



Green Tourism Business Scheme Frequently Asked Questions

GETTING STARTED

What is the process for joining the scheme?

- Once you have expressed an interest in joining the scheme you will receive the scheme criteria documents and other information in an Application / Information pack.
- You then complete the enclosed Application form and return it to the GTBS office who will invoice you for your membership fees (see below).
- A GTBS grading advisor will make an appointment with you and come to your business to assess you against the criteria.
- If you have implemented enough measures you will be awarded either a BRONZE, SILVER or GOLD Award.
- You will receive a plaque, full report and certificate, and relevant advice and information on new technologies, case studies, financial support etc.

How much will it cost me?

- Both your joining fee and annual fee are payable in the first year. The annual fee is payable during the quarter of your first grading visit thereafter (i.e. If your first grading visit is May 2007 your next annual fee will be due between April and June 2008). The fee is determined by the size and type of your business
- If there is more than one type of business on your site, for example B&B and Self-catering units, both will need to be assessed independently as different criteria may be relevant and they may achieve different award levels. The largest business will be charged the usual joining and annual fee, and as long as the second business type is within a very short walk, this will only need to pay 50% of the usual annual fee

THE VISIT

Will my GTBS Grading take place at the same time as my Quality Grading?

- No. The GTBS Grading visits are undertaken by independent, qualified Environmental Advisors, *not* Quality Grading advisors. Your business will be revisited every 2 years for re-evaluation.

How do I prepare for a visit?

- Read through the criteria and try to implement as many measures as possible. Many are simple and require little time or investment, e.g. having an environmental policy in place.
- You can use the checklists provided in the criteria to record and plan your green measures. Have these checklists available for the visit so you have all the relevant information to hand for the GTBS grading advisor.
- Have any other supporting evidence ready for the GTBS grading advisor to view. For example, utility bills, invoices, technical documents and staff training procedures all help to support your application.
- Advisory visits are available. Please contact the office for details of costs.

How long does a visit take?

- Your first grading visit will take around 2 hours depending upon the size of the business. Re-visits take place once every 2 years and take on average 1-2 hours.

What happens during a visit?

- The GTBS grading advisor will talk to you about the running of your business as well as the measures you have implemented and will look at many areas including back-of-house, offices, storage areas, kitchens, refuse areas, grounds, boiler rooms and so on.
- The GTBS grading advisor will make notes on the measures you have implemented and grade them during the visit. This will be confirmed with a follow up report containing advice on further measures you could implement.

How long will it take for me to be visited after I apply?

- The green grading visits are always made by appointment. Visits are undertaken to be as efficient as possible to reduce travel time and emissions. You will be contacted when a GTBS grading advisor is planning a trip to your area to arrange a convenient visit date and time.
- Usually you will be visited within 2-3 months of application. However, we try and accommodate requests for earlier visits, which may be required for funding purposes.

ACHIEVING THE AWARD

I don't know if I am doing enough to get BRONZE – how can I make sure?

- Look through the criteria. If you are doing at least three measures in each section and at least 35 measures in total you are likely to be doing enough for BRONZE.
- If you want to achieve GOLD you should aim for 5-8 measures in each section with at least 65-70 measures in total.
- If you are unsure whether you are doing enough and would like more advice or information contact the GTBS office on 01738 632162 or email gtbs@green-business.co.uk

I run a small business – how can I afford to implement the same measures as a large hotel?

- Many measures require little or no cost and can save you money immediately.
- Some measures do require investment (either time or capital) but you are assessed in relation to the size, location and market for your business. We do not compare you to larger businesses and instead make viable recommendations that are low cost, relatively easy to implement, make cost savings or improve the experience for your visitors.

I run a visitor attraction / activity centre and it seems most of the measures are for accommodation – how can I join?

- Some of the measures are targeted at specific industry sectors e.g. towel agreements for serviced accommodation. However, the majority of measures can be applied to any tourism business that has a building, uses energy and water, produces waste, involves travel to get to and from it and makes purchases.
- Non-accommodation businesses can score well in management and communication as well as having an advantage in other sections, particularly if your business encourages the use of local produce and facilities or has a specific cultural or educational value.

I am a nature-based business so I should be able to get GOLD easily

- Although wildlife, nature and the natural environment are included in the criteria other environmental issues are also included. These include reduction of resource use (energy, water, waste, and transport), sourcing local produce and products and issues relating to the management of your business and its communication with suppliers, staff, and guests.
- The scheme covers *all* aspects of a tourism business's impact on the environment.

If for any reason I am unable to undertake a measure can I still achieve my award?

- The scheme is flexible enough to accommodate your strengths and weaknesses. As long as the business demonstrates a strong overall commitment to reducing its environmental impact there is plenty of potential to gain the award.

For example: 'Local recycling provision is poor so how can I achieve enough credit in the 'Waste' section?' - Credit is given as much for reducing and reusing waste items as for recycling. Look into buying in bulk, reducing packaging waste, reusing textiles and so on.

If you have any further questions about any aspect of the scheme please contact Green Business on 01738 632162 or email gtbs@green-business.co.uk