

Unit 81: Stage Costume Making

Unit code:	M/502/5673
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit will allow learners to develop costume-making skills and apply them to the realisation of a costume design for a public performance.

● Unit introduction

The costume in performance portrays the character, the period and the season, working at a conscious and subconscious level to communicate the designer's, the director's and/or the choreographer's interpretation of a character and their role in the performance.

Creating a costume for a performance requires costume-making skills and techniques. Learners will be supported and encouraged to develop confidence in the use and application of costume design and construction skills. They will learn how to use costume construction materials and explore the potential of materials and costume design finishes.

In a professional context costumes are made by the wardrobe department, usually by a team of skilled dressmakers who work within a defined budget and timeframe under the guidance of the wardrobe manager. Being a member of the costume team requires effective interaction and teamwork skills. This unit will require learners to interact with the actor, the costume designer and the wardrobe manager and will echo professional experience as learners apply the skills and techniques learned in the unit to create a costume for a performance.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to use costume construction skills
- 2 Know how to select appropriate materials for costume construction
- 3 Be able to realise a costume design for public performance.

Unit content

1 Be able to use costume construction skills

Pattern cutting: measuring sheets; measuring the actor; drafting block patterns; fittings; fabric estimation

Costume construction tools and skills: eg using the pattern, cutting the fabric, measuring, hand sewing, use of sewing machine, use of overlocker, sewing appropriate seams, darts, fastenings, types of thread, reinforcement, boning, use of iron, applying finishes

Health and safety: for the costumier eg use of handheld tools and equipment, use of machines; glue guns, irons, dyes, finishes; for the actor eg avoidance of allergic reactions, asthma attacks, comfort of fit, ease of movement; awareness of potential fire hazards of construction materials; storage of costumes and fabrics

2 Know how to select appropriate materials for costume construction

Conventional materials: natural fabrics eg linen, silk, cotton, wool; synthetic fabrics eg rayon, vinyl, lycra; fabrics with decorative finishes eg silk moiré, embossed velvet

Unconventional materials: eg plastics, wire, bubble wrap, foam, rubber, carpet, card, paper

Processing materials: eg dyeing, fabric printing, fabric painting, applying decorative finishes

3 Be able to realise a costume design for public performance

Realise costume designs: working to designs; interaction with wardrobe manager and designer; planning of process; working to budget; measuring the actor; constructing the costume; attending costume fittings; completing costumes for the technical/dress rehearsal; making final alterations

Select appropriate materials: eg demands of costume, type of performance, length of run, calculate materials and quantities needed, adapt existing costumes

Select appropriate costume construction tools: eg cutting, sewing, adapting existing garments, use of sewing machine, use of overlocker

Finishing costume: eg decorative finish, painting, ageing, ironing

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, learner is able to:
P1 use costume construction skills and techniques with support and guidance	M1 use costume construction skills and techniques competently with minimal support and guidance	D1 use costume construction skills and techniques competently and independently
P2 describe the use of materials for costume construction	M2 explain the use of materials for costume construction	D2 critically comment on the use of materials for costume construction
P3 select appropriate materials and construction methods to produce a costume for performance [CT]	M3 select appropriate materials and construction methods to produce a costume for performance in a competent manner	D3 select appropriate materials and construction methods to produce a costume for performance in a competent and confident manner
P4 produce a costume that is suitable for performance with support and guidance.	M4 produce a costume that is suitable for performance with minimal support and guidance.	D4 independently produce a costume that is suitable for performance.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

The unit focuses on the development of costume construction skills and the application of those skills. Learners should be introduced to health and safety guidelines in relation to costume construction at the outset of the unit. Sessions should cover the use of handheld tools and equipment, the use of machines, glue guns and irons, the use of dyes and finishes and the storage of costumes and fabrics. Practical sessions should follow that allow learners to develop measuring and pattern cutting skills and to develop costume construction and alteration skills using a range of materials. A series of mini projects could be introduced at this stage to allow learners to apply and demonstrate construction skills.

Learners will need to be introduced to the relationship of the costumier and the actor. Sessions should cover fittings, ways to ensure comfort of fit and ease of movement and an awareness of possible allergic reactions or potential fire hazards associated with some construction materials.

Learners should be given the opportunity to demonstrate the skills they have developed through the construction of a costume for a given purpose. For the purposes of this unit a costume is a garment, for example a jacket or a shirt, rather than a character's whole costume. Learners will be expected to interact effectively with the actor, the costume designer and the wardrobe manager throughout the costume construction process.

Learners should be provided with opportunities to further their understanding of the costume maker's role through research into the professional role. They should also reflect on and document the development and application of their skills and experience of the costume making process in a logbook.

If possible it would be valuable to arrange a site visit to a theatre wardrobe department, a design school or a costume production company to enable learners to see what can be achieved.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to the unit and structure of the programme of learning.
Tutor-led sessions to introduce learners to health and safety guidelines in relation to costume construction. Sessions will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• use of handheld tools and equipment• use of machines, glue guns and irons• use of dyes and finishes• the storage of costumes and fabrics.
Tutor-led practical sessions to develop measuring and pattern cutting skills. Practical exercises will include <ul style="list-style-type: none">• measuring the performer• use of measuring sheets• how to draft block patterns• fabric estimation.
Tutor-led practical sessions to develop costume construction and alteration skills using a range of materials. Practical exercises will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• using a pattern• cutting the fabric• hand sewing• use of a sewing machine• use of an overlocker• sewing appropriate seams and hems• fastenings• use of the iron• use of natural and synthetic fabrics• use of unconventional materials• use of decorative finishes.
Assignment 1: Construction Skills – P1, M1, D1 Learners complete a series of practical tasks to demonstrate the use of costume construction skills, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• cutting out a sleeve using a pattern• sewing a seam• inserting a zip• using an overlocker to neaten a raw edge• adding a decorative finish.
Feedback from assignment.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Tutor-led sessions to introduce learners to the relationship of the costumier and the actor.

Sessions will cover:

- comfort of fit and ease of movement
- avoidance of allergic reactions, asthma attacks, etc
- awareness of potential fire hazards of construction materials.

Tutor-led workshop – putting it all together, the realisation of a costume.

Learners are taken through the stages of the realisation of a costume from initial design to finished product.

Assignment 2: Making a Costume – P1, M1, D1, P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4

Learners construct a costume from a given design.

- selecting appropriate materials and construction methods
- using costume construction skills to produce the finished costume
- keeping a log of the processes and materials used.

Feedback from assignment and review of units.

Assessment

Assessment of this unit will take the form of practical activities in which learners demonstrate the use of costume construction skills and appropriate materials to create a costume that is suitable for performance.

Grading criterion 1 assesses learners' ability to use the skills and techniques associated with costume construction. This will be evidenced through the items of costume produced, backed up by tutor observations and a process log produced by learners. To achieve P1 learners must be able to use appropriate skills and techniques; however they will require support and guidance from the tutor to produce a successful outcome. Learners achieving M1 will be able to use these skills and techniques in a more proficient manner and will require only very occasional support and guidance. Learners achieving D1 will be able to complete tasks without specific guidance and will work efficiently and with confidence.

Grading criterion 2 assesses learners' understanding of the materials commonly used for costume construction. This will be evidenced through learners' process log, which should include details of how and why certain materials were selected and used. Learners achieving P2 will identify specific materials used giving unelaborated descriptions of how they will be used. For M2, learners will give reasons for choices made and provide more detailed explanations of how materials will be used. Learners achieving D2 will evaluate their choices, providing justification for decisions made and materials used.

Grading criteria 3 and 4 assess learners' ability to select and use materials and construction methods to produce a costume suitable for performance. For the purposes of this unit a costume is a garment, eg a jacket or a shirt, rather than a character's whole costume. The evidence for these criteria will be the costume itself supported by tutor observations and process log entries.

To achieve P3 learners must demonstrate the ability to select materials and methods that are suitable to the costume being produced. For P4, they will however, require support and guidance from the tutor to produce an appropriate costume. To achieve M3 learners must select materials and methods in a proficient manner and for M4 they will require only very occasional support and guidance to produce an appropriate costume. To achieve D3 learners must select materials and techniques in an efficient and assured manner. For D4, they should produce their costume without specific support from their tutor.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
PI, M1, DI	Construction Skills	Learners, in the role of costume-maker, complete a series of practical tasks to demonstrate the use of costume construction skills as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cutting out a sleeve using a pattern sewing a seam inserting a zip using an overlocker to neaten a raw edge adding a decorative finish. 	Tutor observation. Materials completed on practical tasks.
PI, M1, DI, P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4	Making a Costume	Learners, in the role of costume-maker, construct a costume from a given design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> selecting appropriate materials and construction methods using costume construction skills to produce the finished costume keeping a log of the processes and materials used. 	Tutor observations. Process log. Finished costume.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Performing and Production Arts sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Performing and Production Arts suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Exploring Design Skills for the Performing Arts	Costume Construction	Production Arts Planning
	Wardrobe for Stage Performance	Production for Theatre Performance
		Stage Wardrobe Management
		Period Costume for the Stage

This unit may also have links with the following National Occupational Standards:

Technical Theatre

- CPD1 – Improving your skills
- TP2.1b – Interpreting designs for costumes
- TP2.1a – Contribute to the interpretation of designs for costumes
- TP3.1b – Planning costume requirements for a production
- TP7.1a – Making and finishing costumes
- TP18 – Drafting patterns for costumes
- TP19a – Carry out the fitting and altering of costumes and accessories.

Essential resources

The teaching space will need costume construction and maintenance tools and materials. Learners will need a clean dedicated space to work in, to display costume design sketches and to post all communication paperwork.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Assignments should be set within a vocational context with learners producing costumes to a 'live brief' for a real production, for example, one being created by themselves or their peers.

A visit to the costume department of a theatre company or some input from a professional member of a wardrobe team would be beneficial.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Betzina S – *Fabric Savvy: The Essential Guide for Every Sewer* (Taunton Press, 2002) ISBN 9781561585731

Mooney S K – *Making Latex Clothes* (Batsford, 2004) ISBN 9780713488654

Moss S – *Costume and Chemistry: A Comprehensive Guide to Materials and Applications* (Batsford, 2001) ISBN 9780896762145

Reader's Digest – *New Complete Guide to Sewing* (Reader's Digest, 2009) ISBN 9780276444166

Singer S – *The Complete Photo Guide to Sewing* (Creative Publishing, 2009) ISBN 9781589234345

Thorne G – *Designing Stage Costumes: A Practical Guide* (The Crowood Press, 2001) ISBN 9781861264169

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Creative thinkers	selecting and using appropriate materials and construction methods to produce a costume for performance.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Reflective learners	considering the skills and techniques learned in the unit that can be applied to the costume they are making
Self-managers	ensuring their costume is completed within the given deadline.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
Mathematics	
Select and apply a range of skills to find solutions	using calculations to assess quantities of fabrics required
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	communicating with actors during costume fitting sessions.