

# National Apprenticeship - Occupational Profile

Apprenticeship Title	Sportsturf Management
NFQ Level	Level 6 Higher Certificate in Sportsturf Management
Duration	2 Years
Occupation Title	Sportsturf Technician
Typical tasks/ responsibilities	<p>The sportsturf technician is responsible for implementing sportsturf maintenance techniques on natural and artificial sports surfaces.</p> <p>On a weekly basis these would include setting up the facility for play, mowing, fertiliser application, topdressing, repairs and renovation, rootzone management, monitoring for pest and diseases. They will set up, maintain and operate a wide range of turfgrass specific machinery safely and in keeping with best practice.</p> <p>They will work closely with their line manager to produce playing conditions in keeping with the expectations of stakeholders. The role of the sportsturf technician is central to maintaining the facility in an environmentally safe and sustainable manner.</p> <p>They will usually work as part of a small team where communications and supporting others are fundamental to successful operation.</p> <p>The sportsturf technician may be required at times to work on their own and make and implement agronomic decisions based on a sound knowledge of the core sciences pertaining to turfgrass management.</p>

**On successful completion of the proposed apprenticeship, a Sportsturf Technician will have the following knowledge, skills and competences:**

Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workplace health and safety, hazard identification and risk assessment – the Sportsturf Technician will engage in all sports maintenance activities in a safe manner.</li><li>• Plant science – knowledge of all of the sciences underpinning the successful management of the grass plant.</li><li>• Plant protection – the Sportsturf Technician will have a thorough appreciation of sportsturf pests, diseases and disorders and the sustainable management of these, using the principles of Integrated Pest Management.</li><li>• Soils and rootzones - the sportsturf technician will have a thorough understanding of soils and rootzones and the challenges that different soils present in sportsturf management.</li><li>• Principles of hydrology - understand the principles of water movement into, within and out of a sportsturf rootzone.</li><li>• Environmental legislation and sustainability - understand the importance of the environment and the legislation governing its protection in Ireland.</li></ul>
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- Sportsturf surface set-up and repair - setting up and repair of facilities for play, training and competition.
  - Understand performance criteria for natural and artificial sports surfaces and the role they play in maintenance and setup of facilities
  - Core knowledge of sportsturf equipment: maintenance, set up and operation, in particular; mowing, aeration, topdressing, spraying and nutrition
  - Rules of sport - understand the rules of sport played on natural and artificial turf and their importance with regards to construction, maintenance and setup.
  - Assess and use meteorological data - this involves understanding the influence of all meteorological parameters, their measurements and appraisal.
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## Skills

- The ability to identify hazards and implement safety controls in relation to factors pertinent to sportsturf management e.g. machinery, water, pesticide management, fertilisers and sports surface performance.
  - Competently identify plants, weeds, pests, diseases and disorders.
  - Control weeds, pests and diseases using a variety of integrated methods.
  - Accurately and safely apply fertilisers and pesticides in accordance with key regulations/guidelines (DAFM Professional User Registration).
  - Prepare a sportsturf facility in accordance to the specifications as required by relevant sporting bodies.
  - Perform turfgrass maintenance tasks competently and autonomously such as mowing, aeration and topdressing.
  - Operate and maintain sportsturf machinery and equipment safely and competently in accordance with best practice
  - The ability to communicate effectively with colleagues and stakeholders to provide the best playing surfaces possible while protecting the environment.
  - Demonstrate accuracy and attention to detail in all core sportsturf maintenance tasks performed.
  - Maintain sportsturf facilities to the highest agronomic standards in keeping with best practice.
  - Maintain accurate records of all maintenance tasks performed.
  - Exhibit good organisational and IT Skills to perform effectively within a sportsturf environment.
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## Competencies

- Demonstrate an ability to work independently and as part of a team in a sportsturf facility.
  - Complete tasks autonomously with skill and attention to detail to ensure playing surfaces are safe and of appropriate standard for the particular sport.
  - Show professionalism and exhibit good time management practices.
  - Show an ability to think critically.
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- Demonstrate an ability to solve problems that may arise with turfgrass equipment and general turfgrass agronomy.
- Be self-motivated and manage their professional development and self-learning within the sportsturf training system.
- Exhibit an ability to cope with the uncertainty of managing sportsturf in changing environmental conditions.
- Follow standard operating procedures with regard to equipment operation, health and safety, pesticide and fertiliser application.

#### Industry/industries served by the apprenticeship

- Sportsturf industry to include golf courses, sportsturf contractors, sports pitches, race courses, training gallops, local authorities, educational institutions, bowling greens, pitch and putt clubs and cricket clubs, sports, tennis and parks/amenity areas.

#### Proposed minimum entry requirements for apprentices on the programme

All apprentices must be employed full time by an 'approved employer' in a Sportsturf setting.

##### **Option 1:**

- Leaving Certificate or equivalent
- The minimum requirement of a grade D in mathematics at Junior Certificate level; specific grades in mathematics at foundation level may be acceptable to meet the minimum entry requirements for mathematics.

##### **OR- Option 2**

- School Leavers at Junior Cycle are required to be over 16 years with 2 years of full-time work experience in the Sportsturf industry. Note – additional information will be required in relation to work experience i.e. references from previous employers details.

##### **OR- Option 3**

- Have passed a pre-approved course in Horticulture at QQI Level 4 or higher

##### **OR Option 4**

- Mature applicants may be admitted with meeting these formal entry requirements on the basis of interview to establish: (a) prior work experience in the Sportsturf sector, (b) \*English language competence; (c) \*\*Mathematical competence. Note – additional information will be required in relation to work experience i.e. references from previous employers.

##### **OR Option 5**

- International applicants may be admitted with meeting these formal entry requirements on the basis of interview to establish: (a) Confirmation of eligibility to work in Ireland for duration of the programme (b) prior work the Sportsturf sector, (c) \*English language competence;(d) \*\*Mathematical competence