

Unit 84: Designing Costumes for Performance

Unit code:	R/502/5682
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

In this unit learners will carry out the role of the costume designer for a production. Learners will do this through developing the range of skills required by the stage designer and enacting the designer's role from the initial planning stages to the realisation of the costumes on stage.

● Unit introduction

Every production has a costume design requirement. The budget usually dictates the complexity of the costume design and the costume designer's role could be as small as coordinating the actors' personal clothes or as sophisticated as a big budget production which requires lavishly detailed period costumes. The costume designer is responsible for the selection of costumes to suggest, through non-verbal communication, the subtleties and status of the character and to explain the context and the time period that the character is based in.

This unit will develop learners' ability to design, plan and manage the creation of costumes for performance and to fulfil the responsibilities of a costume designer as a member of the production team.

The costume designer has two main responsibilities. The first is a creative role; the costume designer is responsible for the development of costume design ideas through research, text analysis, the use of notes and the use of sketches and discussions with the director to decide the final set of costume designs. This unit will develop research and design development skills that will inform and enable the development of costume design ideas. Learners will develop visual communication skills to inform the development of the design concept and to produce costume design sketches to enable the clear presentation of final costume design ideas to the director, the actors and the costume production team.

The second is a managerial role; the ongoing communication of costume design ideas and the management of the materials, resources and costume construction team to realise the costume designs, including the ability to plan and manage a budget. Learners will be expected to interact successfully with the costume construction team and be ultimately responsible for the accurate realisation of the costumes throughout the planning process, the production process, the fittings, the technical and dress rehearsals in preparation for the final performance. If there is a wardrobe manager learners will be expected to work closely with them. Learners will be expected to promote a safe working application of health and safety practice throughout all aspects of the process.

This unit could be taught in an educational establishment or as a stand-alone unit in industry.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to develop costume design ideas
- 2 Be able to communicate costume design ideas
- 3 Be able to manage the costume construction process
- 4 Be able to fulfil the roles and responsibilities of a costume designer.

Unit content

1 Be able to develop costume design ideas

Research from a range of sources: eg exhibitions, galleries, museums, libraries, costume collections, film, video, internet, real-life scenarios

Research context: period; style; other productions; history; length of run; practical requirements

Working to a design brief: developing ideas with the director and set designer

Develop design ideas: eg photographs, sketches, CAD programmes, notes, diagrams

2 Be able to communicate costume design ideas

Presenting costume design ideas to the wardrobe construction team: 2D notes and sketches; construction methods; fabric types and quantities; budgeting; sourcing/altering suitable patterns; altering existing costumes; dyeing costumes; ageing costumes

Presentation of costume ideas to the director, the costume construction team and the actor: coloured images of final design ideas which show front and back of costume; details of accessories; details for hair/wigs; ability to present and promote costume design ideas

3 Be able to manage the costume construction process

Manage process: construction materials; source fabric; plan the costume budget; manage and monitor costume construction expenditure

Communicate with construction team: design and construction sketches; regular meetings with the wardrobe manager and costume makers to monitor and feedback on costume construction process; attend production meetings; attend fittings; attend technical rehearsal; attend dress rehearsal

4 Be able to fulfil the roles and responsibilities of a costume designer

Knowledge of the play/performance: development of design concept with the director/choreographer; planning design ideas; development of design ideas; communication of design ideas; management of the costume design construction team; interaction with the director and the production team; fittings; technical rehearsal; dress rehearsal

Health and safety: use of fabrics; application of finishes; performance demands

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment 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 develop costume design ideas in response to the director's brief [CT, TW, IE]	M1 develop mostly effective costume design ideas in response to the director's brief	D1 develop wholly effectual costume design ideas that are thoroughly considered and that successfully meet all considerations of the director's brief
P2 present 2D sketches of design ideas	M2 use 2D sketches to communicate the costume design ideas effectively	D2 use 2D sketches to clearly communicate fully detailed costume design ideas
P3 communicate costume construction plans in notes and sketches	M3 use instructive sketches and clear and detailed costume construction plans to inform the costume construction process	D3 use instructive sketches and fully detailed and comprehensive costume construction plans to inform all aspects of the costume construction process
P4 demonstrate the ability to cost, select and purchase materials, trimmings, and accessories, as appropriate, for costume construction throughout the costume construction process [SM]	M4 competently demonstrate the ability to cost, select, and purchase appropriate materials, trimmings and accessories, as appropriate, for costume construction throughout the costume construction process	D4 confidently demonstrate the ability to cost, select and purchase materials, trimmings and accessories, as appropriate, throughout the costume construction process
P5 use communication techniques to manage the construction team during the costume construction process [TW, EP]	M5 use effective communication techniques to manage the costume construction team throughout the production process	D5 demonstrate the sensitive use of wholly effective communication techniques to manage the costume construction team throughout the costume construction process
P6 carry out the responsibilities of the costume designer [RL]	M6 carry out the responsibilities of the costume designer competently	D6 carry out the responsibilities of the costume designer proficiently and confidently
P7 apply health and safety considerations to the design and construction of costumes.	M7 apply health and safety considerations to the design and construction of costumes competently.	D7 apply health and safety considerations to the design and construction of costumes proficiently and confidently.

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

This mostly practical unit is focused on the development of learners as costume designers within production teams.

Initially, it will be necessary to teach the skills that learners will need to develop and communicate costume design ideas. Research approaches and design development skills should be taught and developed through practical experiments with the focus of producing costume design sketches which can be used to communicate ideas to the company. It is recommended that learners develop their research and design skills through small practical exercises to build confidence and to develop their own individual style.

Learners will need to acquire an understanding of the properties and behaviours of possible costume design materials to enable the confident application of materials in their costume designs. An understanding of costume construction skills would be advantageous but not essential.

Learners will need access to approaches and methods to enable the clear management of, and communication with the director in, the development of costume design ideas, the actor in the communication of the final costume ideas and the costume construction team in the overseeing of the costume construction process, eg informal/formal design discussions, production meetings, rough sketches, fully finished sketches, swatches, memos, emails, checks on wardrobe progress.

Learners will then demonstrate the application of the above in the design and management of costumes for a live performance.

Learners will develop and apply appropriate health and safety practice to all aspects of the costume production process and in all costume design considerations for the performer.

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 unit and structure of the programme.
Formal learning part 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the role of the costume designer• working to a design brief• text/character analysis• research strategies.
Formal learning part 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• developing and presenting design ideas• construction sketches• costume construction materials• managing the construction process• health and safety.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Assignment 1: Liaising with the Director – P1, M1, D1

Learner:

- meets with the director and discusses costume brief
- analyses text
- carries out research
- generates initial ideas
- discusses ideas with director.

Assignment 2: Communicating Costume Design Ideas – P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3

Learner:

- produces 2D costume designs
- presents designs to director, actors and production team
- produces construction sketches
- discusses sketches with wardrobe management and costume construction team.

Assignment 3: Managing the Costume Construction Process – P4, M4, D4, P5, M5, D5

Learner:

- researches, costs and purchases materials
- manages budget
- communicates with wardrobe manager and costume makers
- oversees the construction of costumes
- attends costume fittings.

Assignment 4: The Get-in to the First Night – P6, M6, D6, P7, M7, D7

Learner:

- attends technical rehearsals
- attends dress rehearsals
- attends first performances.

Production meetings.

Theatre visits.

Reviews and feedback – individual and group sessions.

Assessment

Learners' understanding of the skills and approaches necessary to be a costume designer should be developed through small initial assignments. However the main assessment focus should be on the assessment of learners as they fulfil the role of the costume designer for a live performance. It would be preferable, although not essential, for learners to have multiple assessment opportunities to fulfil the role.

Assessment evidence should include evidence of each stage of the costume design process, the construction process and the final costumes.

A range of assessment processes should be used to assess this unit. This includes self-evaluation as a formative assessment process to enable reflective learning. It also includes peer evaluation, used to gain feedback about learners' interaction with, and ability to communicate with, all members of the costume construction team, the scenic designer, the actors and the director. Other forms of evidence can be used to support assessment, such as observational evidence and visual media.

Learning outcome 1, which relates to grading criterion 1, requires learners to demonstrate their ability to develop costume designs in response to a director's brief. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be apparent through the appropriateness of the costume designs that learners produce.

- At pass level, learners will produce basic costume designs that meet the director's brief. The designs will be unelaborated and although basic will clearly show the artistic intentions of learners. It is expected that learners will receive support from their tutor to achieve this criterion.
- At merit level, learners will produce appropriate costume designs that display a creative and thoughtful response to the director's brief. Aesthetic decisions will be considered and will be on the whole satisfying. It is expected that learners will receive some support from their tutor to achieve this criterion.
- At distinction level, learners' designs will be wholly appropriate and will be characterised throughout by creative thinking. The designs that learners develop will show that they have wholly understood the director's brief and the demands of the production. Learners will work independently and will present ideas with confidence.

Learning outcome 2, which relates to grading criteria 2 and 3, requires learners to demonstrate artistic and technical skills whilst producing 2D sketches of design ideas and construction plans in notes and sketches. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be apparent by the level of artistic ability and technical skill shown by learners.

- At pass level, learners' work will be basic. The drawings will be simplistic but will show some understanding of the characters and the stimulus material. The construction drawings and notes will be simplistic but will show the artistic intentions of learners. It is expected that learners will receive support from their tutor to achieve this criterion.
- At merit level, designs will be carefully drawn and will actively display and endorse the artistic intentions of learners. The designs will show a thoughtful understanding of the characters and the stimulus material. The construction drawings will be developed competently and will be accurate. It is expected that learners will receive some support from their tutor to achieve this criterion.
- At distinction level, learners' designs will be detailed and produced with care and confidence and endorse every detail of learners' artistic intentions. The designs will show a thoughtful and creative understanding of the character and the stimulus material. The construction drawings will be detailed and wholly accurate and will precisely inform every aspect of the construction process. Learners will be expected to work independently to achieve this criterion.

Learning outcome 3, which relates to grading criteria 4 and 5, requires learners to manage the costume construction process. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be apparent through the level of ability shown by learners to manage the costume construction process.

- At pass level learners will cost, select and purchase materials, trimmings and accessories, as appropriate, with the help of their tutor. The materials will, for the most part, be unsophisticated and functional and little attempt to find creative materials will be shown. Learners will show limited initiative but will show some understanding of the processes. During the costume making process learners will use basic communication skills to manage the construction team.
- At merit level, learners will confidently and competently demonstrate the ability to cost, select and purchase appropriate materials, trimmings and accessories. Learners will, for the most part, work independently but will still need occasional advice or support to carry out the work. Whilst carrying out the work for these criteria learners will show initiative and thoughtfulness. Learners will oversee the costume construction team for most of the production process and use effective written and verbal communication methods to ensure that the costumes are accurately made within the allocated time period.
- At distinction level, learners will cost, select and purchase materials, trimmings and accessories with confidence. Learners' work will be characterised by creative thinking and activity and learners will solve problems resourcefully and effectively. Learners will manage the entire costume construction process independently. Through careful planning and expert management skills learners will gain the respect of the construction team.

Learning outcome 4, which relates to grading criteria 5 and 6, requires learners to understand and fulfil the roles and responsibilities of a costume designer. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be shown in the level of understanding that learners show regarding the role of the costume designer and the level of ability they show in fulfilling the role.

- At pass level, learners will show a basic understanding of the role of the costume designer. Whilst carrying out the role of costume designer learners will not totally understand what is expected of them and will need support from their tutor to carry out some of the tasks. During the design and costume construction processes learners will apply health and safety regulations; their understating of health and safety regulations and considerations relating to both costume makers and actors will be limited.
- At merit level, learners will demonstrate an informed understanding of the costume designer's role. Whilst carrying out the role they will understand what is expected of them and carry out all the tasks competently. During the design and construction processes learners will apply health and safety regulations competently. They will display an understanding of the importance of health and safety considerations both for the costume makers and the actors.
- At distinction level, learners will have a complete understanding of the costume designer's role. Whilst carrying out the role of the costume designer learners will display a thorough knowledge of what is expected of them and carry out every aspect of the role proficiently. During the design and construction processes learners will apply health and considerations at all times. Learners will show a thorough understanding of the importance of health and safety considerations both for the costume makers and the actors.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and 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, MI, DI	Liaising with the Director	Learners have been employed as a costume designer by a small theatre company. Learners will design costumes for a production. Having liaised with the director and discussed the requirements for the production, learners carry out text analysis and research and produce a body of evidence that they can draw on to inform their costume designs. Drawing on the research material learners produce costume design sketches that show a development of design ideas.	Portfolio of evidence consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a written account of the director's brief • text/character analysis • research material • initial ideas.
P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3	Communicating Costume Design Ideas	Learners present finished costume design ideas to the director, cast and the production team. Learners make sketches and plans which outline construction details of any costumes which are to be made.	Portfolio of evidence consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2D costume designs • construction sketches • notes of meetings with the director and the wardrobe management and costume construction team.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P4, M4, D4, P5, M5, D5	Managing the Costume Construction Process	Learners work closely with the wardrobe manager and select suitable materials, trimmings and accessories for the costumes that are to be made. Learners liaise with costume managers and the costume construction team during the production of the costumes.	Portfolio of evidence consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notes relating to the cost and purchasing of materials • database of suppliers • outline budget • notes relating to all meetings with the wardrobe management and costume construction team • costume fitting notes.
P6, M6, D6, P7, M7, D7	The Get-in to the First Night	Learners attend technical rehearsals, dress rehearsal and first performances. Whilst carrying out this work learners apply health and safety regulations. After the production learners write an account in which they demonstrate that they understand the role of the costume designer within the production process.	A portfolio of evidence consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notes from technical and dress rehearsals and first performances • a written account which demonstrates an understanding and application of health and safety considerations throughout the design and construction processes • a written account that demonstrates an understanding of the costume designer's role.

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	Wardrobe for Stage Performance	Stage Costume Making
	Costume Construction	Stage Wardrobe Management
		Developing Costume Design Skills
		Period Costume for the Stage

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

Technical Theatre

- CPD4b – Overseeing technical production work for performance
- G4a – Managing finance for a defined work activity
- G6a – Providing Leadership
- G11b – Developing and maintaining work relationships
- HS2 – Assessing risks
- HS5 – Controlling risks
- TP4b – Provide design information to enable drawings to be produced
- TP2.1a – Contribute to the interpretation of designs for costumes
- TP3.1b – Planning costume requirements for a production
- TP3.1c – Oversee the planning of costume requirements for a production
- TP5.1 – Sourcing costumes, materials and equipment
- TP7.1b – Lead on the making and finishing of costumes
- TP19c – Oversee the fitting and altering of costumes and accessories.

Essential resources

Learners will need access to a learning resource centre, library, internet, specialist video, film, exhibitions, galleries and museums for research. For the design element, a basic design studio environment will be required with the appropriate drawing/designing materials and storage facilities for finished work.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Learners should develop links with theatre, film and television studios that have costume design/construction departments. Most of the large producing theatre companies such as The Royal Shakespeare Company and The National Theatre offer work placements to learners – www.rsc.org.uk and www.nationaltheatre.org.uk. Costume designers and makers are usually willing to talk to learners about the processes involved in designing and constructing costume.

Both Skillset (the Sector Skills Council for the audio-visual industries) and the BBC have substantial sections of their websites dedicated to careers, including job descriptions – www.skillset.org/careers and www.bbc.co.uk/design/careers.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

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

Blumenthal E and Taymor J – *Julia Taymor: Playing With Fire, 3rd Edition* (Harry Abrams, 1999) ISBN 9780810930773

Campbell H – *Designing Patterns: A Fresh Approach to Pattern Cutting* (Nelson Thornes, 1980) ISBN 9780859504041

Huaixiang T – *Character Costume Figure Drawing: Step-by-Step Drawing Methods for Theatre Costume Designers* (Focal Press, 2004) ISBN 9780240805344

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

Peacock J – *Costume 1066 to the Present, Second Edition* (Thames & Hudson, 2006) ISBN 9780500286029

Peacock J – *The Complete Fashion Sourcebook: 2,000 Illustrations Charting 20th Century Fashion* (Thames & Hudson, 2006) ISBN 9780500512760

Peacock J – *Men's Fashion: The Complete Sourcebook* (Thames & Hudson, 1996) ISBN 9780500017258

Peacock J – *Fashion Accessories: The Complete 20th Century Sourcebook* (Thames & Hudson, 2000) ISBN 9780500510278

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

Tsu S, Ingham R and Covey L – *The Costume Technician's Handbook, 3rd Edition* (Greenwood Press, 2003) ISBN 9780325004778

Website

www.theatredesign.org.uk

British Society of Theatre Designers

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 ...
Independent enquirers	carrying out text/character analysis
Creative thinkers	generating costume design ideas
Reflective learners	evaluating the role of the costume designer within the production process and using experiences to inform future projects
Team workers	communicating costume design ideas to the director, the actors and the costume construction team collaborating with others to produce costume designs
Self-managers	showing initiative, commitment and perseverance when working towards the objective of producing costumes for a production
Effective participators	proposing practical ways forward, breaking these down into manageable steps while managing the production team.

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 ...
Independent enquirers	identifying questions to answer and problems to resolve whilst managing the costume construction process supporting conclusions, using reasoned evidence and arguments
Creative thinkers	trying out alternative ways of producing costume designs and following ideas through adapting costume design ideas as circumstances change
Reflective learners	inviting feedback on costume designs and dealing positively with praise, setbacks and criticism reviewing progress, acting on outcomes
Team workers	showing fairness and consideration to other members of the production team providing constructive support and feedback to other members of the production team
Self-managers	organising time and resources, prioritising actions responding positively to change, seeking advice and support when needed
Effective participators	discussing issues of concern, seeking resolution where needed trying to influence others, negotiating and balancing diverse views to reach workable solutions.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	carrying out historical and/or contemporary research
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	using spreadsheets to produce and manage a budget collating research using databases to store information on suppliers
Mathematics	
Understand routine and non-routine problems in a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations	managing the budget using measurement and calculation in the construction of costumes
Identify the situation or problem and the mathematical methods needed to tackle it	
Select and apply a range of skills to find solutions	
Use appropriate checking procedures and evaluate their effectiveness at each stage	
Interpret and communicate solutions to practical problems in familiar and unfamiliar routine contexts and situations	
Draw conclusions and provide mathematical justifications	
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	presenting costume design ideas to the director, the actors and the costume construction team liaising with the wardrobe management and costume construction team
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	reading text and producing appropriate text/character analysis carrying out historical and/or contemporary research
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	producing research finding producing notes from costume meetings producing a written account of the costume designer's role.