

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

The BSc in Applied Golf Management Studies (AGMS) can lead to a wide range of careers in the industry. It gives both a degree qualification and can lead to membership of the PGA (Professional Golfers' Association). It is one of only five University programmes with a 100% employability record 6 months after graduation and one of two programmes to achieve this in successive years (the other being Dentistry). This booklet covers some of the opportunities open to AGMS graduates.



"A key part of the broader economic impact of the game of golf is in the provision of long term career opportunities. The game has an impact across society from venues, to service industries, from infrastructure to manufacture, and employs a significant number of people in different services and organisations." (Sports Marketing Surveys, 2013:11)

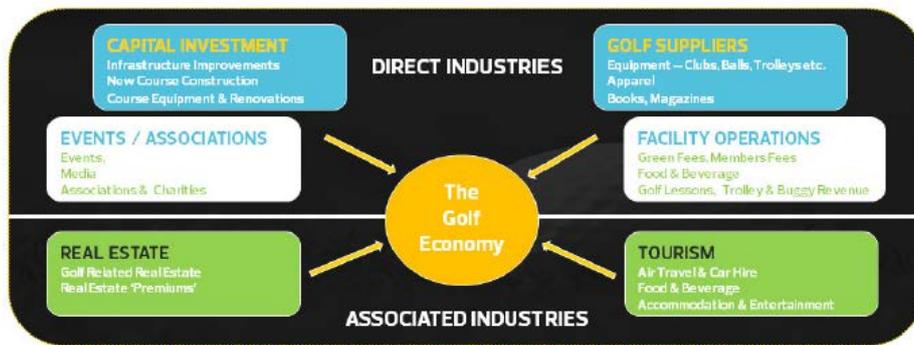
The above quote emphasises that the golf industry provides many diverse careers. This includes jobs in 'Direct Industries' which help people to participate in golf. These include:

	<p>Golf Facility Operations e.g. golf club management, golf operations, golf coaching, golf retailing.</p>
	<p>Golf Suppliers e.g. equipment manufacture and marketing, golf books and magazines.</p>
	<p>Capital Investment e.g. golf course construction, infrastructure improvements, course renovations.</p>
	<p>Events/Associations e.g. Golf Tournaments/Events, Media, Associations and Charities.</p>

In addition, there is employment in 'Associated Industries' such as:

- Golf Tourism, and
- Real Estate.

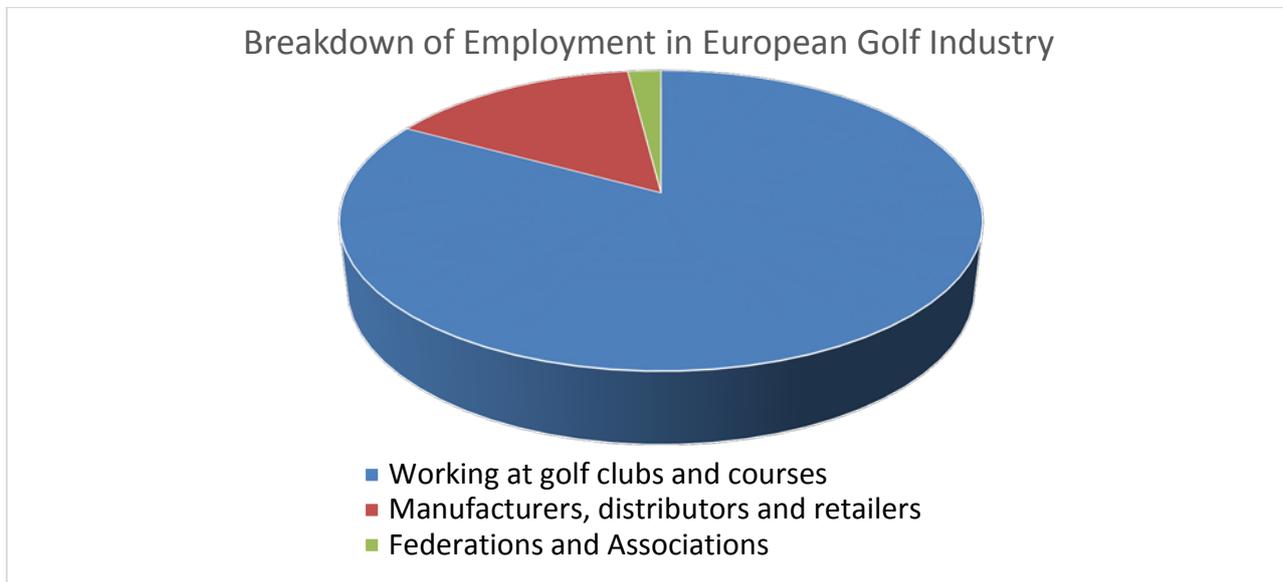
This is summed up in the following model of the golf economy:



Source: Sports Marketing Surveys (2013:4)

## Golf in Europe

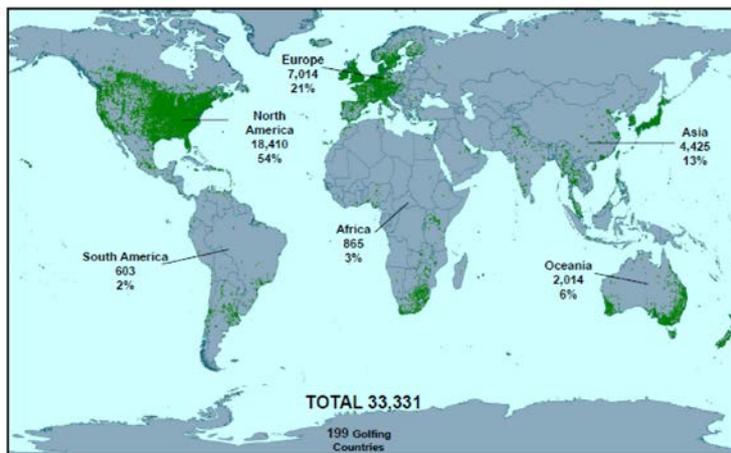
According to Sports Marketing Surveys (2013), golf contributes over €15bn to the European economy and there are estimated to be 180,500 full-time equivalent jobs in the golf industry in Europe. These break down into the following categories.



Great Britain and Ireland is the biggest sector of the European golf economy and has around 79,000 full-time equivalent jobs in golf. Just over 80% of these jobs are at golf facilities of which there are over 3,000. These range from large complexes owned by private companies such as Marriott and Troon to small private members' clubs.

## The World of Golf

Internationally, there are over 33,000 golf courses and, according to Beditz, 2012 there are 199 'golfing countries' (see below).



Source: Beditz, 2012.

The industry is well developed in the USA with over half of the world's golf courses and an economic impact estimated at around \$52bn. Japan and Western Europe are other well established markets and there is much potential for development in the less mature golf markets in other parts of the world such as China, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, India, and Russia. In China, there are estimated to be around 600 golf courses, although some of these were built despite a government ban on building golf courses in 2004! According to the *Guinness Book of Records*, the Mission Hills Resort in China is the biggest golf club in the world, with twelve 18-hole courses. The Manager for International Development for the Professional Golfers' Association in China is AGMS Graduate, Matthew Davies (see link below). Matthew provides a direct link between the PGA, AGMS and golf in China.

[Matthew Davies \(2007-2010\)](#)

In the mature markets of the USA, UK, Canada and Australia, the golf market has reached a challenging stage with the development of the game having slowed down or being entirely stagnant. The decrease in the number of affiliated golfers can be partially attributed to the economic crisis of recent years but also to the change in lifestyles, work and golfing patterns. Specifically, in Great Britain and Ireland, where golfers do not need to be registered to play, more and more golfers choose to play on a casual basis, rather than paying club membership. Nevertheless, there are still many opportunities to develop a career in the industry.

### Career Opportunities in Golf

Previous graduates from the course have gained work in golf organisations around the world and have shown the ability to adapt to many different roles and the way of life in a variety of countries. Recent surveys of graduate destinations show that of the respondents, virtually all were working in the golf industry, in many different positions. Even for those who have chosen to work outside of the golf industry, the AGMS has provided a route into careers such as Teaching and Accountancy.

Graduates are employed in some of the top UK golf venues such as Wentworth, St Andrews, Royal Mid-Surrey, Stoke Park, Marriott Forest of Arden and St. Mellion. Others have moved abroad to work, in countries ranging from Belgium, Spain, France, Ireland, Portugal, Switzerland, China, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Australia. A number of graduates have taken up employment with the PGA, primarily in the Tournament Department but also in the PGA National Training Academy and with the PGAs of Europe. Others have 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.

The AGMS Degree equips students to work in a variety of different roles within the industry. Just a few examples are included below:

### **Golf Management**

Graduates have opportunities to gain the skills needed to work in the golf industry in a management capacity. Many sections of the industry have expanded in recent years. At the 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. A number of AGMS graduates have already developed successful careers in this field. See links below:

[James Ibbetson \(2007-10\)](#)

[Clinton Norris \(2008-2011\)](#)

[George Scott \(2012-15\)](#)

### **Golf Development**

Another route after graduating is to move into golf development, which is critical to future participation levels in the sport. There are opportunities to work with many golf organisations who specialise in this field. They are looking for graduates who have a passion for developing golf and introducing new players to the game and the drive to make that happen. An example of an AGMS graduate who has gone down this route is Lauren Spray who is the Women and Girls' Participation Officer for England Golf (see link below):

[Lauren Spray \(2007-10\)](#)

### **Golf Equipment**

Golf equipment and supplies have an economic value of nearly €3bn to the European market and €1.4 in GB&I. Some of the equipment manufacturers are huge, multi-national businesses with worldwide revenues around \$1bn and high profile brand names. Studying on AGMS has provided a route into this field for a number of students. For example, Jess Florey at TaylorMade-Adidas Golf and Oliver Churcher at Motocaddy (see links below):

[Jess Florey \(2005-08\)](#)

[Oliver Churcher \(2003-06\)](#)

### **Golf Event Management**

Golf Tournaments and Events are another significant element of the golf economy and during the AGMS course, students are given the chance to organise a live golf event and to gain experiences that they can then take out into the real world. There is no bigger golf event than the Ryder Cup which is broadcast in 183 countries worldwide. The 2010 event at Celtic Manor generated over £80m for the Welsh economy and estimates suggest that this figure was closer to £100m for the 2014 competition at Gleneagles. Eleanor Woodall, who graduated from AGMS in 2001 was appointed as Ryder Cup project supervisor for the 2018 Ryder Cup in France within a few months of graduating which was a huge compliment to her abilities and the whole AGMS Programme (see link below):

[Eleanor Woodall \(2008-11\)](#)

### **Golf Coaching**

For those who are interested in golf coaching, the AGMS Degree provides the opportunity to develop high level coaching skills and to turn this into a profitable and rewarding career. In addition to the degree modules, which explore golf coaching and sports science in detail, students are required to complete the ASQ Level 1 and 2 Golf Coaching awards which means that they are qualified to coach golfers once they have graduated. A number of AGMS graduates are now employed as golf coaches at many venues around the world:

[Chris Jelly \(2003-06\)](#)

[Andy Griffiths \(2008-11\)](#)

## Playing on Tour

Some students from the AGMS degree want to establish themselves as players, although this is a highly competitive field and it takes a huge amount of talent and hard work to become successful. The PGA has a schedule of regional, national and international tournaments for both male and female golfers enabling players to work up the rankings. Alternatively, a playing route can be taken through the various satellite tours which may eventually lead to gaining a Tour Card on the European Tour or the Ladies' European Tour. Both Jason Palmer and Lucy Williams have had the opportunity to play in their respective US Opens after graduating from AGMS (see links below):

[Jason Palmer \(2003-06\)](#)

[Lucy Williams \(2007-10\)](#)

## AGMS Students/Graduates on LinkedIn

Many AGMS students and graduates can be found on LinkedIn. Enter "Applied Golf Management Studies" (in speech marks) in the search box. <https://www.linkedin.com/>

## Joining the PGA

You can develop your career by opting to become a member of the PGA or remaining an amateur. PGA membership is essential for those who want to coach as most employers will specify that they want a coach who is PGA Qualified. Other roles within golf may not see PGA membership as essential but may regard it as beneficial and the combination of a degree from a top university and membership of the world's oldest PGA may give an advantage when applying for jobs. You can retain amateur status and still work in a range of jobs related to the business side of the industry. The golf industry is a complex network, and becoming familiar with how the organizations fit together is useful.

## Skills and Qualities Required to Succeed

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.

## MAIN JOB AREAS

**Head/Club Professional/Teaching Professional:** Golf centres and clubs employ PGA members to manage golf facilities and to teach customers. They may also run the retail outlets on site. Staff are often self employed. After some experience, progression is to head/club professional posts, with responsibility for other staff.

**Director of Golf /Director of Golf Operations/Operations Manager:** This involves managing large complexes and commercial facilities and having responsibility for staff working as assistant professionals, teaching professionals and coaches. It may also involve responsibility for any retail outlets on the site and acting as liaison between other departments and green-keeping staff. These posts usually require considerable experience and successful candidates often are promoted to these posts.

**Golf Coach:** Specialist coaches are normally 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 manufacturers 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 Direct Golf 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. The European Institute of Golf Course Architects offers a Vocational Qualification in Golf Course Design which may be something that AGMS students would be interested in after graduation (see <http://www.eigca.org/BecomeGCADiploma.ink>). 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.

**Ground staff / 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)
- ProShop Europe (<http://www.proshopeurope.co.uk/>)

## 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.

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.org.uk](http://www.fulbright.org.uk).

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- PGA – UK [www.pga.info](http://www.pga.info)
- PGA – US [www.pga.com](http://www.pga.com)
- 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)
- 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)
- <http://www.colttmm.com/home> Colt Mackenzie McNair (CMM) is the leading executive recruitment specialist working in the golf markets of Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific.
- <http://www.golftoday.co.uk/noticeboard/jobs/> - Golf Today the web's most comprehensive news and information source for golfers.

## Acronyms

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

Contact Careers Network to gain advice on your future career plans  
[www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers](http://www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers).

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*Please note this leaflet is for guidance only.*