

# National Competitions

## Restaurant Service Technical handbook 2026



## Table of Contents

WorldSkills UK .....	3
Sector Overview .....	3
Career Pathway .....	3
Competition Cycle .....	4
Competition Overview .....	4
Entry Criteria .....	6
Competition specific rules .....	6
Pre-competition Activity .....	6
Digital Badges .....	6
Entry Stage .....	7
National Qualifier .....	7
National Final .....	7
Judges Top Tips .....	8

## 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 aimed at those young people who have recently entered the Hospitality Industry as either employees or apprentices, or who are currently studying at college at either Level 3, Restaurant Service or Hospitality Supervision with the view of working in the Front of House operations.

## Career Pathway

Participation in the competition enhances both personal & professional skills in Restaurant Service and competitors often secure employment as Restaurant Managers in some of the most prestigious hotels & restaurants in the UK. For more information on careers associated with the restaurant services please visit the WorldSkills UK Careers guidance webpage on becoming a restaurant manager: [How to become a Restaurant Manager - Careers - WorldSkills UK](#)

## Competition Cycle

Date	Stage
2 March – 27 March	Registration period
3 March – 4 April	Entry Stage
May – June	National Qualifiers
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 Professional Restaurant Service

This competition consists of:

- An entry stage, a remote assessment in which you must complete work and submit this for judging
- A qualifying heat, which you must attend and complete a series of tasks on a specific given day
- A UK National Final, taking place across locations in Wales in November 2026 as part of WorldSkills National Finals.

### Core competencies

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

- Demonstrate a sound understanding of food & wine matching
- Carry out a range of specialised food & beverage service tasks
- Prepare cocktails using a range of ingredients and methods
- Lay up & provide a range of different styles of food & beverage service with good customer care throughout in a timely fashion
- Observe health, safety & hygiene regulations & work in a professional manner throughout

### Qualifications

The competition is aimed at those young people who have recently entered the Hospitality Industry as either employees or apprentices, or who are currently studying at college at either Level 3, Restaurant Service or Hospitality Supervision with the view of working in the Front of House operations.

## Assessment Criteria

For this competition the breakdown 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
Demonstrate a sound understanding of food & wine matching	Plan a menu with suitable wine choices and be aware of any allergens	Be able to discuss wine & food choices confidently with the judges and explain alternative options
Carry out a range of specialised food & beverage service tasks	Be able to carve fruit / cook & flambe dishes / decant wine/ prepare salads & dressings/ carve meat or fish at the table	Be able to work confidently & efficiently with minimal wastage or spillage and good customer interaction
Prepare cocktails using a range of ingredients & methods	Be able to mix a variety of traditional and own devised drinks using different methods and with a sound understanding of products	Work confidently & efficiently with flair, minimal wastage, good interaction & excellent presentation skills
Lay up & provide a range of different styles of food & beverage service with good customer care throughout in a timely fashion	Prepare correctly & efficiently for a given service demonstrating a sound understanding of customer needs throughout service	Work confidently & efficiently ensuring all tableware is aligned and providing consistent service of food & wine throughout with excellent customer care skills
Observe health, safety & hygiene regulations & work in a professional manner throughout	Work in a safe & hygienic manner when carrying out any task with good personal presentation	Work in a logical, safe & hygienic manner throughout demonstrating excellent personal presentation

## Entry Criteria

- This is an individual competition.
- There is no limit to the number of competitors permitted to enter this competition per organisation.
- Competitors must be familiar with the core competencies (these can be found in the National Standard of Excellence in the 'Useful resources' section on the webpage) and be training or working in Food & Beverage Service or Hospitality.
- Competitors must be studying towards a Level 3 qualification or have achieved a Level 3 qualification in the last 12 months.
- When entering the competition please bear in mind that if successful applicants will be committed to up to 2 years of training which will involve training sessions and opportunities to gain skills and knowledge that will be pivotal to your career going forward

## 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 in the pre-competition activity available on the bottom of the webpage. 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

Competitors will complete an online assessment covering a wide range of Food & Beverage Service knowledge within a set time. The registration period opens from 2 March to 27 March. Competitors who register will be sent a link to the online assessment.

## National Qualifiers

Competitors who were successful at the entry stage will be invited to National Qualifiers. At this stage competitors will carry out a range of specific stand-alone tasks covering competencies such as menu & wine planning, table lay up, cocktail and mocktail preparation & service, flambe dishes, fruit preparation, and napkin folding. Some advanced preparation will be allowed but all tasks will need to be completed within a given time. Competitors will need to provide all their own equipment & ingredients at this stage. Locations of qualifiers are held across the UK, but competitors will be able to select their preferred venue at registration.

## National Finals

The National Finals will take place at various locations across South Wales in the week commencing 16 November 2026. Held over the course of 2 days, competitors will be expected to complete a variety of both stand-alone higher level table theatre tasks, as well as preparing for different styles of service with restaurant customers, demonstrating not only excellent knowledge but a high level of personal presentation, health & safety awareness, and customer care when carrying out all tasks. The majority of equipment & ingredients will be provided at this stage.

## WorldSkills UK International competitions

Beyond the national finals, there are a host of opportunities for competitors. Eligible competitors who show the highest skills, passion, and drive from the national finals will be given the opportunity to compete to train for the EuroSkills and WorldSkills International competitions. The winners from national final competitions who are not eligible for international competitions may join the Skills Champions programme, which allows continued involvement, including the opportunity to work with WorldSkills UK and visit schools, colleges, and events to inspire the next generations.

- We identify competitors from our national finals each year, who meet the criteria\* for the opportunity to join the international competition development programme towards the next WorldSkills Competition.
- Competitors from each national final will be assessed for their eligibility and will be contacted shortly after the national final competition has finished if they meet the three points of criteria\*. We will ask them whether they would be interested in joining our phase 3 stage which is typically a training and assessment event over 2-4 days during February and March.
- If the Competitor meets the standard assessed at the phase 3 assessment, they will be invited to join Squad UK. This usually represents around 3-5 competitors or teams in each of our international skills, (typically, between 120 – 150 competitors will become Squad UK)
- Squad UK competitors undertake approximately 30 days of technical training across a 12-month period as well as attending 3-4 bootcamps to develop high performing attributes and a competition mindset. This is a competitive process and we are ultimately working towards the selection of the 30-35 competitors who will be selected to represent the UK at international competition. (Please note, this decision is made around March, one year into the cycle, but competitors may be withdrawn at any point if we feel they have not demonstrated the commitment or potential to achieve the standard required.)
- From April of the year of competition, we take the 30-35 competitors forward to train intensively towards the WorldSkills Competition. These competitors are now known as Team UK and they will undertake around 25 day's technical training as well as attendance at one final bootcamp during this five-month period.
- Although the training manager for each of the skills is responsible for creating and leading the training and development plan, the competitors will have a team of specialist trainers and coaches around them who will support their development on all topics from lean working, mindset development, time management and presentation skills.
- To maximise the full value and advantages of our programme, competitors are advised to ensure they have the full support of friends, family and employers.
- To ensure our programme is inclusive and accessible to all, expenses are all paid for and there is a small fund to support competitors who, for example may find themselves taking unpaid leave to attend training.

**\*Criteria for identification as potential Squad UK competitors for participation in WS Aichi 2028**

1. You must be 22 or under in the year of competition for most skills so your date of birth must be on or after 01.01.2006. (The exceptions to this are skills for which you must be no older than 25 in the year of competition so your date of birth must be on or after 01.01.2003 and this applies to the following seven skills: Additive Manufacturing, Aircraft Maintenance, Cyber Security, Digital Construction, Industry 4.0, Mechatronics, Robot Systems Integration.)
2. You must be competing in a skill that progresses to international competition. (Typically, around 30 skills, which is confirmed at the start of every cycle, dependant on funding.)
3. You must have achieved a minimum standard in the national finals' competition. (Usually 65%).

Alternatively, if training is of interest to you, you could consider supporting WorldSkills UK with organising and training, and even helping to run the National Finals.

## Judges' Top Tips

- Practice, practice, practice!
- Use the guidance notes & recommended resources
- Pay attention to detail
- Work logically & efficiently
- Enjoy!

If you have any questions, please get in touch at the following email address: [cgcworldskills@hotmail.com](mailto:cgcworldskills@hotmail.com)



WorldSkills UK is registered at  
52-54 St John Street  
London EC1M 4HF

T: 0800 612 0742  
E: [getintouch@worldskillsuk.org](mailto:getintouch@worldskillsuk.org)  
W: [worldskillsuk.org](http://worldskillsuk.org)



Charity number 1001586, Company number 02535199  
VAT registration number GB945610716