



Diploma in Environmental and Land-based Studies

Career Progression in Environmental Industries

Foundation Diploma to Employment with Training

A career in Sports Turf Management

Example – Groundsman

Groundsmen maintain a range of sports surfaces such as football, cricket and rugby pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens.

Their key role is to ensure that the playing surface is in as good a condition as possible. It may be made of natural turf, synthetic turf or a combination of both.

The job is interesting and varied and requires a wide range of different skills.

These include:

- understanding the nature of different kinds of natural turf including soil types and drainage and synthetic turf surfaces
- the ability to use a range of hand tools
- being practical and methodical
- excellent communication skills
- being able to work well alone and as part of a team.

Including volunteers, the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) has estimated that there is in excess of 100,000 ground staff in the UK.

In recent years the promotion of the link between playing sport and good health has meant more leisure facilities and more opportunities for ground staff, particularly those with the right qualifications or aptitude to working in the industry.

Ground staff are employed mainly by organisations that manage playing fields and other leisure facilities.

For information on the skills gaps and shortages of the current workforce and factsheets on individual industries within the environmental and land-based sector, including animal care please visit: www.lantra.co.uk/skills-assessment

Although there are no set academic requirements for entry into this particular job role the Foundation Diploma would equip students with real skills and knowledge with which to begin their employment.

There are also other job roles within the sports turf industry and these can be found at www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u/ and www.afuturein.com

Why choose the Foundation Diploma in Environmental and Land-based Studies for entry into a Career in Sports Turf Management?

What makes the Diploma different from the traditional GCSE route is that it is not purely a classroom based course. Students get out and about and learn from different employer businesses/organisations who understand what the next workforce generation needs to know. Consequently students take up to date, real world knowledge directly into the workplace.

This is achieved through employers being actively involved with the Diploma in a number of different ways, for example:

- Work Shadowing
- Industry Days
- Visits
- Mentoring
- Questions and Answers Sessions
- Work Experience.

For further information on Employer Engagement in the Diploma visit – www.diplomaelbs.org.uk/welcome/consortia/downloads-and-resources/

What does the Diploma actually consist of and how is it different?

The Foundation Diploma is equivalent to 5 GCSEs (grades D-G). You can also study additional GCSEs alongside the Foundation Diploma.

There are **three** elements to the diploma:

- principal learning
- generic learning
- additional and specialist learning.

Principal Learning

Principal learning is a free standing qualification relating to the environmental and Land-based sector. It focuses on developing relevant knowledge, understanding and skills and applying them to work-based situations.

Therefore students would look at:

- exploring the productive and working environment – how we manage the environment in the modern world
- plants and animals – the role plants and animals in today's society covering subjects including nutrition, care, welfare and breeding
- developing the sustainable environment – the impact of people and business on the environment and debating current environmental issues.

Generic Learning

Consists of:

- functional skills in English, ICT and mathematics
- personal, learning and thinking skills
- a project
- work experience – a minimum of 10 days related work-based activities.

A Project

A student interested in a career in sports turf management such as a Groundsman would perhaps choose a project related to 'the assessment of a sports site, soil and plant growth'.

In order to meet project objectives students need to:

- manage the project
- use resources/undertake research as appropriate to the topic
- develop the project to achieve the planned outcome
- review the project outcomes including own learning and performance.

Students need to show they can plan, deliver and present a piece of work.

Work Experience

There are numerous opportunities for work experience in the sports turf industry. This could include working with a local authority parks department responsible for the schools and parks sport areas.

For a career in sports turf management enthusiasm and an interest in working outdoors and general horticultural work is really important. Work experience along with any voluntary experience would also be extremely valuable and is looked on favourably by employers. It is also useful for ground staff working in a particular sport to have a good knowledge of that particular sport.

Additional and Specialist Learning

Additional and specialist learning adds breadth and/or depth to the learning experience. A student's choice of ASL enables them to personalise their programme to include studies which interest them and support their career ambitions. An example of this could be a Level 2 Certificate in Ancillary Operations for Sports and Amenity Turf Operators.

For further information on the qualifications within the diploma please visit <http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/DiplomaCatalogueSelection.aspx>

Further Progression

On completion of the Diploma there will be opportunities to undertake further study and to enter employment.

Whilst employed ground staff can work towards qualifications by attending college on day or block release, or through online learning and distance learning. Specialist courses are also available in areas such as using a chainsaw operation and applying pesticides and chemicals.

Once employed training is often on the job, and most trainees work alongside experienced colleagues for three to four years. They start with routine tasks before moving on to the more complex procedures.

For a list of current qualifications visit the national database of accredited qualifications (NDAQ), <http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk>

It may also be possible to enter this career through an appropriate apprenticeship programme. Apprenticeships provide structured training with an employer and combine practical and theoretical skills designed to help employees reach a high level of competency and performance. For information on apprenticeships visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Diploma progression illustrations can be found on the QCDA website: www.qcda.gov.uk/25715.aspx

More information on the Diploma in Environmental and Land-based Studies can be found at www.diplomaelbs.org.uk.