



# Staff Certification Rollout Guide

For Course Managers & General Managers

This guide gives you the language and approach to introduce the PGI certification program to your marshals and starters. The conversation you have with your team is one of the most important moments in the process — get it right and the program runs smoothly from day one.

## 1. The Right Frame: Lead With Standing, Not Cost

Regardless of which enrollment tier your course is using, the conversation with your team should never open with the cost. It should open with what changes for them.

What changes is their standing. They go from being a staff member with a radio to a PGI Certified Marshal™ or PGI Certified Starter™ — a credentialed professional. That credential travels with them. It means something here, and it means something at any course they ever work at.

### Sequence matters

Staff who understand the value of certification before they hear about any cost will process the fee entirely differently. Lead with what changes for them — cost comes later.

## 2. What This Changes for Them Day-to-Day

This is the section most managers skip — and it's the most important one for getting staff genuinely on board rather than just compliant. Your marshals and starters need to hear what certification does for them on the course tomorrow morning.

### Suggested language:

*"Let me tell you what this actually changes for you out on the course. This makes your job easier, not harder. You're not guessing how to handle a situation anymore. You're not relying on instinct or trying to figure out what to say in the moment. You've got a clear structure behind you. That means less friction with players, fewer uncomfortable conversations, and more confidence when you step in. Instead of feeling like you're on your own out there, you're backed by a system — and that changes how people respond to you."*

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## The authority shift — and they'll feel it immediately

Guests respond differently when they know they're dealing with someone who is trained and certified. The tone of the interaction changes. A certified marshal who carries themselves with that confidence gets far less pushback than one who's winging it. This isn't just about protection for the course — it's about making their time on the course more enjoyable and less stressful every single day.

Most marshals and starters genuinely enjoy their role when it's going well. Certification reduces the moments when it isn't. Less second-guessing, less tension with difficult players, and a clearer sense of what they're there to do — that's what a good day on the course looks like, and that's what this builds toward.

## 3. Introducing to Existing Staff

Veteran marshals and starters are your most important audience — and the most likely to have a reaction if the rollout is handled poorly. Acknowledge their experience first. Then reframe what certification means for them personally.

### Suggested language:

*"We're rolling out a certification program that I want all of you to be part of. This isn't about doubting how you've been doing your jobs — most of you have been doing this well for a long time. What this does is make that official. You'll go through a structured certification, you'll carry credentials, and you'll be recognized as a PGI Certified Marshal. That means something — both here and if you ever work at another course."*

*Then pause. Let that land before anything about cost comes up.*

### The veteran who's been there 10 years

This is your most sensitive conversation. Lead with respect, not process. Acknowledge their tenure explicitly before introducing anything new. A useful line: "This isn't about catching mistakes — it's about making sure you don't have to carry everything on your own anymore." They don't need to be managed — they need to feel seen. Once they do, they often become your strongest advocates.

### If staff are contributing to their certification fee, add:

*"There's a small certification fee involved — I want to be straight with you about that upfront. The way to think about it: you're not just paying for a course, you're gaining a credential that stays with you and makes this job easier every day. And if you're still with us at the end of the year, we'll take*

*care of that fee. We want people who are committed here, and we want to reward that."*

### The reimbursement offer

Offering to reimburse the certification fee after one year of service is optional – but it completely neutralizes the cost objection and builds natural retention. Nobody walks over money they're going to get back.

## 4. Introducing to New Hires

New hires are the easiest rollout – there's no legacy mindset to manage. Certification is simply part of how things work here.

### Suggested language:

*"Part of working here is becoming PGI certified before you go out on the course. It covers how we handle situations, how we document anything that comes up, and what's expected of you in this role. It also makes your job significantly easier – you'll have a clear structure for every situation you encounter instead of figuring it out on the fly. Here's how the certification works and what's involved."*

Over time, as staff turns over naturally, every new person comes in already understanding that certification is the standard here. The culture self-corrects without you having to manage it.

## 5. Handling Pushback

Most resistance comes from one of two places: skepticism about whether it's worth it, or frustration at being asked to change something that seems to be working fine. When this is introduced the right way, most staff settle in quickly because certification removes uncertainty from the job – that's a relief, not a burden.

"Why do I have to pay for this?"

"We've been doing fine without it."

"I understand the question. You're not just paying for a course – you're gaining a credential that stays with you and makes this job easier every day. And if you're still here in a year, we're going to reimburse it."

"I'm not saying you haven't. What this does is make sure that when something happens on this course, we're all covered – you, me, and the ownership. And honestly, it takes pressure off you. You've got a system behind you instead of having to figure it out on your own."

# The Certification Pins

*Earned. Visible. Worn with pride.*



## **Certified Marshal™**

Entry certification. The foundation.

## **Professional Marshal™**

Advanced standing. Deeper knowledge.

## **Master Certified Marshal™**

The highest level. A career distinction.

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Every certified marshal and starter receives a lapel pin when they complete their certification. It's not symbolic — it's visible. Golfers notice it. They ask about it. And when a marshal explains they're PGI certified, that one exchange changes the entire dynamic of the interaction. They're no longer just staff. They're credentialed professionals who know what they're doing — and golfers treat them accordingly.

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*Three pins. Three levels. Each one earned — not given. The progression is visible to everyone on the course, and it means something to the person wearing it.*

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