

Unit 93: Developing Costume Design

NQF Level 3: BTEC National

Guided learning hours: 60

Unit abstract

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 co-ordinating 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 the subtleties and status of the character, to describe the context and the period.

The costume designer has two main responsibilities. The first is a creative role, the development of costume design ideas through research, text analysis and discussions with the director; the second is a communication and 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.

Learners will understand how to analyse a text, to consider the practical and aesthetic demands of the text and to recognise the possibilities and limitations for the costume designer. Learners will develop skills to access and use a range of research sources to inform the development of costume design ideas. They will use these skills to develop final costume design ideas.

Finally, learners will be able to communicate the final costume design concept and costume design ideas to the director and the actors. They will also communicate the practical construction considerations of the final costume design ideas to the costume construction team. Learners will consider the qualities of different fabrics for costume design use and will develop budgeting skills to enable them to work to a costume design budget.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Understand costume requirements of a text
- 2 Know how to apply research skills to develop costume design ideas
- 3 Understand the practical demands of costume design
- 4 Be able to communicate costume design ideas.

Learners must provide design ideas for at least three costumes.

Unit content

1 Understand costume requirements of a text

Analyse text: group reading/discussion/interpretation; compiling text analysis; contextualising text; costume plot; historical context; social context; performance demands

Development of character: directors concept; character analysis; social status; historical context; motivation of character

2 Know how to apply research skills 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: eg historical, contextual sources, period, style, other productions

3 Understand the practical demands of costume design

Demands of costume: length of run; location of performance; laundering considerations; actors' movement; stature; body temperature during performance; health and safety

Materials: eg understand and be able to apply a knowledge of costume construction material; laundering; construction; flexibility; fireproof qualities; durability of fabrics; suitability to performance demand; decorative finishes; health and safety

4 Be able to communicate costume design ideas

Communication of design ideas: eg notes, sketches, guidance for construction methods, fabric swatches, costume design budget, sourcing suitable patterns, dyeing costumes, altering existing costumes, distressing costumes

Presentation of costume ideas: to the director; costume construction team; 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

Grading grid

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

Grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 analyse the general costume requirements of a text	M1 competently analyse the costume requirements of a text in some detail	D1 analyse the costume requirements of a text in full accurate detail
P2 provide rudimentary character analysis and a costume plot	M2 provide a considered character analysis and an appropriate costume plot	D2 provide a fully detailed thoughtful character analysis and costume plot
P3 use some research findings to inform the design of the costumes	M3 use the research findings creatively and effectively to inform the design of the costumes	D3 use the research findings in an innovative and wholly appropriate way to develop the creative design of the costumes
P4 anticipate and consider some practical performance requirements when designing costumes for performance	M4 competently consider most of the practical performance requirements when designing costumes for performance	D4 demonstrate a fully informed and wholly appropriate consideration of the practical requirements when designing costumes for performance
P5 design basic costumes for a performance	M5 design creative and considered costumes for a performance	D5 design a set of innovative, fully considered and wholly appropriate costumes for a performance
P6 demonstrate how to communicate general costume design ideas to a director, the actors and a costume construction team.	M6 demonstrate how to effectively communicate considered costume ideas to a director, the actors and a costume construction team.	D6 demonstrate how to communicate fully considered costume ideas with wholly detailed accuracy to a director, actors and a costume construction team.

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

The initial focus of this unit must be on the development of learners' costume design skills. The unit must teach and develop research approaches and design development skills through practical experiments with the focus of producing costume designs for a theoretical performance. It is advised that learners develop their research and design skills through small practical exercises to build confidence and to develop their own individual style which is important for a designer.

Learners will develop the ability to analyse a text to discover the performance requirements and to complete a detailed character analysis which identifies the role of the character and the contribution of the character to the plot. Learners will develop the ability to identify the costume requirements of a production in a costume plot.

Learners will need to understand the properties and behaviours of possible costume design materials to enable the confident application of materials in their costume designs. They will also have to develop a working understanding of costume construction or alteration skills.

Finally, learners will develop the skills to enable the clear communication of the final costume design ideas with an understanding of how to promote and sell their design ideas and to communicate clearly possible construction approaches.

Assessment

It is important that learners are able to experiment with approaches and gain frequent formative assessment feedback on their success from the tutor and from peers in the early stages of the unit to contribute towards the development of their individual design style.

The delivery system within the centre may suggest a number of smaller assignments focused on specific criteria, or a longer-term, more detailed assignment that covers all criteria areas. There is scope within this unit for integration with work carried on other units. In this case, assessors must be able to correctly identify the components belonging to this unit and assess in an appropriate manner.

Assessment evidence should include a variety of formats, for example sketches, swatches, finished costume/s, research notes.

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

This unit can be a stand-alone unit or can link to *Unit 20: Photographic Studio Techniques*, *Unit 89: Fashion Promotion*, *Unit 94: Basic Makeup Design and Application*, *Unit 95: Hair Styling and Dressing for Performers*, *Unit 111: Video Production for Interactive Media* and *Unit 118: Single Camera Techniques*.

Essential resources

Learners will need access to dry design space, designing materials, research resources and storage for completed design work.

Indicative reading for learners

Books

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

Blumenthal E and Taymor J – *Playing With Fire* (Harry Abrams, 1999)

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

Huaixiang T – *Character Costume Figure Drawing* (Focal Press, 2004)

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

Peacock J – *Costume 1066-1966* (Thames & Hudson, 1990)

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

Tsu S, Ingham R and Covey L – *The Costume Technician's Handbook* (Butterworth-Heinemann, 2004)

Key skills

Achievement of key skills is not a requirement of this qualification but it is encouraged. Suggestions of opportunities for the generation of Level 3 key skill evidence are given here. Tutors should check that learners have produced all the evidence required by part B of the key skills specifications when assessing this evidence. Learners may need to develop additional evidence elsewhere to fully meet the requirements of the key skills specifications.

Problem solving Level 3	
When learners are:	They should be able to develop the following key skills evidence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading text and producing character analysis • using appropriate research methods and sources. 	PS3.1 Explore a problem and identify different ways of tackling it.