

# National Competitions

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## Foundation Skills: Catering Technical Handbook 2026

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## WorldSkills UK

WorldSkills UK is an independent charity and a partnership between employers, education and governments. Together, they are raising standards in apprenticeships and technical education to enable more young people get the best start in work and life. They are leading the charge to ensure that all young people have equal access to high quality apprenticeships and technical education, by:

- *Inspiring young people through their careers advice resources, to choose excellence through apprenticeships and technical education as a prestigious career route on their path to reaching their potential, whatever their background.*
- *Developing excellence in young people by testing and assessing their skills and knowledge against their peers through their national and international competitions programmes, improving their confidence and potential.*
- *Innovating to mainstream global excellence to help improve the standard of teaching, training and assessment through international benchmarking to help young people, employers and the UK economy succeed.*

They are also part of WorldSkills, a global movement supported by over 80 member countries, which celebrates young people achieving world-class standards in the biennial 'Skills Olympics'.

[This link](#) can be used to access more information about WorldSkills UK and the work it undertakes:

## Sector Overview

The competition is an opportunity for young people who may be aspiring to work in the Catering industry, or any job where it is important to demonstrate professionalism to showcase their talent and demonstrate their journey towards work-readiness.

## Career Pathway

The competition is an opportunity for young people who may be aspiring to work in the Catering industry to showcase their talent and demonstrate their journey towards work-readiness. Some examples of the job roles available might be: Catering/Café assistant, Canteen assistant or Sous Chef.

## Competition Cycle

| Date                | Stage                     |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 March – 27 March  | Registration              |
| 20 April – 29 April | Entry Stage               |
| w/c 22nd June       | National Qualifier        |
| 6 July              | Announcement of finalists |
| W/C 16 November     | National Finals           |

# Competition Overview

## About the Competition

This competition assesses the skills and abilities of competitors entering the field of Catering.

This competition consists of:

- At Entry Stage a remote assessment in which you must complete work in your own time and submit this for judging.
- A national qualifier event, which will be held at North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College – Nuneaton Campus W/c 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026
- You must attend and complete a series of tasks on a specific day, or a set of tasks that you will be sent and must be completed within a given timescale.
- A UK national final, taking place across South Wales during the week commencing 16 November as part of the WorldSkills National Finals.

## Core Competencies

Competitors taking part in this competition should be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- a) Appropriate attire
- b) Professional approach
- c) Personal hygiene
- d) Health & Safety
- e) Practical skills i.e. Knife skills
- f) Demonstrate individuality in task

## Qualifications

This competition is mapped out to the following qualifications:

The competition is suitable for learners with SEND with an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP), on a vocational, employability or work-skills programme. It is roughly

equivalent to a vocational qualification at Entry Level 3 (England and Wales), Level 2 (Ireland), Access 3 (Scotland)

## Assessment Criteria

For this competition the breakdown below will help in how you can go from being competent in the skill to excellent and what the judges will be looking for.

| Core Competence     | Competent  | Excellence  |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Appropriate attire  | Be suitably attired with appropriate clothing                              | Awareness of PPE  |
| Practical Skills    | Be able to demonstrate good knife skills and cooking skills                | Exhibit awareness of correct knives and when/how to use etc                                   |
| Transferable Skills | Ability to work under pressure and attention to detail when preparing food | Appropriate terminology used within kitchen, using own initiative when working under pressure |

## Entry Criteria

The Foundation Skills competitions have been created to showcase the skills of students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), additional learning needs (ALN), or who require additional support for learning (ASL). Participants will be tested against core competencies aligned to Entry level 3 or level 1.

Competitors must be 16 years of age or over.

## Competition Specific Rules

Skill specific rules can be found here: [Skill-specific-FS-Catering-competition-rules.docx](#)

More generic rules include:

Competitors who arrive late for the event will not receive additional time.

Competitors will start, and finish work as instructed by the judges.

If there is a power stoppage, breakdown of equipment or accident, the competitors must act accordingly to the instruction of the organizer.

If during the competition a competitor feels they must leave their work (e.g.: medical reasons, toilet break), they will have the time recorded on a 'time out' sheet by a member of staff.

No mobile telephones are allowed in the competition room.

Photographs will be taken during the event that may be used for marketing/publicity purposes – if the competitor / support staff cannot have their photo taken it is the responsibility of the college entering the competition to notify the organisers beforehand and at the event.

## Pre-Competition Activity

Before registering to enter students and apprentices to take part in a WorldSkills UK Competition, it can be helpful to enable them to practice, test and challenge their technical and mental skills by getting involved on link available on the bottom of the webpage. Pre-competition-Activity-Pack-Foundation-Skills-Catering.pdf

As well, the following activities could be used to support prospective competitors to get a feel for what will be expected of them in a WorldSkills UK Competition, whilst still in an environment with which they are familiar:

- On and off the job training and work experience
- WorldSkills UK or other externally run competitions
- internal competitions e.g. internal to an employer, specially designed competitions - using WSUK competition briefs
- local competitions e.g. in colleges and training providers.

## Entry Stage & National Qualifier

As well as being judged on vocational competence and work-readiness, competitors will be required to provide evidence of tasks carried out in preparation for the competition, and learning activities embedded in their normal curriculum delivery which are relevant to the competition.

The entry task will be sent out to competitors once registration is complete. This task will be a remote assessment in which you must complete work in your own time and submit this for judging

**"The competition entry task forms the first stage of a wider, ongoing project designed to progressively develop skills and capability. Completion of the entry task provides a foundation for assessment and learning, with outcomes and feedback directly informing the next phase. Successful participants will then progress to a more advanced qualifier task, aligning with the standards and expectations of the WorldSkills competition pathway."**

For competitors who have managed to pass through the Entry stage the next step is the national qualifiers. This is stage be held at North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College, Nuneaton Campus during w/c 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026, where competitors will have the chance to demonstrate their skillset.

This stage will be marked by WorldSkills UK expert judges. The top eight scores from the

national qualifiers will then go through to the next round, the national finals.

## National Finals

The 8 highest scoring competitors from across the National Qualifier will be invited to compete at the finals – held in locations across South Wales in the week commencing 16 November 2026.

This will be held in a physical location which will be announced at a later date.

The competition will be held over a 1-day event where the competitors can showcase their skills in a live environment.

## Judges' Top Tips

- Read the brief carefully and use this as a checklist to ensure all tasks are completed.
- Plan your cooking task and check timings
- Think carefully about how you will present the final piece
- Ensure you have the correct ingredients and equipment



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