

Trophies and Medals: an evolution

Since its creation in 1950, International VET Competitions have not only showcased exceptional vocational skills but also featured a diversity of aesthetics and cultural influences of each hosting country. In the early years, winners were awarded trophies. However, since 1959, medals have been preferred, evolving from simple designs to intricate pieces that embody the essence of skill excellence. From the sleek designs of the mid-20th century, more related with craftsmanship symbols to the culturally inspired motifs of recent years, these awards serve as tangible representations of innovation and cultural exchange. Each edition of the competition brings forth new designs, carefully curated to resonate with the host nation's heritage and contemporary design trends. This curated list explores how these medals and trophies have evolved, highlighting the artistic interpretations and symbolic meanings embedded in their design, which transcend mere recognition to embody the spirit of global skill excellence.



1st International Workers' Vocational Training Competition, Iberian Competition, 1950, Madrid (Spain)

A trophy from the first international event in Madrid in which Spain competed against Portugal.

In WorldSkills' early years trophies were awarded to winners.

WSI_3057



3rd International Vocational Training Competition 1953, Madrid (Spain)

During the first international competitions, trophies were customized with the name and skill competition of the winner engraved in Spanish.

WSI_1584



6th International Vocational Training Competition 1957, Madrid (Spain).

WSI_2149



7th International Vocational Training Competition 1958, Brussels (Belgium).

The trophy from the 1958 Competition in Brussels integrates four triangular pieces and three wires attached to the base, with a cup mounted on top. The images of tools and instruments are engraved on the triangular pieces with a version of the Mercator projection of the globe engraved on the cup. The designer of this beautiful trophy may have set out to depict trades supporting the globe.

WSI_2196



8th International Vocational Training Competition 1959, Modena (Italy).

The 1959 Competition in Modena was the first competition where medals were presented.

They were designed and produced at the well reputed Loriolo Mint. The face shows an image of Modena Cathedral and back shows three human figures, tools, and machines.

The text on the face is a Latin motto: "Vital Excollimus per Artes", meaning "We enhance life through the arts". The skill and name of the winner is also engraved on the face. The text on the back is the competition name in Italian.

WSI_3668



9th International Vocational Training Competition 1960, Barcelona (Spain)

The medal carries the competition logo on the face and the name engraved in Spanish on the reverse.

WSI_0498a-b



10th International Vocational Training Competition 1961, Duisburg (Germany)

The face of the medal features a map of a borderless western Europe and a section of the IVTO gear in low relief.

On the reverse it is engraved the German name of the organizing committee, the dates and various locations that held the competition.

WSI_2091



11th International Vocational Training Competition 1962, Gijón (Spain)

This appears to be a medal from the 1962 event held in Gijón.

The small medal features a nautical design attached to a narrow strip of leather. The reverse carries a brief inscription with the name and place of the competition.

WSI_2648



12th International Vocational Training Competition 1963, Dublin (Ireland)

This is a replica of a medal from the first International Competition held in Ireland. It features an emblem inspired by the "Tara" brooch" and the name of the competition in Gaelic.

WSI_2126

Medal



13th International Vocational Training Competition 1964, Lisbon (Portugal)

The medal, from the 1964 International Competition, is rectangular with engraved symbols and text in Portuguese.

The face carries the name of the Competition and its logo, a cog and a globe-like symbol.

WSI_0124



14th International Apprentices Competition 1965, Glasgow (United Kingdom)

The medal dates from the International Apprentices Competition 1965 in Glasgow and features the Lion Rampant, the Scottish royal coat of arms.

The design is by Albert Lucas, a jewellery design tutor at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, Southampton Row, London.

WSI_0120



15th International Vocational Training Competition 1966, Utrecht (Netherlands).

The decorative elements on the front of the medal are in low relief and the engraved text reads 'Utrecht Nederland 1966.'

On the reverse is "XV Internationale Beroepen Wedstrijden", the Dutch name of the competition

WSI_2425



16th International Vocational Training Competition 1967, Madrid (Spain)

The medal has an irregular round shape and the inscription on the reverse reads "campeón" (champion).

The engraved design on the front is a medieval image showing a carpenter craftsman.

WSI_0125



17th International Vocational Training Competition 1968, Berna (Switzerland)

The medal, featuring the Swiss cross and the name of the competition in high relief and engraved in German.

WSI_0121



18th International Vocational Training Competition 1969, Brussels (Belgium).

A rectangular medal with the International Vocational Training Organization logo and Brussels Town Hall, in relief in the front.

The reverse is blank, but carries a polished rectangle, possibly for an inscription.

WSI_0122



19th International Vocational Training Competition 1970, Tokyo (Japan).

A circular medal with the name of the competition engraved in Spanish on the front together with a Japanese landscape and the IVTO logo.

The reverse shows the logo of the 1970 competition, the date and a the name of the competition in Japanese.

WSI_3665



20th International Vocational Training Competition 1971, Gijón (Spain).

A striking Silver medal with a hexagon pattern made for the 1971 contest in Gijón, Spain.

The face depicts the competition logo, while the reverse has the IVTO logo and the name and location of the event.

WSI_0220



21st International Vocational Training Competition 1973, Munich (Germany).

This Silver medal shows the IVTO logo in the front, and the name and date of the event in the reverse, in German.

WSI_2426



22nd International Vocational Training Competition 1975, Madrid (Spain).

This rectangular medal features a low relief of the IVTO torch, a deconstructed gear wheel, the Puerta de Alcalá, an 18th century gate in Madrid, and the inscription for 22nd International Competition.

The medals in 1975 were designed and produced by "Vallmitjana Silverware and Metals", a goldsmiths' workshop in Barcelona specializing in commemorative medals.

WSI_0126



23rd International Vocational Training Competition 1977, Utrecht (Netherlands).

This medal design includes anthropomorphic figures, letters, and tools in low relief. It features the logo of the competition and the inscription "hoofd en hand" which translates as "head and hand", the skills needed to be a good apprentice.

The reverse features an animal figure and characters.

The medal was made by Koninklijke Begeer, a Dutch company founded in 1789 which specialized in making trophies.

WSI_0102



24th International Youth Skill Olympics 1978, Busan (Korea).

The face of the medal shows the competition logo and name.

The reverse shows the IVTO logo and name of the competition in Korean.

WSI_2652



25th International Youth Skill Olympics 1979, Cork (Ireland).

This is a replica of a medal from the second international Competition to be held in Ireland. It features an emblem inspired by the "Tara' brooch" and the name of the competition in Gaelic.

WSI_3392



26th International Skill Olympics 1981, Atlanta (United States).

Circular medal with an engraved laurel wreath held by a hand on the face, together to the IVTO logo and the name of the competition.

The reverse shows the laurel wreath and the name, position, and skill of the winner

WSI_0106

27th International Vocational Training Competition 1983, Linz (Austria).



The medal has a cut-out design. It was the winning entry at a student competition at the University of Applied Arts in Austria and is modelled on the emblem of the event, a spiral shape emulating a stair.

WSI_0109

28th International Vocational Training Competition 1985, Osaka (Japan).



Medal with the English name of the competition engraved on the face together with the five-color logo of the competition, the second to be held in Japan.

The reverse shows the engraved IVTO logo and the name of the competition in Japanese.

WSI_0115

29th International Vocational Training Competition 1988, Sydney (Australia).



The blue enamel on the face features a forefinger and thumb framing "Skill Olympics 88." This was the logo of WorldSkills Australia at the time. The competition was sometimes described as an "Olympics" until the late 1990s.

A leafy vine borders the reverse along with "Australia 1788-1988" a reference to the bicentennial of the arrival of the first European settlers to Australia, which coincided with the competition.

WSI_2439

30th International Youth Skill Olympics 1989, Birmingham (United Kingdom).



This circular medal features a globe cradled by a human and robot hand on the face.

On the reverse it includes the name of the competition and the skill competition, as well an abstract symbol.

WSI_0131

31st International Vocational Training Competition 1991, Amsterdam (Netherlands).



This medal design includes anthropomorphic figures letters and tools in low relief. It carries the logo of the competition and the inscription "hoofd en hand" which translates as "head and hand", the skills needed to be a good apprentice.

On the reverse there is a five-colour band and the engraved Dutch initials of the competition name, city, and year.

WSI_2444

32nd International Vocational Training Competition 1993, Chinese Taipei.



This medal shows the coloured logo of the competition on the face. It is surrounded by a 3-color band. It also includes the name of the competition and year.

On the reverse it shows the IVTO logo over a 5-color band.

WSI_0363

33rd Skills Olympics 1995, Lyon (France).



The face of this medal includes an engraved abstract design of a group of people and the name, location, and year of the competition.

On the reverse, it reads the English name and logo of the IVTO.

ARTHUS-BERTRAND has been chosen to design and manufacture the medals awarded to the winners of the XXXIII Olympiads of Crafts and Trades, as well as the collection of objects that will remain for the participants and the public (pins, badge holders, watches, pens, luggage).

Founded in 1803. ARTHUS-BERTRAND is a creator and manufacturer of French and foreign commissions and decorations, medals, jewellery, badges, watches, trophies and objects of prestige and communication.

Two centuries - and five generations - of craftsmanship and demanding creativity have forged an exclusive know-how and incomparable expertise, based on tradition, aesthetics and quality, in the design and manufacture of 'objects that bear witness'.

WSI_2408

34th International Youth Skill Olympics 1997, St Gallen (Switzerland).



The face of this rounded medal shows the logo, English name, date, and location of the competition.

On the reverse, the English name and logo of the IVTO is shown

WSI_2359

35th WorldSkills Competition 1999, Montreal (Canada).



The face of this medal features an engraved drawing of the Montreal Olympic stadium, the venue of the competition.

On the reverse the IVTO logo is shown along with the English, French, and German name of the competition.

WSI_2443

36th WorldSkills Competition 2001, Seoul (Korea).



The face of the medal features an open, waving hand, the symbol of the Korean event.

The reverse side showcases the WorldSkills logo and underneath "International Vocational Training Organization." The juxtaposition of the two names is a visual representation of the organization's transition to a modern identity.

The Korean competition was the first time the current WorldSkills logo was used.

WSI_2432

37th WorldSkills Competition 2003, St Gallen (Switzerland).



The face of this medal shows the engraved symbolic figures of seven skilled workers and the name and location of the competition.

The medal also represents the organization's transition from its old to modern identity. On the reverse is inscribed the new WorldSkills brand as well the old "International Vocational Training Organization."

WSI_2433

38th WorldSkills Competition 2005, Helsinki (Finland).



The face of the medal features the competition's symbol, the fist of a blacksmith Ilmarinen, a god in Finnish mythology. An open outstretched hand emphasizes a legacy of the competition which was to share expertise with future hosts.

The reverse shows the WorldSkills logo, host city, and event date. In 2005, the medals were designed and made by students at Salpaus Further Education in Finland.

WSI_0474a-c

39th WorldSkills Competition 2007, Shizuoka (Japan).



Hokusai's Great Wave is prominent on the face of the medal, together with a relief image of Mount Fuji, the WorldSkills logo and the English name of the competition.

On the reverse, the engraved logo of the competition and the host city is shown.

WSI_1998

40th WorldSkills Competition 2009, Calgary (Canada).



The Rocky Mountains are etched on the front of the medal with the name of the competition, and the Canadian flag.

On the reverse, the WorldSkills logo is featured.

WSI_2006

41st WorldSkills Competition 2011, London (United Kingdom).



The face of the medal is inscribed with the city's skyline including the London Eye, the competition logo and two hands holding the world.

On the reverse, the WorldSkills logo is featured.

WSI_2002

42nd WorldSkills Competition 2013, Leipzig (Germany).



The 2013 medals's design emphasizes internationality and interconnectivity. The various heights represent the six skill sectors. On the reverse, the 42 corners symbolise Leipzig as the 42nd competition, all of which are linked by 46 beams representing the 46 skills featured in the competition.

WSI_1995



43rd WorldSkills Competition 2015, São Paulo (Brazil).

The 2015 medals were created by Bruno Villardo, Guilherme Vieira, and Thiago Leon Marti - graphic designers and medallists from previous WorldSkills Competitions.

The medals incorporate 50 different elements which represent the number of skills competition in WorldSkills São Paulo 2015. The elements in the medals' final design provide a revolutionary and unique concept, with various symbols that are part of the competition: pieces of gear, a timer, an arena, fireworks, and the São Paulo city skyline. All the elements meet at the WorldSkills logo, the symbol of the global hub for skills excellence and development.

WSI_0001



44th WorldSkills Competition 2017, Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates).

The undulating waves on the face of the medal represent the desert origins of the people of Abu Dhabi.

Above a line of modern landmarks is engraved the name and year of the event.

WSI_1968



45th WorldSkills Competition 2019, Kazan (Russia).

On the face of the 2019 medal is the WorldSkills logo and text, "45th WorldSkills Competition."

The intricate, three-pointed design is Tatar in origin.

A skyline of UNESCO-designated heritage and modern buildings is featured on the reverse. A combination of relief and inscribing techniques have been used on both sides.

WSI_2022



46th WorldSkills Competition 2022 Special Edition

The medal for the WorldSkills Competition 2022 Special Edition were made with a hydraulic press in China.

The WorldSkills Shanghai Executive Bureau contributed medals to the event.

WSI_3139a-f



47th WorldSkills Competition 2024, Lyon (France)

The centre of the WorldSkills Lyon 2024 medal design is a hexagon building block, reflecting the WorldSkills movement’s belief that skills are the building blocks of life.

Lyon is represented by its emblematic Place Bellecour, Europe’s largest pedestrian square. The medals feature a majestic big wheel – the city’s iconic attraction – along with a silhouette of Louis XIV, the Sun King, whose statue can also be found in the heart of the square.

Inspired by WorldSkills building blocks, six hexagons represent six skills sectors in the Competition, while also reflecting the vibrancy of WorldSkills Lyon 2024. These six sectors are further broken down into the 62 skills in the Competition, showcased on the medals as embossed dots.