

Career Facts & Figures for: **THEATRE COSTUME DESIGN**



Defintion:

FIDM Theatre Costume Design Chairperson Alan Armstrong was recently quoted as saying, “A theatre costume designer is an apparel designer who designs fashion and accessories for various aspects of the entertainment industry, including the legitimate stage, television, film, video, and spectacle.”

LearnDirect describes the position as those “...responsible for the design, creation, acquiring and adapting of all costume items for a production. They design original costumes, oversee the purchase, hire and adaptation of ready-made outfits, and work with a team of technicians and craftspeople who will translate their sketches into wearable garments and look after the costumes once at the theater or on the set.”

ArtsAlive states, “costume designers create the look of each character by designing clothes and accessories the actors will wear in performance. Depending on their style and complexity, costumes may be made, bought, revamped out of existing stock or rented.”

Professional Skills, Proficiencies, and Competencies Necessary

1. **Written Communication** – letters, memos, reports, presentations
2. **Analytical Ability** – complex problem solving, detail orientation, conceptual, resourceful, spatial, script, design, color, and trend.

3. **Computing Ability** – software and hardware technology applications and trends
4. **Oral Communication** – active learning, active listening, critical thinking, public speaking
5. **Artistic Appreciation** – print and non-print items
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** – drawing and rendering, dyeing, patternmaking, sewing and alterations, period historic costume cutting, patternmaking and construction techniques, beading, aging, sketching, 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** – skills focused on extensive historical and contemporary time periods and fashion trends

Theatre Costume Design Career Options:

Entry Level (up to 3 years)

Assistant Wardrober

Costume Intern

Production Assistant

Wardrobe Intern

Mid Level (4+ years)

Assistant Costume Designer

Seamstress/ Tailor

Wardrober

Costumer

Stylist

Senior Level (10+ years)

Costume Designer

Head Wardrober

Head of Wardrobe

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:

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/>

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 ConNectiions

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

Additional Sources for Industry Information:

Costume Design

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

National Endowment for the Arts

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

Career Directions Database

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

Wikipedia Encyclopedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costume_designer

Costumer's Manifesto

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

Costume Design Resources

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

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 30th of each year.

- Fashion Designer of Tomorrow
- Fashion Merchandising Executive of Tomorrow
- Graphic Designer of Tomorrow
- Interior Designer of Tomorrow
- Visual Designer of Tomorrow
- Digital Media Artist of Tomorrow

See **For Your Students** (<http://educators.fidm.edu/educators/student-services/fidm-scholarships.html>) for additional student scholarship opportunities.