

Item 6.1 – Official report on the 35th World Skills Competition in Montreal, Canada, 11-15 November 1999

1. The official report, attached at Annex A, covers all the major aspects of the competition in Canada and the necessary preliminary activity associated with the selection and preparation of the UK team. It records a generally well-organised competition, a committed and on the whole professional UK team of competitors and experts and the excellent and much appreciated support given by the Official and Technical Delegates, the official observers and the two team leaders. The report also identifies a number of lessons that need to be addressed in the future before the next international competition to be held in Seoul in 2001.
2. Preparations for the World Skills Competition cover a period of at least 18 months during which a very large number of organisations and individuals are involved in a complex and demanding process which seeks to raise the public profile of vocational training and the need for a highly skilled workforce. Industry support for this process, which involves regional and national competitions prior to the team selection, providing additional preparatory training and releasing the competitors and technical experts for the period of the international competition, is estimated at a total of £5 million.
3. The UK team in Montreal gained one silver and two bronze medals and eight diplomas (awarded when a competitor achieves the international standard of 500 marks) to record an overall award score of 15 and gain 10th place overall. As will be seen from the table below, which shows the UK results since 1991 when UK SKILLS first entered a team, this was a disappointing performance in comparison with previous competitions. Although gaining one place in the overall ranking table, the award score and the average mark are the lowest so far achieved. This last is particularly disappointing because the skills competition organisers are required to nominate for selection only those individuals whom they consider capable of reaching the international standard.

Year and Venue	Award Score	Position	UK Competitors	Top Country and Score	Average Mark of UK (Top Country)
Amsterdam 1991	25	10 th of 24	27	Taiwan 74	497 (518)
Taipei 1993	26	7 th of 24	31	Taiwan 111	496 (535)
Lyon 1995	26	8 th of 28	24	Korea 72	501 (524)
St Gallen 1997	19	11 th of 30	23	Switzerland 68	500(513)
Montreal 1999	15	10 th = of 33	28	Taiwan 66	490 (524)

4. The report identifies weaknesses that affected the UK team performance and indicates where action is needed and will be taken to remedy the situation for the future.

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5. It may be noted that good progress was made in improving the monitoring of competitor preparation, the provision of mentors for new experts and the introduction of the team building weekend. It was widely regarded that this team was better prepared than any of its predecessors but that the international opposition is just as successfully developing better preparatory practices. This was the largest team of competitors sent by UK SKILLS to the Skill Olympics and it included entries in five established trades where the UK had no recent experience at the competition and in three demonstration trades.
6. National coverage of the World Skills Competition and of the UK team remains sketchy but local and regional interest was very satisfactory. A large number of visitors, including the Baroness Blackstone, Minister of State in the Department for Education and Employment, Sara Donaldson, Director Millennium Challenge, a group from the Further Education Skills Council and representatives from industry and the skills competition organisers made the journey to Montreal to see the competition, and this was most welcome.
7. The Board is invited to comment on the attached official report and to advise on further action to achieve greater success in future World Skills Competitions