

Skills Competition success for painting and decorating student from Flintshire

A 19-year-old from Cefn-y-bedd has won a gold medal in the painting and decorating final of a national skills senior level competition.

Backed by the Welsh Government through the European Social Fund, Skills Competition Wales is a series of events held in colleges across the country, designed to celebrate vocational skills and create highly skilled, award winning employees for the Welsh workforce.

Lewys Rawlings, who is studying a level 2 NVQ diploma in Painting and Decorating at Coleg Cambria, competed against 12 other students from across Wales in a series of decorating challenges within a five-hour time period. The competitors were tasked with upscaling a design onto three large boards, correctly measuring and painting a series of coloured shapes.

Lewys, who is also completing an apprenticeship at MJ Bannister in Wrexham, said he couldn't believe it when the judges announced him as the winner.

"After winning the gold medal last year, I knew what to expect on the day and how high the standard of work is. To be named as the regional winner two years in a row surprised me but I think my experience at the UK Skills Show taught me how to work quickly and efficiently.

"I'm hoping to progress to the international finals in Kazan, and I've been putting in the extra hours at college and staying for 12 hour days to perfect my techniques. Everyone at work has been so supportive while I finish my apprenticeship, my boss is really keen for me to do well so he can have an award-winning painter in the team!"

More than 35 competitions are taking place this year, across a wide range of different vocations from plumbing and beauty therapy to aeronautical engineering and accountancy.

The successful Welsh competitors may go on to challenge youngsters from across the UK at the WorldSkills UK national finals, held at The Skills Show in Birmingham's NEC this November. Competitors who excel at The Skills Show may then be

shortlisted to compete against the world's most talented young people at the international WorldSkills competition in Kazan, Russia in 2019.

Minister for Skills and Science, Julie James said: "At the Skills Show last year, the Welsh team topped the leader board of UK regions winning a total of 45 medals, which demonstrates that we're producing some of the most highly skilled young people across the nation.

"In a year when Wales is celebrating legends of the past, competitions like these showcase the talent across the country and provide a platform for emerging Welsh legends of the future.

"Along with Lewys' hard work and determination the support from his employer is an important factor in his success, and I would like to extend a special thank you to all the local businesses, schools and colleges across Wales who support these talented individuals.

"I would like to congratulate Lewys on his fantastic achievement and wish him the best of luck in the next stage of the competition and their future career."