



THE PGA PROFESSIONAL

PGA Pro
The  of golf[®]

*A guide to understanding the structure of
PGA Membership & PGA Member Education.*

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Document amendments

Date	Amendment
January 2012	Time until member is eligible to apply for Advanced status once they become a member has been reduced from 5 years to 3 years

Welcome

This document is designed to provide information on the Professional Golfers' Association's (PGA) initial training programme, member education opportunities and membership classifications & titles that are part of the PGA's framework & structure.

Although the membership of the PGA is made up of individuals commonly referred to as 'PGA Golf Professionals', all PGA Professionals are not of equal standing when one considers the type of role they have, the length of time served in various roles, their successes & achievements, ongoing commitment to personal & professional development, additional & further qualifications, PGA membership classifications, etc.

In pulling together the critical pieces of information that someone (employer, golf club committee member, member of the golf industry, etc) might need to know when seeking to better understand what differentiates one PGA Professional from another, it is hoped that this document provides a useful guide for all.

Please note:

Throughout this document electronic references/websites (e.g. URL's) have been identified to help. Should one of these resources be unavailable please contact the Member Education Dept at the PGA National Training Academy who will endeavour to find you an alternative option.

Introduction

The Professional Golfers' Association is a members association with over 7000 Members working in over 70 countries around the world at present.

The Association has a variety of different classifications which identify specific categories of membership and they include:

- Class A Professional
- Class AA Professional
- Tournament Professional (4 levels: TP1 –TP4)
- Life Member
- Honorary Member
- Staff Member
- Inactive Member
- Retired Member

To identify Members who have qualified as a PGA Professional and gone on to demonstrate higher levels of knowledge and skill in a variety of roles, the PGA also affords Members the designations of:

- PGA Advanced Professional
- PGA Fellow Professional
- PGA Advanced Fellow Professional
- PGA Master Professional

This document sets out the process by which an individual can become a PGA qualified Professional and the conditions by which the two largest classifications of membership are identified (Class 'A' and 'AA' Professionals)¹, as well as giving some background on how the four 'PGA Professional' designations listed directly above are determined.

Information on the other categories of membership can be accessed by contacting the PGA Membership department at PGA headquarters on 01675 470333.

¹ 90 % of PGA members are classified as either Class 'A' and 'AA' Professionals (March 2011)

Background

Our research suggests that the PGA Professional fulfils one or more of the following roles on completion of their initial PGA qualification (*the list is not exhaustive*):

- A qualified teacher and coach who understands a wide range of issues relating to the coaching process, including the biomechanics of the golf swing, psychology, fitness and nutrition
- A knowledgeable retailer, able to understand not only selling techniques but also issues such as marketing and customer service
- A customer advisor who recommends the best products for their customers' needs
- A skilled business person who can satisfy the requirements of both the customer and the supplier
- A skilled club fitter who builds, repairs and customises golf equipment
- A manager of services, products, facilities and people
- A Professional who is IT literate
- A tournament organiser, course planner and referee
- A good player

Initial training – PGA recognised training programmes

Potential Members of the Association undertake a three-year training programme which since 2003 has been a nationally recognised qualification – a Foundation Degree in Professional Golf. Prior to that the PGA awarded its own Diploma; a qualification recognised within the industry but not outside.

Since 2002, the University of Birmingham and the PGA have also offered the Applied Golf Management Studies (AGMS) degree. Although PGA membership is not secured through successful completion of the AGMS degree alone, the subjects covered are quite similar.

Amongst the subject areas covered in both qualifications, students study:

- Business Management
- Golf Coaching
- Sports Science
- Equipment Technology
- Rules and Tournament Organisation
- Coaching Children
- Personal & Career Development

Further details of both qualifications can be found here - [How to Become a PGA Pro](#)²

² <http://www.pga.info/AboutThePGAPro/31851301.htm>

Coaching qualifications

In addition to the PGA qualification (and since 2008) an assistant must also complete the Association of Sports Qualifications' (ASQ) Level 1 Certificate in Coaching Golf and ASQ Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Golf qualifications to be eligible for membership of the PGA.

These two Certificates in Golf Coaching have been developed by the PGA on behalf of the UK Source Group for Golf³ in line with UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC) Guidance and Standards. These qualifications have been designed to support the development of the sport of golf throughout the UK by providing a high quality coach education framework that meets the needs of golfers at all levels of the relevant player pathways. For more information please view - [Coaching Golf](#)⁴

PGA Professionals qualifying prior to 2008 were awarded a PGA Level 3 certificate. This award reflects the position of the Professional as a coach, and is a sign that they have completed the PGA Golf Coaching practical examination which is part of the Applied Golf Management Studies Degree and Foundation Degree process.

Eligibility for PGA Membership

To be eligible for PGA membership, assistants must have:

- Successfully completed a PGA recognised training programme
- Obtained an ASQ Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Golf
- Attained an emergency First Aid certificate
- Completed an appropriate child protection course
- Undertaken an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check, (or equivalent)
- Competed in Professional competition to the agreed standard

Initial status of PGA Membership

On admission to the PGA as a Member, an individual is given class 'A' status⁵.

Having gained three years experience they are then awarded class 'AA' status, providing they have amassed 100 points from Member Education activities (courses, additional qualifications, etc) at the relevant regrade date⁶. From the beginning of the PGA training programme, assistants are able to engage in events that are recognised as part of the PGA Member Education programme.

³ The UK Source Group for Golf consists of representation from the governing bodies of golf within the UK and includes the Home Nations Golf Unions (both men and women), the R&A, the PGA with support from **sports coach UK**

⁴ <http://www.pga.info/CoachingGolf/34497409.htm>

⁵ This is the current situation (Oct 2011), however previous regulations mean some members may have gained AA status more quickly

⁶ Class A and AA status is re-graded each year on 1st October. Class A and AA status is explained further on in this document

Member Education Programme

To ensure that Professionals have the opportunity to gain continuous access to current information and recognised professional development, various learning opportunities are offered as part of the Member Education programme. Courses form the majority of those opportunities at present. These courses are put on around the country and cover a number of subject areas. Many of the courses offer a tiered approach (beginner, intermediate and advanced).

Attendance on a course provides Members with the opportunity to collect CPD points – each learning hour is typically awarded 5 CPD points (a typical CPD event will offer 25 points per day). Points are also awarded for courses organised by external bodies. They must be recognised by the PGA as providing information that may be of benefit to PGA Members.

In working with partners across the golf & education sectors, the PGA has started to develop a range of online education opportunities that Members can access 24/7. These courses are designed to offer Members the chance to update their knowledge in certain areas at a time to suit them, where they can have more control over when they choose to learn.

Further Education – qualifications

As well as the aforementioned ways of accruing CPD points, the PGA offers its Members the chance to undertake a 'PGA Advanced Diploma'. This qualification is currently made up of eight modules which each require an assignment to be submitted for an award of CPD points, plus on completion a certificate is awarded which can contribute towards any submission for an upgrade in membership designation.

As well as this qualification, all other education based qualifications; (e.g., NVQ's, HND's, A-levels, Bachelors Degree, MPhil, PhD, etc) are awarded varying numbers of points, depending on the amount of study undertaken. This allows the Member to follow their own desired course and gain points to maintain or upgrade their membership category.

PGA Member Education website

Further details of courses, qualifications and other personal and professional development opportunities which are currently available to PGA Professionals are available at www.pganationaltrainingacademy.org.uk

PGA Membership Categories

Class 'A' and 'AA'

As previously referenced the PGA uses the terms 'A' and 'AA' to differentiate between PGA Professionals with differing levels of current professional development.

The following definitions may be helpful:

Class 'AA'

Only Professionals who have a PGA Qualification; have been qualified for at least three years⁷, **and who have engaged in (at least) the minimum amount of professional development** are recognised as class 'AA'.

Class 'A'

A class 'A' status designation is carried by PGA Professionals who have a PGA Qualification and who have either **been qualified for less than three years**, and/or **who have not engaged in sufficient recognised professional development** at the time of the annual re-grading of PGA membership status.

The system

To be awarded 'AA' status Members must maintain 100 CPD points in a rolling three-year period, by engaging in relevant professional development, some of which are provided through the opportunities listed within the Member Education programme.

As part of the rolling programme concept, each Member is not simply required to get 100 points during a three-year period and then a further 100 points in the following three-year period, but rather maintain a 100 point profile at all times⁸. Failure to do so means the loss of class 'AA' status. It is important to recognize that if a Member is downgraded, then they have to make up the number of points needed to be eligible to be upgraded⁹.

However, once a Member reaches the age of 55, if they are a class 'AA' Member, they remain so for life. Members over 55 are still able to attend events, and if they are a class 'A' Member at the time they can still upgrade to class 'AA' status on achievement of 100 CPD points.

⁷ This is the current situation (Oct 2011), however previous regulations mean some members may have gained AA status more quickly

⁸ Points gained in a single year expire after three years.

⁹ The upgrade/downgrade procedure is only run once a year on 1st October and it is at this time that a Member's status is confirmed for the whole of the following year.

Evidence of professional development activities

Each year all Members receive a 'Continuous Professional Development Statement'. This details the courses attended during the year, the points awarded and the total points to date (for the current three-year period). It also shows the number of points that will expire in the following year, so that Members will be able to see what is required to maintain/attain their class 'AA' status.

Should an employer or deployer of a PGA Professional wish to ascertain the exact nature (and amount) of professional development that a PGA Professional has engaged in, a 'PGA Member Education CPD Profile' highlights all recognised education activities that have been accredited. These can be obtained by the Member from the PGA and provided to the employer/deployer. They are not available to employers/deployers directly.

PGA Membership Designations

As well as the class 'A/AA' status, PGA Members are also differentiated through formal recognition of their previous experience, further education, achievements, accreditations, etc. Once qualified, and with a minimum length of time served in the golf industry, a Member can submit an application to be awarded any one of four additional titles. They rank hierarchically from PGA Advanced Professional up to PGA Master Professional – as below.



PGA Master Professional

Meets the criteria laid down for PGA Master Professional and has been qualified for a minimum of 15 years



PGA Advanced Fellow Professional

Meets the criteria laid down for PGA Advanced Fellow Professional and has been qualified for a minimum of 10 years



PGA Fellow Professional

Meets the criteria laid down for PGA Fellow Professional and has been qualified for a minimum of 8 years



PGA Advanced Professional

Meets the criteria laid down for PGA Advanced Professional and has been qualified for a minimum of 3 years



PGA Professional

Has gained membership by successfully completing the PGA Training Programme

The process to gain one of the four advanced membership designations requires that a Member completes an Accreditation of Professional Achievement & Learning (APAL) form,

and submits it, with evidence, to the Membership Department¹⁰. A committee sits and deliberates on the appropriateness of an application against a set of criteria which are published on the following pages and available to PGA Members¹¹. The same process is applicable if a Member decides to re-apply later in their career when more experience, more recognition and more learning has resulted.

The criteria on the following pages identify some of the traits/behaviours expected of a PGA Professional at the different levels. They are set against a 'Novice to Expert' continuum designed to reflect skills and achievements. The scale relates closely to the various membership designations awarded by the PGA. (E.g. A PGA Professional given 'PGA Advanced Professional' status is expected to demonstrate a highly competent level of practice within their role in the golf industry, as well as being able to evidence achievements of a comparable nature).

¹⁰ A Member must be of class 'AA' status at the time of application and have been a full Member for a minimum of 3 years.

¹¹ In exceptional circumstances, where a member is able to demonstrate achievements that belie their years, The PGA reserve the right to award a higher level of membership than their time in membership might dictate.

APAL Criteria

		Highly capable	>	Highly competent	>	Highly proficient	>	Highly expert	
Roles In the game	Coaching	Evidence of effectively introducing golfers to the game and keeping golfers in the game through their actions		Evidence of sustained influence and some success at club, county or regional level		Sustained influence and success with players who have gone on to success at national level		Sustained influence and success with players who have gone on to success at international level	Highly regarded person who has had significant and sustained success in this area
	Retail	Evidence of providing a retail experience which offers customers goods and services with good quality customer care		Evidence of operating, managing and continuously developing all aspects of the golf retail business with some success		Evidence of operating, managing and continuously developing all aspects of the golf retail business with sustained success		Evidence of operating, managing and continuously developing all aspects of the golf retail business with sustained success. There is strong evidence of entrepreneurial behaviour in this person's actions and results	Highly regarded person who has had significant and sustained success in this area
	Golf Management	Evidence of effectively delivering all aspects of golf operations under their control		Evidence of effectively delivering and developing all aspects of golf operations under their immediate control		Evidence of operating at both a tactical and strategic level, managing and continuously developing all aspects of the golf business with some success		Evidence of sustained success in operating at both a tactical and strategic level, managing and continuously developing all aspects of the golf business with evidence of strong customer care, improved revenues and profitability	Highly regarded person who has had significant and sustained success in this area
	Equipment Tech	Evidence of providing recognised club fitting and repair service. Offers Members technical advice on equipment matters		Provides a complete fitting service to a customer which includes a club fitting service based on a thorough and holistic analysis of all parts of the game based on measurable data		In addition to offering a complete club fitting service, they offer a wide range of options in the customisation of equipment and build clubs from components		Evidence of a strong commitment and contribution within the field of equipment technology and/or repairs, which has enhanced the reputations of golf Professionals	Highly regarded person who has had significant and sustained success in this area
	Other roles	Comparable evidence of operation, success and continued development as per Coaching, Retail, Golf Management, Equipment Tech definitions. For example: Golf Course Architecture, Refereeing, Education, etc							

	Highly capable	>	Highly competent	>	Highly proficient	>	Highly expert	
Playing record	Represents the PGA well when playing in Pro-Am or other Pro events		Repeated success at PGA regional level		Repeated success at PGA national level		Repeated Success at Tour level	Success at Majors or Ryder/Solheim Cup
PGA Roles held	Is involved in the committee structure at the club		Sustained commitment and contribution at county level		Sustained commitment and contribution at regional level		Sustained commitment and contribution to the PGA	An ambassador/leader recognised for work that benefits the PGA
Work within the community	Is a positive influence in the local area		Is a strong role model as a PGA Professional		Has held more than one senior role at regional or national level with evidence of commitment and contribution		Over a sustained period of time has shown evidence of commitment and contribution which has strongly influenced a significant part of the game	An ambassador/leader recognised for work that benefits the game of golf
Media, Press and other public work	Produces literature which promotes themselves and what they do in a Professional manner on a local level		Produces literature/delivers seminars which promotes themselves and what they do in a Professional manner to a wider audience		Has written articles/books and presented at regional or national level seminars or conferences		Written a number of books, articles and presented at prestigious conferences and seminars	Someone who has left their mark at conferences and/or through books, articles or videos
Professional Development	Has maintained sufficient points to be classed as 'AA'. Some evidence of this being linked to career progression		Through attendance at courses, seminars, and by taking qualifications related to golf, has shown a desire and willingness to develop self		Demonstrates evidence of sustained commitment to personal development which is coherent with developing further expertise and career opportunities		Has invested in self extensively, seeking out individuals with cutting edge knowledge and understanding in order to be more effective within their own field of work	Continues to invest in self extensively, seeking out individuals with cutting edge knowledge and understanding in order to be more effective within their own field of work
Quals	PGA Qualified and all relevant basic certificates		Evidence of further qualifications up to degree level		Degree level or equivalent		Masters level or equivalent	Doctoral level or equivalent
General Description	Proactive Professional, with a strong reputation within their facility for good service and good knowledge. Acts in a Professional manner, as expected by the PGA, and by their actions supports the PGA 'brand'		Proactive with a high profile within the local area. Building a reputation based on evidence of influencing and contributing to the success of others		Developing a reputation more widely within their field, significantly influencing and contributing to others, with recognisable career development and investment in their own learning		Numerous examples of innovative and significant contribution to the game. Recognition is strong at national level, with the possibility to be known more widely. Clear evidence of personal development throughout their lifetime	International reputation within their field. Sustained and significant success with significant influence over a number of other Professionals

Summary

The classifications and designations that have been identified within this document are used by the PGA to identify various levels of expertise and attainment of PGA Members, as well as recognising ongoing personal and professional development.

Members are encouraged to use these to market and promote themselves. The golf industry is encouraged to use them to identify and recruit appropriate individuals that meet the needs of a particular role.

When seeking to differentiate between PGA Professionals; the key questions that should be asked are as follows:

Q - What class of membership do you have?
Possible responses Class A = less than 3 years qualified and /or not kept up to date with the minimum professional development recognised by the PGA Class AA = Qualified for at least 3 years and has at least the minimum requirements expected of a PGA Professional
Q - What membership designation do you have?
Possible responses A qualified Member with no further recognition of their achievements, professional development, etc will be recognised as a 'PGA Qualified Professional'. The hierarchy then goes up to 'PGA Advanced Professional', 'PGA Fellow Professional', 'PGA Advanced Fellow Professional' and those Professionals at the pinnacle of the game and the Association are known as 'PGA Master Professionals'.
Q - How were your class of membership and membership designation achieved?
Possible responses A 'PGA Member Education CPD Profile' can highlight the type of activities that a Professional has engaged in part of their professional development. An employer might question whether or not that information is suitable for the role that they are trying to fill.

In addition, a Member's CV should highlight some areas of expertise that cannot be captured by either continuous professional development and/or categories of membership. This will include the amount of time spent in the profession and other personal details.

Further guidance can be sought from your regional or national PGA headquarters



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