

**GENERATION
APPRENTICESHIP**
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APPLICANT

Information Guide



AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Sportsturf Management Apprenticeship



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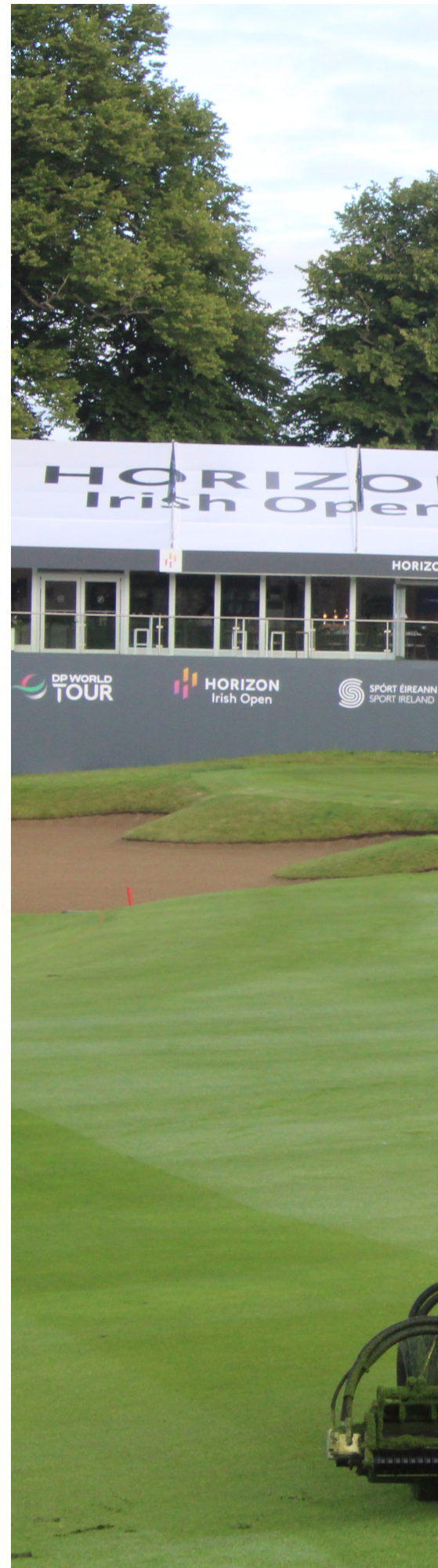
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Introduction

The National Sportsturf Management Apprenticeship is for anyone who wishes to pursue a career in the sportsturf sector or existing personnel employed in a sportsturf facility that would like to gain a recognised qualification.

This apprenticeship was developed by a consortium of industry representatives and Teagasc. Apprentices on the programme will engage in an integrated programme of workplace training along-side traditional classroom and blended on-line delivery. The programme runs over a two year period.

Sportsturf management and maintenance is a specialist area that requires suitably qualified professionals. The programme will equip apprentices with the knowledge skills and competence to maintain and manage amenity grasses in a precise and technical manner.

This guide provides an overview of this apprenticeship for prospective apprentices, parents and guidance counsellors.

Programme Aims

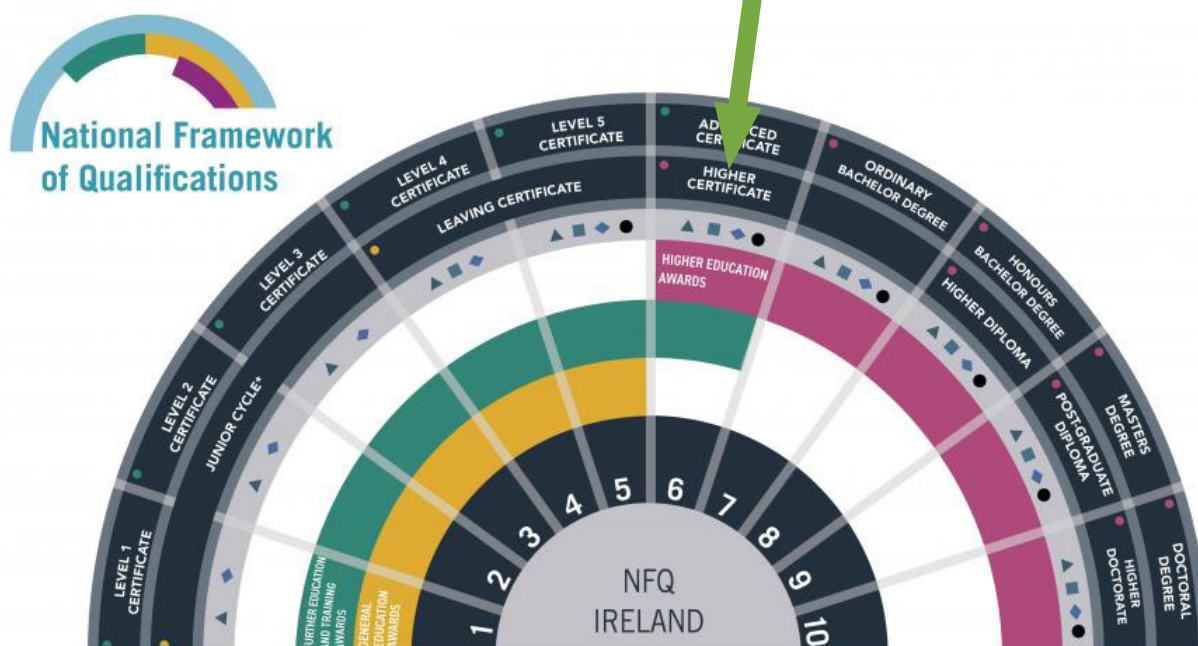
The **Sportsturf Technician** is concerned with carrying out core maintenance tasks on sportsturf facilities.

The Sportsturf Management Apprenticeship Programmes aims are to:

- Offer apprentices a specified pathway to gain a qualification in Sportsturf management while in employment.
- Prepare the apprentice to work safely and productively in a sportsturf setting.
- Develop competences in the areas of plant science, sustainability and water management.
- Provide apprentices with transferable skills such as communication, computer and leadership skills.
- Bring apprentices together as a community so as to enable cross-collaboration on projects and knowledge transfer.
- Provide apprentices with a thorough scientific grounding and factors affecting turfgrass growth.
- Allow apprentices to learn from a nominated skilled mentor on-the-job.
- Equip apprentices with the practical skills and knowledge necessary to setup, operate, maintain and repair sportsturf equipment to the highest standard.
- Train apprentices as Professional Users as defined by the Sustainable Use Directive 2009/128/EC.

Programme Overview

Programme Title	Sportsturf Management Apprenticeship
Duration	Two years
Certification	Higher Certificate in Sportsturf Management - Level 6
Awarding Body	Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)



Programme Structure

Apprentices will be trained in a progressive manner and will get to put their skills into practice during both on and off the job training stages. On successful completion, the apprentice will be fully competent in the role of a Sportsturf Technician.

Employers are asked to support employees throughout their learning journey by engaging line managers and facilitating mentor one-to-ones on a regular basis. Employers will be issued with advice on this on induction.

The block release programme has been designed to minimise the impact of the apprentices absence for the employer. Block release allows for employers to plan for the apprentice's absence throughout the off season. Attendance is compulsory and apprentices will attend classes, practicals, labs and field trips while off-the-job. Examinations will take place also in this period.

The following stages will be completed as part of the Sportsturf Management Apprenticeship:

Stage Label	Off-the-job training
Year 1	
Year 1 Autumn / Winter Semester	Sept / Oct - 2 weeks off-the-job Nov / Dec - 2 weeks off-the-job
Year 1 Winter / Spring Semester	Jan / March - 2 weeks off-the-job.
Year 1	Blended learning - Weekly throughout
Year 2	
Year 2 Autumn / Winter Semester	Sept / Oct - 2 weeks off-the-job Nov / Dec - 2 weeks off-the-job
Year 2 Winter / Spring Semester	Jan / March - 2 weeks off-the-job.
Year 2	Blended learning - Weekly throughout

Programme Modules

Year 1

- Introduction to Sportsturf Management
- Turfgrass Science & Morphology
- Sportsturf Grasses & Weeds
- Turfgrass & Landscape Management
- Turfgrass Equipment: Set-up, Maintenance & Operation
- Soil & Rootzones for Sportsturf Facilities
- Soil Hydrology

Year 2

- Plant Protection
- Artificial Sports Surfaces
- Meteorology, Environmental Sustainability & Ecology
- Sportsturf Construction
- Sportsturf Facility Set-up
- Apprentice Project

Entry Requirements



All apprentices **must be employed full time** by a ‘**SOLAS approved employer**’ in a Sportsturf setting.

Option 1:

- Leaving Certificate - Minimum entry requirements are a grade H7/O6 or above in five leaving certificate (or equivalent) subjects. A minimum of grade O6 must be obtained in English. A minimum of grade O6 or a B2 or above in Foundation Level must be obtained in Mathematics.

Option 2

- Holders of a QQI Level 5 (or equivalent) in Horticulture can apply for entry onto the programme.

Option 3

- A candidate, 17 and older who does not hold the Level 5 qualifications as set out in categories 1 or 2 above but who has a minimum of 1 years’ experience working as in sportsturf industry, is recommended by their employer and demonstrates the correct attitudes, behaviours and literacy skills, will also be eligible to apply.
- Note - The English language entry requirements for the programme are CEF B2+ or equivalent. Candidates with English language levels below CEF B2+ must first reach this minimum standard before enrolling on the academic programme.

Is it for me?

- Good level of physical fitness and enjoy physical activity and work.
- Safety focused and a love for working outdoors.
- Interest in sportsturf and science.
- Solid literacy, verbal and numeracy skills.
- Ability to plan and prepare work
- Good analytical and problem solving skills
- Good computer skills
- Good hand/eye co-ordination, manual dexterity and spatial aptitude.
- Good interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team



How to become an Apprentice Sportsturf Technician

Applicant secures employment with an employer who employs greenkeeping or grounds staff.

Employer will start the registration process with SOLAS (The Further Education & Training Authority)

Applicants application will be assessed and interview will be held with Teagasc.

If successful...

Applicant will be registered as an apprentice.

Apprentice will be called for off-the-job learning block release.



Learning Environment

Off-the-job

Direct contact via lectures and practical demonstrations at Teagasc, Kildalton College, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny.

Laboratory work and analysis of sportsturf rootzone materials and topdressing sands.

Extensive turfgrass areas for demonstrations and practice

- golf course greens
- tee boxes
- sportsturf drainage examples
- sports pitches
- equine facilities
- cricket square
- bowling green
- tennis court
- artificial playing surfaces

Machinery maintenance facility for equipment setup, repair and maintenance training.

Exposure to modern Sportsturf maintenance equipment for training purposes.

Field trips to Sportsturf facilities around Ireland highlighting excellence.

Professional User training facility (Pesticide Application Equipment).

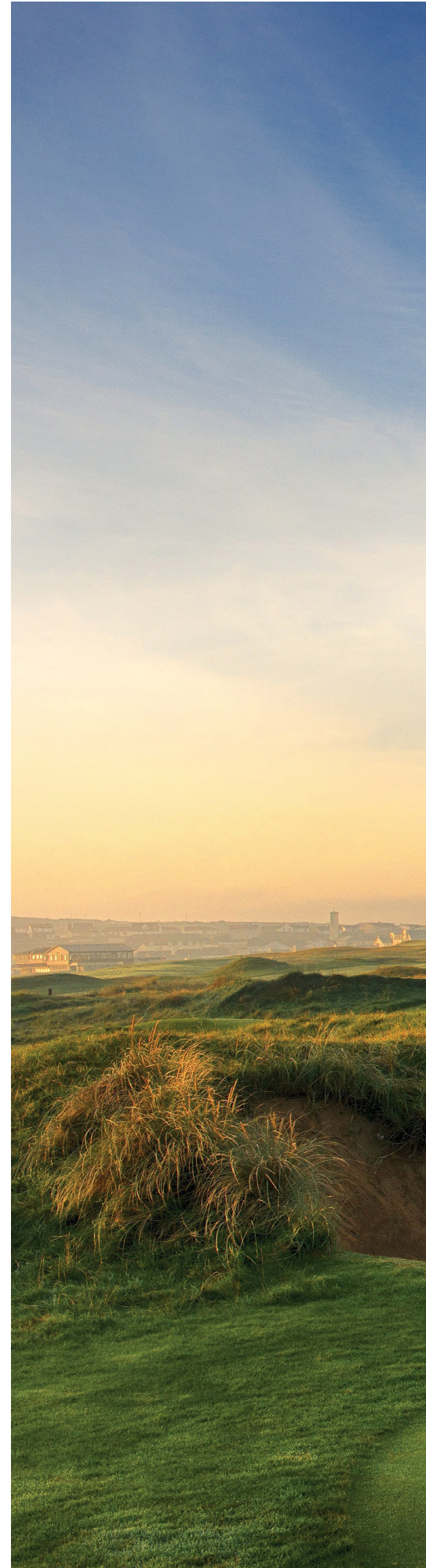
On-the-job

Apprentices while on-the-job will be mentored by a workplace mentor.

Apprentices will be trained in the traditional skills associated with greenkeeping, grounds and racetrack maintenance.

Blended e-learning - access to Teagasc's e-learning platform Moodle.

Connection to peers through weekly on-line sessions.





Useful Links



For more information on the Sportsturf Management Apprenticeship, visit our website: **www.teagasc.ie** or email **sportsturf@teagasc.ie**

For more information on Apprenticeships as a career pathway, visit the Generation Apprenticeship website: **www.apprenticeship.ie**







Sportsturf Management Apprenticeship

**QQI LEVEL 6 HIGHER CERTIFICATE
IN SPORTSTURF MANAGEMENT**



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

SOLAS
learning works