

## Classroom Resources - Career Facts & Figures for: **FILM & TV COSTUME DESIGN**



### Definition:

**FIDM Film & TV Costume Design Program Creative Director Mary Kay Stolz** was recently quoted as defining a Film and/or Television Costume Designer as follows, “The Costume Designer is responsible for the look of all the costumes that become the character’s clothing, worn by the actors in a film, TV show, commercial, music video, webisode, etc. They help establish the mood of the film, define who the characters are, in what time they live, where they live, what they do, and how they change over the course of the script. Costume Design is part of the non-verbal narrative. Before anyone says a line of dialog, the costumes have informed the audience about the character and started the story telling process.”

“The major responsibilities of a Costume Designer on a large production are as follows:

- Create costume concepts and designs to fit the Director’s vision and the Producer’s budget
- For each character—provide appropriate research on costume styles, colors, and fabrics for the era and story location
- Sketch and swatch costume designs (Costume Illustrator may be used.)
- Work closely with the Costume Department crew including the Wardrobe Supervisor, costume makers and shoppers

- With the Wardrobe Supervisor--breakdown and study the scripts of the assigned project, determine which costumes will be made, which rented and which shopped, and manage the costume/ wardrobe budget
- Discuss concepts and ideas with the director, production designer, Director of Photography and the hair and make-up department manager
- Make sure that there are enough multiples (doubles, triples, etc.) to accommodate action, weather, and stunts that are in the script

“On smaller productions, the Costume Designer might also execute the tasks of...

- Renting or purchasing costumes
- Fitting, altering and adapting costumes
- Overseeing the aging or distressing of garments
- Keep a continuity book

**LearnDirect** <http://www.learndirect-advice.co.uk/helpwithyourcareer/jobprofiles/profiles/profile915/> describes the position as a costume designer...

“You would be responsible for the overall look of the clothes and costumes in theatre, film or television productions. As well as researching and designing costumes, you would lead a team that may include a design assistant, wardrobe supervisor, wardrobe assistants and costume and (*theater only*) wig makers.

## Professional Skills, Proficiencies, and Competencies Necessary

1. **Written Communication** – letters; memos; reports; presentations
2. **Analytical Ability** – organization, script analysis, complex problem solving, attention to detail orientation, conceptual and spatial design, color and trend research, resourceful
3. **Computing Ability** – software and hardware technology applications and trends
4. **Oral Communication** – active learning, active listening, critical thinking, public speaking
5. **Artistic Appreciation** – film history, print and non-print materials, art history
6. **Social Skills** – teamwork; coordination; motivation; negotiation; persuasion
7. **Systems Skills** - judgment and decision making, visioning, multi-tasking
8. **Resource Management Skills** - management of materials, people, and time

9. **Technical Skills** – costume design, illustration, sourcing, pattern making, sewing and alterations, patternmaking and construction techniques, fabric and trend knowledge, aging, sketching,. Hire others to perform such tasks as period historic costume cutting, beading, costume-related crafts such as millinery, mask and jewelry making
10. **Business Practices** – computer, budgeting, human resources, organizational, and time management
11. **Information Literacy/Research Skills** -- focused on extensive historical and contemporary time periods and fashion trends

## Film & TV Costume Design Career Options:

### Entry Level (up to 3 years)

Production Assistant

Assistant Stylist

Set Costumer

### Mid Level (4+ years)

Assistant Costume Designer

Key Costumer

Stylist

Costume Designer on a music video or low-budget independent feature

### Senior Level (10+ years)

Costume Designer

Costume Illustrator

Wardrobe Supervisor

## Median Annual Income:

**Annual Starting Salaries:** Varies tremendously according to the project and the locale. These salaries are impacted by Union Rates and Wardrobing & Styling guidelines.

## Professional Organizations & Association:

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)

- Motion Picture Costume Designers, Local #705
- Costume Designers Guild, Local #892 <http://www.costumedesignersguild.com/>

## Recommended Websites:

The following websites are useful to review when considering a career in the Film & TV Costume Design field:

The Costume Designers Guild

<http://www.costumedesignersguild.com/>

The Costume Society of America

<http://www.costumesocietyamerica.com/>

The Greater Bay Area Costumer's Guild

<http://www.gbacg.org/>

Internet Movie Database

<http://www.IMDB.com>

Student Film Makers

<http://www.studentfilmmakers.com>

The Textile Society

<http://www.textilesociety.org.uk/>

The United Kingdom Costume Society

<http://www.costumesociety.org.uk/>

Theatrical Wardrobe Union Local 764

<http://ia764.com/>

Greater Bay Area Costumers Guild Costume Related Organizations

<http://www.gbacg.org/orgs.htm>

Costume Connections

<http://www.costume-con.org/links.shtml>

## Additional Sources for Industry Information:

Career Directions Database

<http://www.careerdirections.ie/CDW3C/AccessDBAllCareerDetails.jsp?id=383>

Costume Design

<http://www.theatrelinks.com/costume.htm>

Costume Design Resources

<http://www.artslynx.org/theatre/descost.htm>

Costumer's Manifesto

<http://www.costumes.org/advice/1pages/jobdescription.htm>

Craigslist

<http://www.craigslist.org>

Hollywood Reporter

<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com>

National Endowment for the Arts

<http://www.nea.gov/>

Variety

<http://www.variety.com>

Wikipedia Encyclopedia

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costume\\_designer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costume_designer)

## Student Competitions - FIDM:

National Scholarship Competition: Five [5] one-year scholarships to attend **FIDM/The Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising. Scholarships** are available to High School students. The deadline is April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year.

- Fashion Designer of Tomorrow
- Fashion Merchandising Executive of Tomorrow
- Graphic Designer of Tomorrow
- Interior Designer of Tomorrow
- Visual Designer of Tomorrow