

## WorldSkills Success for WEC Group and Themis at Burnley College Apprentices!

Five apprentices from Darwen-based WEC Group, including four from Themis, are celebrating after making it through to the national final of the prestigious 2015 WorldSkills UK Construction Metal Work competition.

Harry Chadwick (17) from Blackburn was the overall winner of the tough regional heat which took place at Burnley College. Ryan Smith (17) from Accrington, Thomas Woodburn (18) and James Ennis (23), both from Darwen, also successfully made it through after a gruelling seven hour competition. The fifth WEC Group apprentice to win through to the finals is Christopher Taylor (26) of Darwen and studying with Blackburn-based Training 2000.

The prestigious WorldSkills competition in Construction Metal Work is designed to test entrants' skills to the limit.



The five welding and fabrication apprentices are part of the nationally renowned WEC Group training academy, named one of the top three in the UK by the prestigious National Apprenticeship Awards. WEC Group has also been named in 2015's City & Guilds Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer List.

WEC Group's recent takeover of Yorkshire-based MTL Advanced has also now seen a significant investment in apprentices at its Rotherham factory. Up to 20 apprentices

will be recruited this year by across the WEC Group with more than £1 million invested in the workforce of the future.

The talented apprentices competed against 90 entrants from around the UK to make it to the final 10 – with WEC and East Lancashire contributing 50 per cent of the national finalists.

They will now battle it out against each other and five more regional champions at the national finals in Birmingham in November. Glory there will see them represent the UK at the WorldSkills International Final in Abu Dhabi in 2017.

Themis at Burnley College is extremely proud to have been chosen as the host for the regional heat and to have four apprentices successfully get through to the UK final is especially exciting.



Simon Jordan, director of Themis, said: *“The WorldSkills UK regional event is a fantastic opportunity for training providers from across the region to test themselves in a competitive setting and for the chance to have their work exhibited on an international platform. The success of the Themis apprentices is testament to the outstanding training programme WEC Group has developed.”*

Kris Mercer, training and development manager at WEC Group, said: *“We are very proud of all our apprentices’ achievement and it’s a tribute to the investment by WEC Group and the hard work put in by the lads themselves and the high quality of teaching and training from Themis.*



*“For WEC Group to have contributed half the national finalists in such a prestigious competition is an amazing achievement.*

*“The fact that one of our apprentices Harry Chadwick also won the regional heats, despite being one of the youngest apprentices to enter the competition, shows an amazing ability to work very efficiently to a very high standard.*

*“It’s these qualities that have enabled Harry and his four colleagues to set such a high UK standard, by winning the regional competition and getting through to the final against very experienced level 3 students.”*

Organised by Semta, the WorldSkills UK Construction Metal Work competition aims to showcase the talent and skills of Advanced Metal Fabricators, while demonstrating competitors’ ability to work safely and effectively on a test piece.

This internationally respected standard of competition is hotly contested throughout the UK with highly skilled competitors representing a number of cutting edge businesses and training providers across the country.