

The price of being a Certified Sports Field Manager

Now that I have been a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) for more than 2 years, my perspective is changing. In the past, if you watered faithfully, followed some type of fertilization program, maintained good cultural practices, and mowed three times a week, that was all you needed to be a good sports turf manager. Ten years ago, that might have been right.

But now, more fields are becoming state of the art. There are new turf systems on the market every day, from the portable and removable turf systems, to all kinds of stabilized sand-based systems, to modified native soil fields. Today we are inundated with all kinds of soil amendments, the newest and best fertilizers, the best turfgrass varieties, and the latest and greatest chemicals, all of which we need to perform our jobs correctly.

Who are the Sports Turf Managers that will be able to manage the latest and greatest turf systems? I am sure we will have more venues where the grass will be grown indoors, pushing the limits of turf even farther than imagined. Who are the Sports Turf Managers that will continue to improve and up-grade existing fields?

The answers to those questions are the sports turf managers who will continue with their professional development. Professional development is the single most important action you can take to improve your career and further your potential new employment opportunities. The Certification Program guides you in the right direction.

Becoming certified isn't easy. If it were easy, all would be certified. Today's CSFM has made the commitment to learning more about the sports turf industry.

This shows us that, for CSFM's, the education and professional development process never stops.

Here at Michigan State University, you don't have to look far to see the future of the sports turf industry. The 2-year Sports and Commercial Turf Management Program and the 4-year degree program are bringing a better-educated turf manager to the turf industry. Researchers at the Hancock Turf Research Center continue to work toward the next best sports turf grass species and cultivars and toward finding the best combination of sports turf grasses that can take use and abuse, and recover quickly. They continue testing the latest new products that enter the market.

Researchers are continuing to test turf grass soils, based on soil physical and chemical properties. All of the information and learning experience has proved to be invaluable for me. While not everyone has a turf research center at his or her disposal, new information on turf grass research is becoming more available.

The CSFM's of the future will have the best education and experience, putting them at the top of our profession. You can't put a price on education and experience, or maybe you can—your salary. The CSFM's will become the industry leaders in expanding their horizons by pursuing new educational opportunities. To say I know all there is about turfgrass and turfgrass management would be a false statement, but I'm constantly striving to learn more. Being a CSFM has shown that professional development will make me a better sports turf manager, a small price to pay for being recognized as a leader in the sports turf industry. —Eric Adkins, CSFM



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About the Certified Sports Field Manager program

Having recognized the importance of fostering and improving professionalism within the sports turf industry, the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) developed the certification program for sports turf managers.

The STMA firmly believes that a combination of education and experience are necessary to be the best possible athletic field manager. However, it also recognizes that in a profession as diverse as the sports turf industry, experience should play a major role.

In order to successfully gain certification, you must meet certain education and/or experience requirements. These requirements were set to establish minimum criterion for becoming certified. You will notice, however, that there is a strong leaning toward experience as a sports field manager. For example, it is possible to be certified without having any formal education beyond high school if you have enough years of experience. You cannot, however, become certified by virtue of education alone.

CSFM REQUIREMENTS

A total of 40 combined education and experience points are required to take the certification examination.

EDUCATION PROGRAM	POINTS
Associate Degree	
Non-Turf	2
Turf Related	8

Bachelor Degree

Non-Turf	8
Turf Related	16

Advanced Degree

Turf Related	24
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Note: Education points are not cumulative. No more than 50% of total experience points can be earned on a golf course.

EDUCATION

Activity	Points/Year
Sports Turf Crew	1
Sports Turf Supervisor	3
Sports Turf Manager	6
Golf Asst. Supt.	1.5
Golf Superintendent	3

EXAMINATION

The examination for certification covers four major areas of sports field management:

- Agronomics
- Pest Management
- Administration
- Sports Specific Field Management

If you're interested in raising the level of professionalism in the sports turf industry or simply advancing your career, becoming a Certified Sports Field Manager may be the best thing you can do. For more information on the program contact STMA Headquarters at 800/323-2875 or via email at STMAHQ@st.omhcoxmail.com or check out the STMA Website: www.sportsturfmanager.com.