

Managing Sports Turf Study

The transition to online during COVID-19

2019 VGCSA Golf Turf Apprentice of the Year:

Scott Allott

Employer: Metropolitan Golf Club

Current Studies: Diploma of Sports Turf Management, Melbourne Polytechnic

Describe the new learning/study mechanisms that have been implemented by TAFE for your course since the COVID-19 social distancing restrictions.

Prior to the legislated COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, Melbourne Polytechnic already had an online learning platform called 'Moodle.' On Moodle, students in a given course are able to access course content that the course coordinator makes available. When the Victorian government announced social distancing restrictions back in March, my course - Diploma of Sports Turf Management - had to change from face to face learning to online learning in order to abide by these restrictions. This meant each week accessing each subject's theory content via Moodle. Additionally, the course coordinator would also send out weekly emails explaining and summarising each topic from a given subject as well as using practical and anecdotal experiences to help consolidate theoretical knowledge.

Unfortunately, the course does rely on face to face and practical learning in order to complete assessment tasks, a necessary requirement to successfully pass the course. For now, this means that assessment tasks will not be completed until students are able to resume face to face classes again. Hopefully, this does not impact the completion date for the course. Additionally, because learning is online it is also self-directed. This means you are in control of when and how you study in your own time. This can allow for greater flexibility when studying. Course coordinators and teachers are available to talk to via the phone, however, because there is no contact with other students it allows less opportunity for group discussions and problem solving, which used to be both common and beneficial part of face to face classes.

How easy or challenging has the transition to online studies been for you? Pros and Cons?

An advantage to transitioning to online learning has been that previous studies (e.g.



Apprenticeship through Melbourne Polytechnic) has meant I am already familiar with Moodle, the online learning platform. This means navigating myself through directed learning has been easier. Additionally, because learning is self-directed, I can complete content in my own time and at my own pace allowing greater flexibility.

A disadvantage is that online learning doesn't allow for group discussions with the teacher and peers or the ability to ask questions. Another disadvantage is not having the practical learning experiences that help to consolidate learnt theoretical knowledge. Moreover, when face to face classes resume, many assessment tasks will need to be completed and won't be as spaced out compared to if restrictions hadn't been put in place. Lastly, the uncertainty of not knowing when the end date of the course will be.

Are there any study components that can't be fulfilled and may need to be deferred due to social distancing restrictions?

As mentioned above, the assessment components of the course have been deferred until face to face classes resume due to the practical nature of assessment tasks.

What are you looking forward to once COVID-19 restrictions are eased?

In terms of my studies, I'm looking forward to being able to discuss content with other peers and the teacher, as well as the practical learning that comes with the course.

In relation to my work, I'm looking forward to being able to work with the whole work staff again. Currently, rosters have been split up to abide by COVID-19 restrictions, meaning I only see a few of my colleagues. Also, wearing latex gloves all day is not overly comfortable.

In terms of my personal life, I miss the privilege of being able to see family members, eat out in restaurants, go to events and football games, and going on holidays.