

## **WHAT NEXT AFTER AN APPLIED GOLF MANAGEMENT STUDIES DEGREE?**

The BA in Applied Golf Management Studies can lead to a wide range of careers in the industry. It gives both degree qualification and can lead to PGA (Professional Golfers' Association) professional status.

About 53,000 people are employed directly in golf in the UK at over 2500 facilities, ranging from large complexes owned by private companies such as DeVere and Marriott to small private members clubs across the UK. A recent Sports Marketing survey suggested the value of the industry at £3billion. Internationally, the industry is well developed in Europe and the US, and there is much potential for development in the less mature golf markets in other parts of the world such as Asia and Africa. In China, ten years ago there were just 10 courses throughout the whole country but now 190 are listed and the number of Chinese playing the game is more than 200,000.

Graduates have opportunities to gain the skills needed to work in the expanding golf industry in a management capacity. All sections of the industry have expanded in recent years. At the DeVere Belfry, for example, the operations section has grown from 5 to 140 staff in the last 20 years. The green fees alone are now worth four million pounds annually. Golf managers need a strong business approach with a clear customer focus to operate in this environment.

Some students from the Applied Golf Management Studies degree want to establish themselves as players, where ability and opportunity to practise are paramount. Working in the golf industry to fund these ambitions and provide opportunity to practise and build up skills on the amateur and then professional circuit is possible, even though only a small number will become successful players.

You can develop your career by opting for professional PGA status or remaining an amateur. Professional status is needed for those who gain financial reward for either playing or teaching the game. Some jobs are restricted to those with professional PGA status, but many jobs are available to either. You can retain amateur status and still work in a range of jobs related to the business side of the industry. See the diagram at the end of this leaflet which shows the range of golf organisations which require management skills and ability. The golf industry is a complex network, and becoming familiar with how the organisations fit together is useful.

The most important requirement for a career in golf is a passion for the industry. Other skills students need to be successful in the industry include:

- Presentation skills
- Willingness to share knowledge
- Taking opportunities as they arise
- Good communication skills – listening and networking
- Ability to build relationships with people
- Having a customer focus
- A strong business sense and financial awareness
- Organisation skills
- Self-management skills – continuously reflecting and developing
- Reliability
- Enthusiasm
- Creative / visual thinking to develop ideas

The need to network in the industry and follow up opportunities and suggestions is crucial to success. Self employment is common, so developing entrepreneurial skills is useful for most areas of work.

Previous graduates from the course have gained work in golf clubs and centres around the UK and others are attempting the Europro tour. Surveys of graduate destinations for the last two years show that of the respondents, virtually all were working in the golf industry, mainly as assistant professionals but also in other roles such as coaching and specialist retail positions. Jobs were in some of the top UK golf venues such as The Belfry, Royal Porthcawl, Scott Cranfield Academy, John Cook Golf School, De Vere Hotels, Royal Liverpool, South Devon Golf Academy, PGA National Training Academy and St Mellion. Other moved abroad to work, in countries ranging from Belgium, Spain, France, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Switzerland, Cyprus and South Korea. Others entered postgraduate study to undertake courses such as PhD in Golf Psychology, MBA in Business, Masters courses in Marketing and in Tourism and Hospitality or MPhil in Sports Coaching.

## **MAIN JOB AREAS**

### **Teaching professional/assistant professionals/retailing professionals**

Golf centres and clubs employ staff with professional PGA qualifications to teach customers. They may also run the retail outlets on site. Staff are often self employed. After some experience, progression is to head professional posts, with responsibility for other staff.

### **Director of golf /director of golf operations/operations manager –**

manage large complexes and commercial facilities and have responsibility for staff working as assistant professionals, teaching professionals and coaches. Also involves responsibility for any retail outlets on the site and acts as liaison between other departments and greenkeeping staff. These posts usually require considerable experience and successful candidates often are promoted to these posts.

**Golf coach** – specialist coaches are PGA qualified and work directly with players or in an education setting e.g. for the Sports Academy, Sport England or PGA.

**Event management** - Tournament controller/organiser/ staging operations staff. E.G. The PGA recruit staff educated to degree level to train as tournament controllers. In this role you need to be prepared to work in different locations and to regularly work early mornings. Good personal skills and organisation skills together with golf knowledge are usually required.

**Sales representatives, promotion and marketing staff** - equipment assemblers and suppliers such as Callaway, Ping, Titleist, Wilson Sporting goods, Taylor-Made . Most manufacturing of equipment is now done in the Far East. For a list of organisations see British Golf Industry Association (BGIA).

**Specialist retailers** – such as Golf Direct or American Golf offer opportunities

**Administrators** – golf organisations. See attached diagram for a summary. Posts range from golf secretaries (the term for senior administrative posts), to more specialised roles e.g. finance manager in larger organisations, clubs and complexes.

## **OTHER JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

**Golf development officers** - Golf organisations such as the Golf Foundation and local authorities such as Birmingham City Council employ staff to promote and develop golf – locally, nationally or internationally.

**Media** – Golf has a high degree of media coverage and roles include public relations, media production specialists, journalists, writers. Entry into this arena often depends on having established a golfing reputation beforehand.

**Education** – lecturer/tutor/administration e.g. tutoring for golf organisations such as the PGA, or posts are advertised to teach at colleges e.g. on BTEC National courses

**Sports psychologists** – BASES (British Association of Sport and Exercise Scientists ) run an accreditation scheme. Postgraduate study and research are the most likely routes in.

**Research** – equipment, sports science, turf. See the Sports Turf Research Institute for information.

**IT specialists** – web designers, database managers/applications designers/games designers

**Golf consultants** – staff with experience in a wide range of golf areas work on a freelance basis, often on several projects at the same time with different organisations e.g. in sports development, retail enterprises, education , promotion and activities such as designing driving ranges.

**Golf architects/designers.** Qualifications in landscape architecture are usually needed for technical roles. Promotion and marketing roles are open to those without these specialist qualifications. Edinburgh College of Art offer a Golf Course Design postgraduate course open to those with experience and graduates of any subject. There are about 100 practising professionals in Europe and about 150 in the US. See [www.eigca.org](http://www.eigca.org) for further information.

**Groundstaff/ maintenance.** Specialist qualifications are needed. See [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk)

**Golf club specialist managers** – Human resources /Finance/ Purchasing/ Hospitality. Appropriate qualifications and training in accountancy, HR etc would be needed in these career areas. Some training schemes for new graduates exist with general larger employers and then you could transfer to golf related organisations.

## SOURCES OF VACANCIES

- PGA website [www.pga.info](http://www.pga.info)
- [www.golfcareer.co.uk/](http://www.golfcareer.co.uk/)
- Magazines: PGA Professional (<http://media.pgamagazine.com/pgamagazine/pgamagazine.html> ), Golf World and Today's Golfer (EMAP [www.emap.com](http://www.emap.com)), ProShop Europe ([www.proshopeurope.com](http://www.proshopeurope.com) )

Speculative applications using contacts made and networking opportunities.

- PGA hold trade directories and a Directory of Golf listing professionals.
- English Golf Union produce the EGU Directory of organisations and suppliers of both services (e.g. insurance, golf holidays) and materials.

## FURTHER STUDY

As with other degrees, graduates can go onto further studies in areas which do not specify degree content. Masters level courses in areas such as human resources, marketing, finance, journalism or hospitality management are open to graduates of any subject.

Masters courses which may be of interest to graduates include golf course design (Edinburgh) and golf and country club management (Edinburgh). The latter is an MBA and on top of your degree, you would need at least 3 years relevant work experience. The University of Birmingham offers a Masters course in Sports Coaching and also offers MPhil and PhD study in coaching, sports science, and materials technology.

See [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) for an online directory of postgraduate courses in the UK. For courses in the US see [www.fulbright.co.uk](http://www.fulbright.co.uk).

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- PGA – UK [www.pga.info](http://www.pga.info)
- PGA – US [www.pga.org](http://www.pga.org)
- English Golf Union – Careers In Golf. Includes a list of addresses for the main organisations associated with golf. Available online at [www.englishgolfunion.org](http://www.englishgolfunion.org).
- Sports Turf Research Institute. [www.stri.co.uk](http://www.stri.co.uk) – external links section includes an extensive list of golf associations, golf publications, sports associations and other related sites.
- British Association of Sport and Exercise Science (BASES) [www.bases.org.uk](http://www.bases.org.uk).

- [www.rookiegolf.com](http://www.rookiegolf.com) includes a careers section with advice and profiles of golf occupations
- British Golf Industries Association [www.bgia.org.uk](http://www.bgia.org.uk) . The trade association which operates on behalf of manufacturers, distributors and wholesalers of golf equipment.
- [www.skillsactive.com](http://www.skillsactive.com)

### **Acronyms**

AGCS	Association of Golf Club Secretaries
BIGGA	British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association
CMAE	Club Managers Association of Europe
GCAS	Golf Clubs Advisory Service
PGA	Professional Golfers' Association
R&A	Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews
STRI	Sports Turf Research Institute

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Please note this leaflet is for guidance only.

## Working for Golf Organisations

### GOLF ORGANISATIONS

#### Professional

**PGA.** Employs about 100 staff in Headquarters and 7 regions e.g. regional secretaries, secretaries and tournament controllers.

**European Tour.** Employs about 100 administrators, tournament organisers and staging /event staff

**PGA membership** opens international careers. Recognised in Europe. Bridging programme needed for the US.

**Key**  
**Grey** – professional status required for most employment in these organisations  
**White** – opportunities for both those with amateur status and professional status

#### Amateur

**Home Unions** – England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Ladies' and Mens' organisations for each country mean there are 8 in total. Employ tournament staff, golf development officers and administrators.

**Golf clubs and complexes.** Over 2000 clubs in England, divided into counties. Employ golf secretaries. Over 1500 are private members clubs

**Support Infrastructure**  
– BIGGA/  
AGCS/ GCAS/  
CMAE /STRI

**Ladies Golf Union** – small permanent staff

**R & A** – management staff concerned with the Rules of Golf and governs amateur golf

**Golf Foundation** employ development officers