

## WorldSkills UK 2026 – Automotive Refinishing Technical Handbook

Issued by:

Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)

Competition Year:

2026

Status:

Technical handbook for competitors, training providers and competition judges

### Contents

1. **Introduction**
2. **Competition Overview**
3. **Career Pathway**
  - 3.1 Role of a Paint Technician
  - 3.2 Qualifications Required
  - 3.3 Working Hours and Remuneration
  - 3.4 Career Progression
4. **Registration and Pre-Competition Activity**
  - 4.1 Registration Process
  - 4.2 Entry Stage Online Test
  - 4.3 Pre-Competition Preparation
5. **Competition Structure**
  - 5.1 National Qualifiers – Practical
  - 5.2 National Final
6. **Task Specifications**
  - 6.1 Practical Tasks
7. **Marking and Assessment**
  - 7.1 Technical Competencies
  - 7.2 Professional Attributes
  - 7.3 Assessment Moderation
8. **Technical Master Classes & Digital Resources**
9. **Judges' Guidance**
10. **Competition Rules**
11. **Beyond WorldSkills UK**

## 12. Appendices

- 12.1 Glossary and Abbreviations
- 12.2 PPE and Tools Checklists
- 12.3 Contacts and Useful Links

## 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 2026 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%

Task	Weighting
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](mailto:mmassey@theimi.org.uk)
- Emma Carrigy MIMI, Head of Research, Careers & Inclusion: [emmac@theimi.org.uk](mailto:emmac@theimi.org.uk)
- [IMI Skills Competitions | Institute of The Motor Industry](#)
- [WorldSkills UK Resources](#)