



Skills England

Standard Draft Preview

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Standard in development L2: Sports turf operative Version 2.0

Title of occupation

Sports turf operative

UOS reference number

ST0210

Core and options

No

Level of occupation

Level 2

Occupational maps data

Route: Agriculture, environmental and animal care

Pathway: Agriculture, Land Management and Production

Cluster: Landscape horticulture operative or technician

Typical duration of apprenticeship

18 months

Minimum hours for compliance

439 hours

Target date for approval

31/12/2026

Resubmission

No

Would your proposed apprenticeship standard replace an existing framework?

No

Does professional recognition exist for the occupation?

No

Regulated occupation

Is this a statutory regulated occupation?

No

Occupational summary

This occupation is found in a wide range of different sports and venues, for example, athletics, bowls, cricket, croquet, football, hockey, equestrian, rugby league and union, and tennis. The role will primarily be carried out in an outdoors environment and sites will range from general grass root sports surfaces, sports clubs, schools, up to international stadiums

and training facilities. Employing organisations may be of varying sizes depending on the geographical coverage of the organisation. However, sports turf operatives are required in all locations. Employers vary from small niche organisations to larger ones including Local Authorities and professional facilities.

The broad purpose of the occupation is to assist in the day-to-day preparation, maintenance, and upkeep of grounds and sports pitches to the highest possible standards. This includes both public and private sports facilities that are available for use at all levels from grass roots to professional sport and ensures facilities are available to support the Government policy of increasing physical activity. A sports turf operative will assist in various tasks including the preparing and renovation of sports surfaces, creating, marking out, and preparing sports turf playing surfaces for use, and will use machinery and equipment when required. They will also apply irrigation to sports turf surfaces and ensure maintenance of drainage. They ensure that safe working practices and health and safety legislation and regulations are complied with at all times.

These will all be done whilst ensuring carrying out safe working practices at all times and ensuring health and safety legislation and guidance is adhered to. Most of the work will be done in an outdoor environment, and duties will depend on the seasonality of the relevant sports throughout the year. There may be a requirement to work additional hours leading up to the start of a season or event.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with colleagues within their respective Grounds Maintenance department including a higher-level manager who they would report to. They would also liaise with other employees at their establishment of work such as maintenance staff, gardeners, or estate workers. They may also be required to have some customer-facing tasks dealing with members of the public, sports personnel, players, or coaching staff.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for reporting to their appropriate line manager to ensure they can carry out their own work to specific plans and within agreed deadlines. They are required to ensure all their actions are carried out in line with current health and safety legislation. They are also responsible for the maintenance, renovation, and overall appearance of one or more sports turf surfaces in accordance with the needs of the particular sport. Maintaining an appropriate quality playing surface that reflects the carrying capacity of that surface to ensure that a sustainable playing surface is provided.

Typical job titles

Groundskeeper

Groundsperson

Sports turf operative

Are there any statutory / regulatory or other typical entry requirements?

No

Occupation duties

DUTY	KSBS
<p>Duty 1 Undertake routine grounds preparation, maintenance, renovation, and general upkeep of all sports turf surfaces (e.g. natural turf, hybrid turf, artificial turf).</p>	<p>K1 K3 K5 K8 K11 K13 K15 K16 K17 K18</p> <p>S1 S5 S7 S8 S9 S11 S13</p> <p>B1 B2 B3 B4 B6</p>
<p>Duty 2 Prepare a surface for play in line with the relevant rules of each sport's national governing bodies.</p>	<p>K2 K5 K6 K8 K9 K10 K11 K15 K16</p> <p>S1 S2 S6 S7 S12</p> <p>B3</p>
<p>Duty 3 Prepare and establish ground for grassed areas for sport.</p>	<p>K2 K4 K5 K6 K9 K10 K11 K13 K15 K16</p> <p>S1 S6 S7 S12</p> <p>B3</p>
<p>Duty 4 Use machinery, equipment, and vehicles in accordance with organisational requirements, manufacturers' instructions and Health and Safety legislation.</p>	<p>K3</p> <p>S9</p> <p>B3</p>
<p>Duty 5 Identify and communicate faults with equipment and machinery to relevant personnel.</p>	<p>K1 K3</p> <p>S3 S10 S11</p> <p>B3 B4 B6</p>
<p>Duty 6 Maintain the cleanliness of machinery, equipment, sports grounds, and work areas.</p>	<p>K3</p> <p>S3</p> <p>B3</p>
<p>Duty 7 Ensure a safe working environment and the adoption of safe working practices.</p>	<p>K1 K3 K11 K12</p> <p>S9 S10</p> <p>B1 B3 B5</p>

Duty 8 Assist with the movement of equipment and materials, and their installation around the sports ground and playing areas.	K3 S3
Duty 9 Maintain effectiveness of sports turf irrigation and drainage systems.	K4 K9 K11 K14 S4 B4
Duty 10 Dispose of waste in accordance with organisational procedures, legal requirements and taking into account environmental sustainability.	K12 S14
Duty 11 Identify and communicate incidence of sports turf weeds, pests, diseases, and disorders.	K4 K6 K7 K9 K13 K19 S5 S10 S12 B3 B6
Duty 12 Use integrated prevention and control methods to reduce the incidence of diseases, disorders, pests and weeds on turf.	K4 K6 K9 K13 K19 S1 S5 S11 S12 B4
Duty 13 Mark out playing surfaces (including arcs and squaring off using the 3-4-5 method).	K8 K15 S2

KSBs

Knowledge

K1: Environmental, health, and safety legislation and regulations (e.g. Health and Safety at Work Act, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health, principles of risk assessment).

K2: Governing body rules and regulations relevant to the particular sports turf surfaces.

K3: Materials, tools, equipment and machinery used in maintenance and renovation activities.

K4: Soils structure and texture (including amended rootzones and top dressings).

K5: Sports turf reinforcement methods (including hybrid surfaces) and artificial turf materials.

K6: Common names of turf-grasses.

K7: Common threats to turf health :- Weeds: Daisy, Dandelion, Yarrow, Mosses, Procumbent pearlwort, White clover, Greater (Broad leaved) plantain, Ribwort (Narrow leaved) plantain, Knotgrass, Creeping buttercup, Creeping cinquefoil, Slender speedwell Pests: Cockchafer grub, Earthworm, Leatherjacket grub, Nematode Diseases: Anthracnose, Leaf Spot, Fairy rings - (Type 1 or Type 2 or Type 3) – (acceptable example of a correct Genus name only required, e.g. Type 1: Marasmius spp; Type 2: Lycoperdon spp; Type 3: Hygrophorus spp), Microdochium (Fusarium) patch, Red thread, Take-all patch. Turf disorders: Thatch, Compaction, Fertiliser scorch, Hydraulic oil scorch, Black layer, Drought.

K8: Processes for setting up sports turf surfaces in line with relevant governing body requirements (including line marking, the 3-4-5 squaring technique, and marking arcs and semi-circles).

K9: The principles of plant science (including photosynthesis, respiration and transpiration in the growth and development of plants).

K10: The principles of plant nutrition and impact on sustainability (including Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium, Magnesium, Sulphur, Iron).

K11: The impact of climate, weather and ground conditions on the maintenance and use of sports turf surfaces.

K12: Different methods to sustainably, legally and safely dispose of waste to minimise and reduce environmental impacts.

K13: Methods to assess the condition of sports turf surfaces (including thatch content, root depth, uniformity of cover, weed/pest/disease content).

K14: The principles of sports turf irrigation and drainage systems (including layouts, components, and basic maintenance).

K15: How to calibrate equipment to apply a range of materials associated with sports turf surfaces (e.g. grass seed, granular fertilisers, bulky top-dressing, turf and root zone).

K16: Maintenance operations required to ensure the quality of sports turf surfaces.

K17: Operations and techniques required for general day-to-day maintenance of sports turf surfaces.

K18: Operations and techniques required to repair damaged sports turf surfaces .

K19: The application of integrated prevention and control methods to reduce the threat to sports turf health (e.g. weeds, pests, diseases, disorders).

Skills

S1: Apply the correct rates and range of materials to sports turf surfaces (e.g. grass seed, granular fertilisers, bulky top-dressing, turf and root zone).

S2: Set and mark out the sports turf surface in accordance with the relevant governing body rules (including line marking, the 3-4-5 squaring technique, and marking arcs and semi-circles).

S3: Prepare machinery and equipment to ensure their safe and effective use when carrying out sport turf tasks.

S4: Maintain levels of soil moisture using either irrigation or drainage systems.

S5: Inspect the condition of sports turf, make observations and communicate findings (e.g. PQS, weeds, pests, diseases, thatch content).

S6: Prepare the ground and established grass areas as part of sports turf renovation tasks (e.g. overseeding, turfing).

S7: Carry out cylinder mowing of sports turf surface(s) in accordance with set requirements.

S8: Carry out repair of sports turf surfaces using relevant equipment and machinery (e.g. divot repair, foot hole repair, animal damage).

S9: Prepare and safely operate a tractor and its attachments.

S10: Select and use relevant communication styles (e.g. verbal, written, digital) to convey information to different audiences (e.g. clients, staff, suppliers).

S11: Adopts a systematic approach to troubleshooting and solving day-to-day resource or equipment issues.

S12: Identify a range of turf grasses (vegetative and seed). (Including, perennial ryegrass smooth stalk meadow grass, annual meadow grass, fescue grass (fine), bent grass).

S13: Carry out maintenance of sports turf surface using relevant equipment and machinery for example scarification, verti-cutting, grooming, brushing, rotary mowing, dew removal, rolling and aeration.

S14: Dispose of waste in a safe and sustainable manner.

Behaviours

B1: A strong work ethic including attention to detail and good time management.

B2: Flexible and positive attitude to work.

B3: Takes ownership of own work.

B4: Committed to keeping up to date with industry best practice.

B5: Possess a safety mindset for self, colleagues and others.

B6: Team focused and works effectively with colleagues and others.

Qualifications

English and maths

English and maths qualifications must be completed in line with the apprenticeship funding rules.

Does the apprenticeship need to include any mandated qualifications in addition to the above-mentioned English and maths qualifications?

No

Consultation

Progression routes

A sports turf operative would be looking at progression to level 3 which would be as a sports turf technician or advanced golf greenkeeper.

Supporting uploads

Mandatory qualification uploads

Mandated degree evidence uploads

Professional body confirmation uploads

Subject sector area

3.2 Horticulture and forestry