. It has enabled sprayer operators to share best practice and improve their skills. The current focus is on the latest thinking on water protection and covers advice on filling



# And why golf clubs and greenkeepers need to know about it

pests and diseases can present a range of problems in golf courses. Specialist companies make many pesticides to help control these particular problems, but how do greenkeepers know how to get the best use of them? How do they keep up-to-date with the legislation and regulations that govern the use of pesticides?

and handling practices and managing soils to prevent run off. Simple improvements in handling practices can have dramatic improvements on the residues found in water courses.

All sprayer operators on a golf course have a duty of care to the public on their courses, and to the environment that they work in. Being a NRoSO member and accessing CPD training represents a responsible way forward for the industry.

■ **E-mail** [information@nroso.org.uk](mailto:information@nroso.org.uk)

■ **Website** [www.nroso.org.uk](http://www.nroso.org.uk)



## National Sprayer Testing Scheme: Why it's important that **all** sprayers should be tested

WHETHER YOU HAVE your own sprayer or engage contractors, you need to be aware of the National Sprayer Testing Scheme (NSTS). There has been much discussion around the relevance of the NSTS in the golf course and amenity sectors. Why should small machines need to be tested when they are not by their nature large applicators of pesticide?

But look at it another way, writes NSTS manager, Duncan Russell. All machines – no matter what size or how much pesticide is applied – need to make that application accurately and safely for both the environment and the operator.

The NSTS test achieves exactly that – an independent person looking at the sprayer to make sure it is in good working condition and capable of applying pesticides correctly. All the more important when the machine is working in very public environments such as golf courses and amenity parks. This annual test has many benefits:

- It confirms that the machine is kept in good working condition and is unlikely to fail or break down when carrying out an important spraying operation.
- The machine is working correctly

and capable, when operated by a qualified operator, of applying the correct dose of pesticide on target.

- It confirms the machine is safe to use from the operator's perspective, helps confirm the requirements of Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) and confirms a general duty of care to members and public alike.
- It will reduce the need for potentially expensive emergency call outs by the service engineer should the sprayer fail during a spraying operation.
- A sprayer kept in good condition is likely to be worth more as a trade-in against a new updated machine.
- It helps confirm that the sprayer owners are supporting the aims of the Voluntary Initiative (VI) in reducing the impact of pesticides on the environment and gives notice of a professional and responsible attitude to pesticide application.

The NSTS has been testing liquid application machinery since 1 January 2003 and to date has carried out more than 32,000 tests. The scheme is part of the VI that has delivered genuine environmental benefits.

The NSTS has a nationwide network of

qualified machine examiners who have the necessary specialist equipment to test a machine to the standards required. A list of these examiners is available from the NSTS website [www.nsts.org.uk](http://www.nsts.org.uk) where machine owners can choose their nearest or preferred sprayer examiner.

Also available from the website is a check-sheet which can be used by machine owners and operators to pre-check their sprayers before submitting them for independent examination. This check-sheet can also be used for regular maintenance and mid season checks.

The NSTS is available for all forms of liquid application from specialist self propelled golf course machines through small mounted sprayers to barrow sprayers and knapsacks. All can be tested within the scheme and will benefit from this regular checking system.

■ Full details of the NSTS are available from the NSTS website.

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# 100% work-based training: the system explained

By Paul McGrail, Quality Assurance Manager at Myerscough College

ONLY 28 PER CENT of the UK's working age population have skills at apprenticeship, technical or craft level – lower than most other European countries.

The continued development of work-based training along with current funding streams is playing a vital role in closing this gap. In many ways the sports-turf sector has been ahead of the field. In the 90s the GTC's vision promoted the idea of NVQs delivered in the workplace using on-site assessors.

In response to the needs of industry, many of the GTC providers have developed more work-based delivery programmes providing quality training enabling learners to gain a wide range of skills.

At Myerscough, paramount to delivering work-based training is acknowledging the individual needs of the learner.

From the beginning an individual learning programme is agreed which establishes the level of help and support required but also sets the ground rules for the key people involved and their learning roles.

Pivotal to the success of such programmes is the working relationship between the work-place supervisor and the college tutor. The work-place supervisor's involvement, like that of the college tutor's, can be wide and varied depending on the learner, the environment and level of employer support.

The majority of work-place supervisors provide on-the-job in-depth training as part of their everyday work role although some take this a step further.

The role of the college tutor may involve providing assessments for specific tasks, delivering group training workshops, liaising with learners by using virtual learning platforms and by conducting one-to-one tuition.

This partnership approach to work-based training is possible due to a national network of college tutors who are fully resourced and supported.

The ongoing success of work-based training at Myerscough College can be attributed to meeting both the training needs of learners, employers and managers, and involving them in the training process.

An example of this is Rotherham Golf Club



The Rotherham Team. From left : Andy Unwin (NVQ 2 working towards NVQ3), Dave Chappell (CM), Phil Smith (Apprenticeship), Jonathan Knowles (Tutor)

***"Pivotal to the success of any training programme like this is the working relationship between the work-place supervisor and the college tutor."***

in Yorkshire. Dave Chappell is the course manager/assessor and has worked with Myerscough Training since 2003. Dave said: "There is no classroom as such, but the lads have not lost out on theory. In fact they've been able to gain loads of knowledge from both the tutor and myself during one-to-one sessions."

Robert Sandilands, a first assistant greenkeeper at Kenwick Park Golf Club in Lincolnshire, is one of the first nationally to have completed the advanced apprenticeship framework including technical certificate, which were all delivered on-site. Rob said: "Work-based means getting paid while you train with the convenience of tutorials arranged around my course manager's work plans and with the added benefit of gathering my NVQ evidence from work on the course as it happens."

David Golding, GTC's Education Director adds an overview of the current situation.

"There has been a tremendous uptake on the 100% work-based training courses especially the N/SVQs and employers are reporting how the programmes suit them.

"Many greenkeeping students prefer the

on-the-job option to learn at the same time as gaining new skills with the support of their Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper.

"As Paul McGrail explains it does take a commitment from the senior greenkeeping staff to support the learners and more work-based assessors are taking the lead role in the programmes.

"However, there are still employers who opt for the more traditional route of part-time college/training provider attendance for their staff and this is also available through the network of GTC training providers.

"The decision whether to use the more traditional part-time off-the-job provider route or the 100% work-based system does need careful consideration and the GTC can help by discussing individual employer and learner's needs."

For details of Myerscough's programmes and all GTC approved providers visit [www.the-gtc.co.uk/providers/index.php3](http://www.the-gtc.co.uk/providers/index.php3)

■ You can be assured of independent advice from the GTC. Contact us by email on [golf@the-gtc.co.uk](mailto:golf@the-gtc.co.uk) or Tel 01347 838640