Amenity and Sports Turf Services

SAC Consulting is a division of Scotland’s Rural College, Leading the way in Agriculture and Rural Research, Education and Consulting

An Expert in Every Field
About SAC Consulting

SAC Consulting, a division of Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC), provides a range of consultancy services to more than 12,000 customers in Scotland, United Kingdom and worldwide. Our team of more than 375 consultants, technicians and support staff are located in 27 offices throughout Scotland and the North of England. SAC Consulting is proud to deliver independent, quality and accessible services to landowners, farmers, Scottish Government, local authorities, sports clubs, rural businesses and beyond.

Specialist sports turf services are provided through our Environment and Design Group who specialise in land management, renewable energy, waste management, environmental planning and design. Working with clients, we provide innovative environment and design solutions to the private and public sectors, throughout the project life-cycle from feasibility to implementation.

SAC Consulting is a corporate member of the Sport and Play Construction Association (SAPCA) and our experienced and qualified team of engineers, landscape architects, soil specialists and project managers has over 20 years’ experience in providing a well-informed, technically proficient and independent sports turf consultancy service. Services include site investigations, feasibility studies, planning, design, project management, facility management, turf management and soil/drainage/agronomic assessments.

In addition to our consultancy team our Analytical Services Department tests a range of agricultural, amenity and other materials for consultancy and research purposes. This includes the testing of soils, plants, soil amendments and horticulture samples. Modern instruments and techniques are adopted and the laboratory uses a computer based ‘Laboratory Information Management System’ (LIMS) for data storage and reporting. The laboratory is accredited to ISO 17025.
What We Do

SAC Consulting regularly works with local authorities, education establishments and sports clubs to provide expert independent guidance and support for the planning, design, construction and management of sports facilities and amenity grassland including:

- Natural and synthetic sports pitches
- Football pitches
- Rugby pitches
- Golf courses
- Cricket outfields and cricket squares
- Shinty, Gaelic football and hurling pitches
- Horse racing courses, cross country courses and horse show arenas
- Bowling greens
- Tennis courts
- School and university sports pitches
- Local authority playing fields, public parks and recreation grounds

Offering the following services:

- Feasibility studies
- Site investigations and assessment
- Soil analysis and assessment
- Sports pitch design and specifications
- CAD drawings
- Drainage and irrigation solutions
- Turf management and maintenance advice
Our Services

SAC Consulting offers a flexible service that can be tailored to suit a client's or project's requirements. Often this can be on a full project management basis or we are happy to be commissioned to undertake individual work packages or stages throughout the project cycle.

Feasibility Studies

For both new facilities and refurbishment projects a feasibility study is an important starting point to determine the scope, cost, timings, and planning implications of the client's requirements. Our methodology will draw on a wide range of data sources and site investigations to provide you with a comprehensive report that will inform the project plan, business case and funding applications.

Site Investigations and Site Assessment

We can undertake a full range of landscape surveys including soils, topography, environmental, ecology, contamination, trees, drainage, noise, condition and materials testing.

Soil Analysis and Assessment

Our SOILCHECK service provides topsoil analysis to the British Standard for Topsoil (BS 3882:2007) which is a common requirement in site specifications. The British Standard for Topsoil includes a comprehensive analysis and a certificate that classifies soils in a range of categories. The British Standard for Topsoil is also a reliable method of establishing and documenting the quality of soils used on site.

Other SoilCheck services include:

- Soil survey and assessment for planning purposes
- Customised soil analysis which can include contamination assessment
- Land restoration and reclamation
- Waste spreading to land recommendations and exemptions
- Land drainage
- Soil sampling and site reports.
Sports Pitch Design, Construction and Project Management

We can provide a full suite of project information including detailed drawings and specifications to suit your needs. Each project will have a bespoke set of drawings produced such as location plans, site layout, earthworks, drainage layout, irrigation layout, floodlighting layout, construction details, access, car-parking, footpaths, landscaping, footpaths and fencing. All plans are produced by our in-house CAD and GIS team using the latest software with outputs tailored to meet compatibility with your software systems.

Upon completion of detailed design, and with planning and funding in place, we are able to develop all necessary tender documentation and manage the tender process, with the overall aim of appointing an experienced contractor offering the best value submission, independently assessing factors such as quality, proposed timescale and cost.

Once a contractor has been appointed SAC Consulting will work on your behalf to offer piece of mind and independently project manage and supervise the works to ensure work is completed satisfactorily to the required specifications, quality standards and the requirements of any public funding applications.

Golf Course Design, Construction and Project Management

SAC Consulting is a member of the Scottish Association of Golf Course Architects and provides a comprehensive golf course planning and design service for both new and existing golf courses.

- Surveys, Assessment & Feasibility Studies
- Conceptual Design & Masterplanning
- Detailed Design for golf course construction - includes plans for setting out, grading, clearing, drainage, landscaping, irrigation, grassing and green details as well as construction details.
- Construction Documentation including specifications, general conditions, bills of quantities and tender documents.
- Project Management - including frequent site inspections throughout the build to ensure that the designs and specifications are followed correctly by the Contractor.
Drainage and Irrigation Solutions

SAC Consulting has been instrumental in developing drainage solutions suited to UK soils and hydrology for over 40 years, and staff continue to evaluate and develop new methods. Drainage requirements are very site specific and it is essential that a proper assessment is carried out to ensure that a fully functioning design can be implemented which will provide a long term benefits to the drainage of the site.

Technical advice and support is available for the design and specification of new irrigation systems and the upgrade of existing systems. Calculations on water usage, storage and management are used to provide cost-effective irrigation solutions that ensure the quality and playability of your sports pitches.

Turf Management and Maintenance Advice

Our knowledge of the latest turf products, techniques, equipment and machinery allow us to give impartial, up-to-date advice and support in the care and maintenance of sports pitches and amenity grassland. Whether natural or synthetic, pitch maintenance is an essential component in surface quality, consistency and sustainability. Working to quality targets and within budget constraints, we can work with you to find cost-effective maintenance solutions to get the best out of your sports surfaces all year round.

Troubleshooting for Pitch Unavailability and Issues

Complementing our site investigation and assessment services SAC Consulting provides bespoke services to investigate sports surface issues. We regularly resolve issues such as: surface compaction/hardness; surface instability/softness; poor grass cover/density; localised wear and tear; surface unevenness; surface uniformity; drainage, flooding and water management issues; pests, weeds and diseases.
Some Of Our Projects

**Synthetic 3G Pitch**

**Spartans Community Football Academy**

**The Project:** In 2011 SAC Consulting was commissioned by Spartans CFA to undertake an assessment of their main pitch. Following assessment and feasibility work to provide Spartans CFA with an options appraisal SAC Consulting was further commissioned to design and project manage a new FIFA compliant synthetic sports pitch to replace the existing natural grass surface. This involved the removal of site topsoil and landscaping of spectator mounding, detailed drainage design and attenuation, reconfiguration of irrigation and electrical layout, installation of FIFA 2* synthetic pitch, realignment of spectator barrier and maintaining existing SFA ground compliance.

**SAC Consulting undertook the following duties:** Sports Pitch Assessment; Feasibility; Planning; Design; Project Management; CDM Co-ordinator; Aftercare.

**Natural Grass Sports Pitch**

**Currie RFC**

**The Project:** In 2012 SAC Consulting was appointed by Currie RFC to oversee the construction of a new grass pitch at Malleny Park, Edinburgh. The project involved the transformation of an agricultural field into a natural grass pitch and training area. The pitches were built with sand-ameliorated topsoil and slit drainage system to facilitate year-round availability.

**SAC Consulting undertook the following duties:** Sports Pitch Assessment; Feasibility; Planning; Design; Project Management; CDM Co-ordinator; Aftercare.
Public Park

Inverleith Park

**The Project:** In 2013 SAC Consulting was commissioned by the City of Edinburgh Council to investigate serious drainage issues at Inverleith Park, Edinburgh. Following initial site investigations SAC Consulting provide drainage designs, specifications and project management services to deliver a drainage solution that allows events, sports and informal recreation use of the park to take place all year round.

**SAC Consulting undertook the following duties:** Site Investigation and Assessment; Design; Project Management; CDM Co-ordinator; Aftercare.

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Golf Course

Baberton Golf Club

**The Project:** SAC Consulting was commissioned in 2004 to oversee the re-design of all 18 greens at Baberton Golf Club, Edinburgh. A new clubhouse being built on the 1st fairway in 2012/13 also demanded a careful redesign of the adjacent holes. A multi-phase approach was taken to ensure the golf course remained open to members throughout the works and SAC worked closely with the club manager, committee, greenkeepers and contractors to ensure disruption was kept to a minimum. The re-design and drainage works now mean the members enjoy an updated course that is open all year round.

**SAC Consulting undertook the following duties:** Sports Pitch Assessment; Feasibility; Planning; Design; Project Management; CDM Co-ordinator; Floodlighting Design; Aftercare.
Education and Training

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), SAC Consulting's parent organisation, was formed in 2012 by the merger of the Scottish Agricultural College with Barony, Elmwood and Oatridge Colleges. Unique in the UK, we draw on more than 100 years of heritage and expertise.

SRUC offers land-based courses at all levels – from access courses and vocational studies, through undergraduate programmes covering HNC, HND and undergraduate degree courses, to taught postgraduate programmes and PhDs.

Through our Barony, Elmwood and Oatridge campuses we offer Sports and Amenity related-courses in many subject areas including:

- Activity Tourism
- Agriculture
- Animal Care
- Environment
- Equine & Horse Care
- Garden Design
- Golf Course Management
- Greenkeeping
- Gamekeeping
- Horticulture
- Sports Coaching
Elmwood Golf Course

Elmwood Golf Course is a multi-purpose golf facility owned and managed by SRUC Elmwood Campus. The facility is unique for Scotland in that in addition to providing an excellent practical teaching experience for Students studying green keeping, golf studies, golf course management, professional golf and golf facility management, we offer local golfers a season ticket membership and we currently have 800 season ticket holders from the local community.

Since opening in 1997, and modified to incorporate additional land in 2008, the golf course strives to be at the forefront of research and education through its ability to develop and showcase best practice in golf course design, construction and management. The golf course has received a substantial list of environmental awards including the golf course becoming GEO Certified™ in January 2013. GEO Certified™ is a globally recognized symbol “designating that a golf facility has met a credible standard in the areas of nature, water, energy, supply chain, pollution control, and community, and is committed to continually improve.”

The golf course aims to be a zero waste facility by 2020 and has recently implemented several sustainability & environmental initiatives including: organic fertiliser programme; recycling of rootzone; installation of borehole for irrigation water supply; recycling of range balls for use as drainage aggregate; installation of compost tea brewing system and associated wormery; willow bridge and wetland environment to treat golf course run-off.
Sustainability and Environment

At SRUC, and its’ subsidiaries, we are committed to promoting sustainability in the land-based sector, helping to mitigate climate change and minimising any adverse impact of our activities, at all levels, directly and through our influence on others. We believe that the legal requirements in these areas define the minimum level of achievement.

To meet our sustainability objectives, continuous improvement and pollution prevention have become core elements of our company culture. We integrate sustainability into management policies and practices at every level of the organisation, and we are proactive in contributing to national climate change targets.

In particular, to improve the sustainability of the organisation SRUC:

- Strives continually to use energy more efficiently and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, by managing our estates and land appropriately, and by using renewable energy sources
- Enacts policies that reduce emissions arising from SRUC fleet vehicles, commutes-to-work and business-related travel
- Avoids purchasing or using hazardous materials and processes, or materials with an undesirable environmental impact, wherever possible, and we use sub-contractors who are in accord with the spirit of this Sustainability Policy Statement
- Protects natural habitats and wildlife on our land, and is sensitive to landscape issues and actively promotes habitat creation and biodiversity
- Minimises the use of natural resources by reducing avoidable waste, by adopting new technologies that rely less on non-renewable resources, by recycling as much as possible and by using, where possible, recycled and recyclable materials
- Encourages staff to be aware of the environmental, economic and social impact of our activities, and, to help with this, we provide development and training programmes, and integrate sustainable practices into everything we do
- Embeds sustainability into the Curriculum to ensure that students gain an understanding of sustainable development and sustainability issues
- Sets targets for the objectives described here, and audits these on a regular basis
- Encourages our clients and suppliers to reduce their own environmental footprints
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