

World Skills UK – Automotive Refinishing Technical Handbook



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Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)

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Technical handbook for competitors, training providers and competition judges

WorldSkills UK 2026 – Automotive Refinishing

Technical Handbook

Produced by the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)

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1. Introduction

This handbook has been prepared by the **Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)** to provide competitors and judges with a comprehensive reference for the **WorldSkills UK Automotive Refinishing 2025 competition**.

It is designed to:

- Describe the structure and requirements of the competition
- Define the technical tasks to be undertaken at the National Qualifiers and National Finals
- Provide assessment and marking criteria
- Offer guidance for preparation and skills development
- Detail career pathways and industry standards

This handbook is applicable to all competitors, training providers and competition judges.

2. Competition Overview

Automotive Refinishing is a core sector within the automotive industry. Competitors will demonstrate competence in:

- Preparation and refinishing of vehicle panels and components
- Application of coatings to achieve high-quality finishes
- Identification and rectification of paint defects
- Colour matching, including metallic and pearl finishes
- Efficient and safe use of tools and equipment

Competitors will be assessed on their ability to apply technical knowledge, work efficiently, and maintain quality under time constraints.

3. Career Pathway

3.1 Role of a Paint Technician

Paint technicians are responsible for:

- Preparing and refinishing vehicle surfaces following repair
- Assessing and rectifying minor defects
- Colour matching and blending finishes
- Applying primer, base coat, and clear coat systems
- Using specialist tools and equipment safely and efficiently

3.2 Qualifications Required

- Level 2 Vehicle Body and Paint Operations (Refinishing)
- Level 3 Vehicle Body and Paint Operations (Refinishing)
- N/SVQs or VRQs in vehicle body and paint operations

3.3 Working Hours and Remuneration (UK, 2026 estimates)

Role	Typical Working Hours	Salary
Apprentice / Trainee	8:00–17:00, Mon–Fri	£8,000–£14,000
Qualified Automotive Refinisher	8:00–17:00, Mon–Fri	£31,500 per annum / £16 per hour
Entry Level	8:00–17:00, Mon–Fri	£28,500 per annum
Experienced	8:00–17:00, Mon–Fri	Up to £43,000 per annum

3.4 Career Progression

- Senior Refinishing Technician
- Vehicle Estimator / Senior Vehicle Damage Assessor
- Bodyshop Manager

Further Information:

- [IMI Skills Competitions](#)

4. Registration and Pre-Competition Activity

4.1 Registration Process

1. Complete online registration and accept competition terms and conditions.
2. Access the **Entry Stage Online Test** via email.

4.2 Entry Stage Online Test

- Mandatory for all registered competitors.
- Performance determines eligibility for National Qualifiers.
- Results communicated via email.

4.3 Pre-Competition Preparation

- Review industry-standard processes for vehicle refinishing.
- Practise tasks under conditions reflective of the competition environment.
- Access the pre-competition activity pack: [WorldSkills UK Pre-Competition Resources](#)

5. Competition Structure

Note: While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, some tasks may be subject to minor changes. Any adjustments will not significantly affect the competition format or marking criteria.

5.1 National Qualifiers – Practical

Tasks:

1. Panel Preparation and Painting
2. Paint Fault Rectification
3. Colour Matching
4. Plastic Panel Repair
5. Spray Equipment Inspection

Assessment:

Task	Weighting
Preparation and Painting	30%
Paint Fault Rectification	20%
Colour Matching	25%
Plastic Repair	15%
Equipment Inspection	10%

Competitor Expectations:

- Rotate through all tasks within allocated time
- Apply industry-standard techniques and procedures
- Demonstrate competence with tools, equipment, and materials
- Certificates awarded upon completion
- Top six highest-scoring competitors progress to **National Finals**

5.2 National Final

Tasks:

1. Panel Preparation and Painting (metallic/mica pearl finishes)
2. Masking Panels using a range of masking products
3. Blend Repair of a metal panel
4. Plastic Panel Repair and Spot Blend
5. Application of Special Finishes (three-stage pearls, satin finishes)
6. Spray Gun Defect Identification

Marking Distribution:

Task	Weighting
Prep & Paint Panels	22%
Blend Repair	20%
Plastic Panel Spot Repair	18%
Masking Panels	14%
Application of Special Finishes	22%
Spray Gun Defect Identification	4%

Competitor Expectations:

- Apply industry-approved refinishing techniques and procedures
- Demonstrate competence in equipment use, colour matching, paint mixing, polishing, and fault rectification
- Exhibit efficiency, planning, and problem-solving under timed conditions

6. Task Specifications

6.1 Practical Tasks

- Panel Preparation and Painting: Prepare and paint panels using industry-standard methods and Glasurit water-based systems
- Paint Fault Rectification: Assess and rectify pre-painted panels to restore quality
- Colour Matching: Identify and match solid, metallic, and pearl finishes
- Plastic Panel Repair: Repair plastic bumpers and prepare for refinishing
- Equipment Inspection: Test spray gun operation and identify faults

7. Marking and Assessment

Judging Principles:

- All tasks marked objectively against agreed criteria
- Judges are industry experts briefed in assessment procedures
- Key competencies assessed:
 - Technical skill and accuracy
 - Efficiency and time management
 - Health and safety compliance
 - Planning and problem-solving
 - Communication and professional behaviour

Assessment Moderation:

- Judging panels independently moderated to ensure consistency
- Marks verified before results confirmed

8. Technical Master Classes & Digital Resources

Master Classes:

- Pre-final technical training is due to be arranged, and details will be shared in due course
- Focus: Product knowledge, latest techniques, process efficiency

Digital Resources:

- [3M Collision Repair](#)
- [Glasurit Technical Guides](#)
- [SATA YouTube Channel](#)
- [Redashe Curing Equipment](#)

9. Judges' Guidance

Technical Competencies:

- Correct application of paint materials
- Colour matching and blending
- Fault identification and rectification
- Efficient masking and equipment use

Professional Attributes:

- Time management under pressure
- Planning and problem-solving
- Adherence to health and safety protocols
- Communication and teamwork

Marking Approach:

- Objective assessment based on task-specific criteria
- Consideration of overall technical excellence

10. Competition Rules

- Competitors must arrive punctually; late arrivals may be excluded
- IMI provides accommodation where required
- Competitors must wear WorldSkills UK T-shirts, Sata overalls, and appropriate safety footwear
- Instructions from judges and organisers must be always followed
- Competitors must comply with venue regulations and PPE requirements

11. Beyond WorldSkills UK

- National Finals contribute to selection for **WorldSkills International** competitions
- Age-eligible competitors may be invited to train for **EuroSkills** or **WorldSkills International** competitions
- Non-eligible competitors may join the **Skills Champions Programme** to support future competitions and inspire others

12. Appendices

12.1 Glossary and Abbreviations

- PPE – Personal Protective Equipment
- OEM – Original Equipment Manufacturer
- VDA – Vehicle Damage Assessor

12.2 PPE and Tools Checklists

- PPE: Gloves, overalls, safety glasses, masks
- Tools: Spray guns, paint mixing systems, polishers, hand and power tools

12.3 Contacts and Useful Links

- Michael Massey CAE FIMI, Skills Competition Manager: mmassey@theimi.org.uk
- Emma Carrigy MIMI, Head of Research, Careers & Inclusion:
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- [IMI Skills Competitions](#)
- [WorldSkills UK Resources](#)