

Costume Designer Guidelines

The costume designer is responsible for the design of all costumes worn by the cast (and sometimes the crew) in a production. Costumes include clothing, undergarments (if seen or necessary for shape and structure), shoes, hats, wigs (or hairstyles), jewelry, accessories, and overgarments, and may incorporate such items as purses or parasols. In addition to this, the costume designer is responsible for any decisions regarding specialty makeup that may be incorporated into the design. All design work is done under the supervision of the faculty costume designer. All execution of these designs is done with the cooperation of the costume shop and the costume shop manager.

A costume designer begins by reading the script, creating a rough plot, and discussing the approach with the director, choreographer, and members of the design team. Knowledge of period and/or style comes from research. The costume designer is expected to attend all design and production meetings. Dates and times for these meetings can be found in the Theatre Arts Production Calendar. At these meetings the designer should be prepared to present information and discuss ideas.

Design Meetings

There are typically five design meetings scheduled. The design process cannot be limited to these five meetings. A designer should take every opportunity to meet with the director(s), faculty advisors, and members of the design team to discuss and clarify ideas. Please see the “Formalized Design Process” section above for details on the five specific meetings.

Also note, before meeting #4, you should take the opportunity to make an appointment and share the plot and sketches with the costume shop manager. It is important to confirm that your ideas and approach are compatible with the time and budget allotted to your show.

Costume Designer Responsibilities

1. The costume designer is responsible for assembling the BIBLE for his or her own show.
2. The costume designer is responsible for pulling clothes from costume storage for his or her own show and restocking the 'rejects' not used in production.
3. The costume designer is responsible for purchasing items for his or her own show.
4. The costume designer is expected to attend all fittings.
5. The costume designer is responsible for supplying any rehearsal costumes requested by the director or choreographer. Please check with the costume shop manager before these items are sent to rehearsal.
6. The costume designer is expected to work in the costume shop preparing fabric or trim and participating in the construction and/or alteration of costumes.
7. The costume designer is expected to consult with the costume shop every day. This is an opportunity to discuss any rehearsal notes, answer questions, confirm fitting schedules, and anticipate or solve problems.
8. The costume designer is expected to attend at least one run-through prior to first dress rehearsal. It is recommended to do so with the wardrobe supervisor so that places for changes and presets can be established. Attendance at more than one rehearsal is recommended. Attendance at a technical rehearsal is also recommended.
9. The costume designer is required to attend all dress rehearsals. At the end of each technical and dress rehearsal there will be a production meeting where the director will be able to give notes to the entire

production team. It is expected that you will participate in the completion of all notes in preparation for the next rehearsal.

10. The costume designer is expected to attend strike.

Acquiring the Costumes

Pulling

You can begin pulling costumes as soon as you have an approach to your production. Feel free to dress up the forms in clothing to assist you in the revision of sketches and final renderings. All costume storage areas are located in Dillingham Center. These areas are locked; keys are kept in the costume shop. Please do not bring food and drink into these areas. It is best to begin pulling clothing by category (dresses, suits, shoes, etc.) rather than by character. Any mess that you create you will be expected to clean up. Please try to leave stock cleaner than you found it.

A rack in the costume shop will be assigned to your show. Character dividers can be labeled and you can begin to store any items you have pulled.

Shopping

Please see the costume shop manager for complete information about purchasing. If you need transportation, shopping trips can be arranged. Manual checks are available for purchasing items in the area. They have a value of \$500 and must be accompanied by a receipt. Remember, Ithaca College is a tax exempt institution and does not pay sales tax. If sales tax is paid, it cannot be reimbursed. Tax exempt certificates are available from the coordinator of theatre operations to present to vendors when making manual check and cash purchases.

Catalogues are kept in the costume shop and items can be ordered from them or on-line. Remember to allow time for delivery.

Renting

All rental arrangements will be made with the costume shop. If at all possible, arrangements will be made for you to view these items prior to establishing any agreements.

Building

The decision to build costumes is made in cooperation with the faculty costume designer and the costume shop manager. A colored rendering is required, research that illustrates cut, drape and style is helpful, and patterns (contemporary or period) are welcomed. The costume designer is responsible for the purchase and preparation of all fabric and trim. The costume designer should be fully prepared to discuss the rendering with the costume shop manager prior to construction. You are welcome to participate in the construction of any or all costumes.

Fittings

As costume designer you are expected to be at all fittings.

Shop time

As costume designer it is expected that you will be an active member in the costume shop. As you work on your show you may add things to the 'to-do' list. Likewise, you will find things 'to-do' on this list. Remember—any mess you make, you will be expected to clean up.

Keys

As costume designer, you are entitled to a key to the costume shop. As a holder of a key, you will be responsible for anything that happens while you are in the shop. The costume shop policy requires that you do not work alone (bring a friend along even if they just sit and read) and that you do not work past 9:00 p.m.

Budget

As costume designer you are expected to work within your budget. You must work with the costume shop manager to maintain accurate, up-to-date budget information.

Specialty Costumes

The breakaway dress and the suit that lights up are examples of costumes that do tricks. You must first discuss the expectations for these tricky costumes with your director(s). Discuss options with the costume shop manager in order to find/buy/rent/build these items.

PLEASE REMEMBER: The design process is collaborative. Asking questions and sharing ideas is the key to a successful project.

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<https://www.ithaca.edu/hs/depts/theatre/handbook/crewheads/costumedesigner/>