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Keiser University’s Career Guide to Golf

If you’re reading this guide, chances are either 1.) You know a thing or two about the game of golf and have a pretty good idea where you’d like to work in the industry or, 2.) You love the game, but aren’t sure what career options are out there for your type of skills and interests. Then there’s Option 3 where you are so fascinated by the sport, you’ll read anything related to it!

For the majority considering a career in the golf industry, there is indeed an underlying passion for the game, whether as a player or an observer. Perhaps you aspire to be the next Tiger Woods or Annika Sorenstam (or at least caddie for them), design a course that rivals Augusta, or fabricate a sleek new club. Whatever your path, whether you are just starting out or contemplating a career change, there are probably about as many golf-related jobs to consider as there are balls at the bottom of lakes in courses around the country… well, almost.

This guide doesn’t include every job, but it does include a wide array of them – jobs that Keiser University’s College of Golf and Sport Management is ready to prepare you for. Keiser’s Associate of Science in Golf Management prepares students with competencies for a variety of golf industry positions. When you complete our comprehensive 14-month program, you’ll have the golf lingo and career skills needed for playing the game as well as managing facilities, instructing golf, designing courses and equipment and many other industry-related careers. Keep in mind, however, some of the careers listed in this guide may require additional skill sets or education, such as an understanding of mechanics, design or agriculture.

Keiser’s Bachelor of Science in Sport Management includes the choice of a Golf Management concentration, Psychology concentration or Sports Medicine & Fitness Technology concentration and is an online program designed to be completed in as few as 40 months. For graduates of an accredited institution who hold an Associate’s degree or higher and have six months of employment in hospitality, fitness, sports, recreation, golf or a related field the Bachelor of Science Degree in Sport Management can be obtained as a degree completion online in as few as 20 months. The variations of these degrees prepare graduates for entry level sport management positions that include but are not limited to: event management, facilities management, marketing and promotion, public relations, sport/talent agencies, sport governing bodies, sports information, sports writing/broadcast, sporting goods, sports scouting, logo and ad design, sports trainer, travel and tourism.

At the end of this guide, you’ll find a listing of resources and Web sites that contain a wealth of information about careers in the golf industry. We encourage you to visit them and get better acquainted with some of the current issues and trends going on in your field of interest.
Golf Instruction

If you have a passion for golf and an ability to share your skill and knowledge with others, you may inspire to join the greats like Butch Harmon, David Leadbetter or Hank Haney. Or, you just may be one of those people with a great aptitude for the sport who wants to make a living teaching others while indulging your passion.

A successful golf instructor has not only a solid grasp of teaching methods and latest industry trends, but possesses great communication and interpersonal skills. Your job is to not only teach your student the fundamentals and beyond, but to motivate and challenge them to be the best player they can be. For those with the skills, the drive and the patience, consider a career in golf instruction.

- Director of Golf Instruction
- Director/Instructor, Professional Golf Management School
- Golf Teaching Professional at a Corporation
- Golf Teaching Professional at a Driving Range
- Golf Teaching Professional at a Golf Course
- Golf Teaching Professional on a Cruise Line
- Assistant Golf Teaching Professional
- Golf Clinician/Trick Shot Artist
- Junior College/College/University Golf Coach
- High School Golf Coach

Professional Golf Tour Circuit

If you work well under pressure and enjoy a fast-paced lifestyle that involves traveling to some of the most beautiful and pristine golf courses around the world, working in the golf tour circuit might be for you. This field offers the best of all aspects of the game, from participant as a professional player or caddie to working behind the scenes as a tournament manager or rules official. If you enjoy being where the action is and want to work among those at the top of their game, consider a tour-related career.

- Professional Player—PGA Regular, Champions, Nike or LPGA tours
- Professional Player—International, Canadian, European or Asian tours
- Professional Player—Golden State, Pepsi, Teardrop, King Stahlman, Cleveland, Golden Bear Tours
- Professional Long-Drive Competitor
- Tournament Director
- Tournament Operations Manager
- Tournament Manager
- Player Manager or Agent
- Organizer
- Rules Official
- Tour Caddie
- Golf Tournament Sales Manager
Facility Management

At the heart of any successful, well-respected golf facility is a service-oriented management team with a passion for the game. Managers must not only provide employees with the best resources and training available, but inspire and motivate their staff to serve customers with enthusiasm and respect. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the manager to ensure that every aspect of the operation is being handled correctly. If you are self-motivated and have a talent for leading others, a career in facility management may be for you.

- Director of Club Operations
- Director of Golf
- General Manager
- Golf Course Owner
- Driving Range Owner
- Golf Merchandise Manager/Buyer
- Golf Resort Manager
- Golf Sales Manager
- Hotel Manager at a Golf Facility
- Human Resources/Personnel/Payroll Director
- Marketing Director
- Head Golf Professional
- Assistant Golf Professional
- Club Membership Director
- Tournament Director

“From the moment it was open for play, people have marveled at the way it routes through the land, hugs the coastline, incorporates the cliffs, the ocean and all the terrain into a seamless and inspiring journey. When you play this golf course, you will be asked to hit all types of shots – and you’ll celebrate the ones you hit well – but you’ll also fondly recall the ones you didn’t.”

– Chuck Dunbar, PGA Head Golf Professional, Pebble Beach Golf Links
Facility Development

Having an expertise in design or construction, especially as they relate to a golf facility, can be a lucrative and highly-rewarding career. Imagine having your golf course design with dramatic elevations, challenging topography and stunning water features being chosen for construction. On the project management end, expect to bring excellent planning and operations skills, as well as an understanding of design and an ability to lead others. Demand for these specialized skills has never been higher as the interest in new and innovative golf facilities continue to grow.

- Golf Clubhouse/Pro Shop Designer
- Golf Course Builder
- Golf Course Construction Equipment Operator
- Golf Course Designer/Architect
- Golf Course Developer
- Golf Course Project Manager
- Golf Course Real Estate Appraiser

Groundskeeping and Turf Management

The crisp, rolling green hills of a beautifully maintained golf course do not come without the skill and efforts of a knowledgeable groundskeeping staff. Those successful in turf management have a solid education in how to plant and care for grasses and related plants, as well as irrigation and landscape design. You will think through and solve problems related to landscape maintenance, water management and other technical issues.

For those interested in horticulture and prefer a job outdoors, turf management offers many exciting opportunities.

- Golf Course Maintenance Crew Member
- Equipment Manager
- Golf Course Superintendent
- Golf Course Superintendent, Assistant
- Golf Course Maintenance Mechanic
- Turf Equipment Manufacturer
- Turf Equipment Operator
- Turf Manager
- Chemical Technician
- Irrigation Specialist
Caddies

They say that a good caddie’s ability to positively influence the mental state of his golfer exceeds just about any other. Insightful advice and moral support aside, a caddie worth his yardage also has excellent knowledge of the game as well as every aspect of the golf course being played, the rules and course etiquette. They also must be in good shape; those golf bags they lug around can weigh upwards of 35-45 pounds. But for those with the right attitude and skills, a career as a caddie can be extremely rewarding. Most caddies are self-employed and do not receive any benefits from a club.

• Caddie

• Caddie Master

Food and Beverage Industry

A superior dining experience is on par with a great game of golf, not only for those who play the game but spectators, too. Today’s golf cuisine goes far beyond standard snack bar food, offering not only traditional favorites but also an array of upscale fare for more refined tastes. Your knowledge of a variety of cuisine and beverage options and an ability to deliver a superior dining experience can make for a great career in the golf food and beverage industry.

• Clubhouse Chef

• Golf Facility Food and Beverage Manager

• Golf Tournament Caterer

• Player Personal Chef

• Tournament Chef

“He (Jack Nicklaus) asked me to do two things. When he’s not playing well, one, remind him that he’s the best golfer out there. And two, that there’s plenty of holes left.”

– Angelo Argea, Professional Caddie
Golf Clothing and Equipment Industries

Golf fashion has come a long way since the days of checkered pants and mismatched shirts as sported by Rodney Dangerfield in the classic comedy Caddyshack. Professional athletes such as Tiger Woods have developed relationships with fashion and equipment brands that have bred a more distinctive, classic style. Golf club design requires great technical skills, knowledge of materials and artistry. Proper club fitting is essential to ensuring a player’s optimal performance.

For those with an eye for fashion, technical ability, and understanding of golf gear and wardrobe needs, there are many rewarding careers in designing and manufacturing golf products.

- Golf Fashion Designer
- Golf Fashion Manufacturer
- Golf Shoe Manufacturer
- Cart Manufacturer
- Club Designer
- Club Fitter
- Club Maker/Assembler
- Club Manufacturer
- Club Manufacturer Research and Development Director
- Club Repair Service
- Club Tester
- Equipment Tester
- Executive, Administrator or Supervisor with a Golf Industry Manufacturer
Sales Positions

Today, the golf ball market alone is worth around $550 million in annual sales, just a fraction of the tens of billions of dollars consumers spend each year on golf-related merchandise. With a market increasingly interested in higher-tech golf apparel and gear, sales associates need a deeper level of knowledge and expertise to engage customers and speak intelligently about golf-related products. A love of sales (and golf!) and an outgoing personality with a desire to satisfy a customer’s needs are also essential for long-term success.

- Broker, Golf Course
- Owner/Manager of Golf Products or Services at a Retail Facility
- Sales Representative, Course Scorecard, Yardage Book, Measurement Supplies
- Sales Representative, Equipment
- Sales Representative, Accessories and Gifts
- Sales Representative, Golf Apparel
- Sales Representative, Golf Carts
- Sales Representative, Independent Golf Product
- Sales Representative, Range Equipment and Supplies
- Sales Representative, Teaching/Training Aids
- Sales Representative, Turf and Sand
- Sales Representative, Turf Maintenance Equipment
- Sales Representative, Turf Products, Maintenance and Landscaping Equipment
- Sales Representative/Distributor, Golf Merchandise or Golf-Related Supplies to Golf Facilities, Retail Stores and other Golf Outlets
- Sales Person, Golf Memberships

“If Tiger Woods calls you up on the phone and asks you to help him, you’ve got to think he thinks you know something.”

– Hank Haney, Professional Golf Instructor
Golf Associations

If you are interested in working somewhere that strives to protect the values, rules and traditions of the game, look no further than a golf association. These are groups representing varying golf demographics; however, they share one thing in common—they are passionately dedicated to promoting the game of golf and provide valuable benefits and services to its members. If you have a true passion for the game and want to work in the heart of the industry, consider one of these rewarding careers.

- Administrator of a Golf Association
- Executive Director of a Golf Association (Professional or Amateur)
- Rules Official
- Course Rater
- Equipment Research and Development Analyst
- Curator of Memorabilia

Event Planning

If you are one of those people with a knack for multi-tasking, have excellent communication skills and work well on a deadline, event planning may be your calling. But to work as an event planner in the golf industry requires an additional set of skills: knowledge of different aspects of golf-tour management as well hospitality needs related to the business. If you are energetic, resourceful and have a take-charge personality, consider one of these careers in event planning:

- Tournament Planner or Coordinator for Golf Events by Organizations, Corporations or Associations
- Tournament Director for Golf Tours/Companies
- Golf Sales Manager within Resort or Hotel or at the Golf Course Property
- Golf Tournament Director at Golf Course
Public Relations, Advertising and Marketing

If you have a flare for writing or ability to visually convey the excitement and passion of the world of golf, you may have a future in golf marketing and communication. Excellent written and oral communication skills are a must for this industry, not to mention creativity and an ability to keep up with the most current communication trends. Your job may entail creating a marketing plan, diffusing a public relations crisis, designing a Web site, crafting an ad campaign or copywriting. Whatever the task, you will be challenged with presenting the industry in a dynamic, upbeat fashion that promotes a positive image.

- Golf Advertising Copywriter/Editor
- Golf Advertising photographer
- Golf Facility Advertising, Marketing and Promotion Agent
- Golf Products and Services Representation and Public Relations
- Player Agent

Media and Performing Arts

Are you one of those people that follow the golf blogs or can’t wait to catch the latest updates on the cable sports channel? Have you ever thought to yourself, “Hey, I could do that!” Good camera presence, sharp writing skills and even a communications degree will only take you so far in this field; having knowledge of the game and its history are what will set you apart. There are also many media jobs for those who prefer to work behind the scenes. The golf publishing and photography industries are also rich with career opportunities.

- Golf Broadcaster/Commentator on TV, Radio, Cable, Internet
- Golf Film/Video Director
- Golf Journalist
- Golf Photographer
- Golf Videographer
- Golf Fashion Model
- Trick Shot Artist
- Golf Artist
Trainers and Medical Support

The physical demands in golf can expose even the fittest player’s body to stress and potential injury. An increasing number of both professional and amateur players are employing the use of trainers and physical therapists to improve performance and prevent injury. Players are also enlisting help from psychology experts to improve their skills in the mental game of golf. This is one of those fields you’ll definitely need some specialized training, but will also require some knowledge and understanding of golf’s unique physical demands.

- Golf Physical Therapist
- Golf Physical/Athletic trainer
- Golf Psychologist

Golf-Related Services or “Hey, What About This Job?”

So what about that guy you saw at the course the other day that was diving into the lake retrieving golf balls? And who fixes the golf carts when they break down? And who helps golf courses that want to adopt good environmental and wildlife management? Whether its support personnel, a consultant or a small business entrepreneur, there are many golf-related jobs that may not fit neatly into a category, however, are nonetheless vital to the industry. **Note:** Some of the jobs listed below do not require an education or background in golf and are included in this guide for informational purposes.

- Course Operations Consultant
- Golf Car Rental/Lease
- Golf Course Environmental Consultant
- Golf Course Equipment Lender
- Golf Course Facility Consultant
- Golf Course Financial Consultant
- Computer Service/Data Processing
- Golf Software Developer
- Golf Employment/Career Services Consultant
- Golf Facility Insurance Provider
- Historian
- Merchandising Consultant
- Mobile Caddie Service
- Mobile Golf Car Repair/Cleaning Service
- Mobile Golf Club Cleaner
- Scuba Diver/Ball Retriever
- Tee Time Service/Operator
- Golf Travel Agent
- Golf Travel and Tour Provider
The business of golf today is multi-faceted. The ability to obtain a career, as well as advance, in the golf industry depends on one’s ability to understand the golf business. Today’s most successful golf professionals know the value of understanding the golf industry as a whole. Regardless of playing ability, to be successful in the golf business, you have to understand the business of golf. In addition to over 18,000 golf courses in the United States, there are thousands of golf-affiliated businesses. The number of manufacturers, teaching centers, hotels, resorts, and other golf related businesses presents virtually unlimited opportunities and potential for those with an education and a commitment to success.

Golf business professionals are looking for golf-educated individuals who not only understand the game, but are versed in the different types of golf facilities and related business, how they operate, and what it takes for them to succeed. They are looking for people who understand the value of revenue generation, management, operations, and contributing to the growth and profitability of an entire facility or business.
RESOURCES

Books

An Insider’s Guide to Careers in the Golf Industry by Nancy Berkley
The Ultimate Golf Book by Charles McGrath, David McCormick and John Garrity
The Comprehensive Guide to Careers in Sports by Glenn M. Wong
Golf Travel by Design by Greg Norman
Every Golf Question You Ever Wanted Answered by Tony Dear
The World Atlas of Golf by Hamlyn

Web Sites

Golf Associations
American Junior Golf Association, www.ajga.org
The Association of Disabled American Golfer’s, www.golfcolorado.com/adag
Executive Women’s Golf Association, www.ewga.com
Ladies Professional Golf Association, www.lpga.com
Professional Golfers’ Association, www.pga.com
Senior Golfers of America, www.seniorgolfersamerica.com
United States Golf Association, www.usga.org

Facility and Operations Management Positions
Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, www.gcsaa.org
Club Managers Association of America, www.cmaa.org
Golf Range Association of America, www.golfrange.org

Careers in Golf Instruction
Ladies’ Professional Golf Association, www.lpga.com
Professional Golfers’ Association, www.pga.com
College of Golf and Sport Management, Keiser University www.collegeofgolf.keiseruniversity.edu

Tour-Related Positions
Ladies Professional Golf Association, www.lpga.com
National Association of Golf Tournament Directors, www.nagtd.com
Professional Golfers’ Association Tour, www.pgatour.com
Professional Tour Caddies of America, www.caddycentral.org
Tour-Related Positions (continued)
PGA Tour Tournaments Association, www.pgatta.org
American Junior Golf Association, www.ajga.org
United States Golf Association, www.usga.org

Food and Beverage Positions
Fairway Gourmet, www.thefairwaygourmet.com
Golf Club Chef Association, www.golfchefs.com
Club Managers Association of America (CMAA), www.cmaa.org

Facility Development Careers
Professional Golf Association (PGA), www.pga.com
American Society of Golf Course Architects, www.golfdesign.org
Golf Course Builders Association, www.gcbaa.org
Golf Course Owners Association, www.ngcoa.org

Groundskeeping and Turf Management Careers
American Society for Horticultural Science, www.ashs.org
American Society of Irrigation Consultants, www.asic.org
Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, www.gcsaa.org
The Institute of Groundsmanship, www.iog.org
Irrigation Association, www.irrigation.org
Turf Links, www.turf.uiuc.edu/turflinks/tl-1.html

Positions in the Golf Clothing and Equipment Industries
Golf Apparel, www.onlygolfapparel.com
Golf Training Aids, www.golfaroundtheworld.com
Ladies Golf Apparel, www.ladygolf.com
Nike Golf, www.nikegolf.com
Professional Clubmakers’ Society, www.proclubmakers.org
Acushnet Company (Titleist, Footjoy and Cobra) www.acushnet.com
Sales Positions
Acushnet Company (Titleist, Pinnacle, etc.), www.acushnet.com
Association of Golf Merchandisers, www.agmgolf.org
Golf Apparel, www.onlygolfapparel.com
Golf Training Aids, www.golfaroundtheworld.com
Ladies Golf Apparel, www.ladygolf.com
Nike Golf, www.nikegolf.com

Event Planning Careers
Golf Event Planning, www.greatgolfevents.com
Golf Event Planning, www.golfinvite.com
National Association of Golf Tournament Directors, www.nagtd.com

PR, Advertising, and Marketing Careers
Golf Publicity, www.golfprofitbuilders.com
Johnson Design Golf Marketing, www.golfmarketing.biz

Media and Performing Arts Careers
The Golf Channel, www.thegolfchannel.com
Cowen Media, Golf-related TV, www.cowenmedia.com
Golf Digest, www.golfdigest.com
Golf Writers Association of America, www.gwaa.com
Golf Online, www.golfonline.com

Golf-Related Services
Association of Golf Merchandisers, www.agmgolf.org
Caddie Service, www.caddieclubgolf.com
Golf Historian, www.golf-historian.co.uk
Tee Master, www.teemaster.com
Computer-Related Careers
Golf Software, www.golfsoftware.com
Golf Switch Systems, www.golfswitch.com

Medical and Training Careers
Golf Physical Training, www.physicalgolf.com
Golf Fitness Trainer, www.golf-trainer.com
Golf Psychology System, www.golfpsych.com

Travel-Related Careers
World Golf Travel, www.worldgolf.com
PGA Travel www.pgatravel.com

Caddies
Professional Caddies Association, www.pcaworldwide.com
Professional Tour Caddies of America, www.caddycentral.org
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