

### **Overview of Role**

Assistant costume designers (ACD) work with the costume designer acting as their right-hand person on a production. ACDs break down the script in detail and compile extensive research for the designer as required. They discuss with the designer which costumes are to be made, purchased or hired. Working within a budget and to deadlines, they help to recruit a team and organise a schedule for the purchases and hires, ensuring the costumes are produced on time for fittings and subsequent shoot days. In some cases, and usually dependent on experience, an ACD will provide creative input for the costumes and may be required to conduct fittings. An ACD liaises with the on-set crew to ensure the designer's vision is presented as visualised.

### **Core Responsibilities:**

These core responsibilities are provided as a guide and are not exhaustive. The exact responsibilities in a particular job will vary depending on the scale / budget band / genre of the production.

#### **1. Pre-production**

- Interpret the script and assess the scale and type of production and its overall visual style as per the design brief
- Create a costume breakdown that confirms the number of costumes required for the characters in the production, and the date and time required
- Collect and collate information about the period or genre of the production
- Communicate the information collected and the design concept to the production team, other departments or individuals, using tools such as mood boards
- Be conversant with software and apps that are relevant to design for producing mood boards
- Identify the creative preferences of the designer
- Assess the creative and technical requirements needed to produce the costume designs, liaising with the appropriate department members
- Plan the costume design making process, identifying the timescale and management of process
- Determine how the story and timeline will affect the look of each character with the designer
- Identify action points in the storyline that call for special costume provision
- Assess the repeats and doubles that may be required when considering fabric or purchases
- Communicate with the supervisor about costs and making
- Maintain the schedule and keep the designer informed of diary commitments and appointments, flagging issues ahead of time
- In consultation with the designer, identify any special effects or stuntwear required, and assess the affect they may have upon the costumes
- Confirm skills and resources required to produce the design
- Monitor the design production progress against the schedule and budget, with the costume supervisor overseeing the process
- Research and select suppliers who are able to meet the creative, budgetary and logistical requirements in relation to creating the costume designs
- Assess areas available for temporary costume work and select the most suitable, considering location, access and resources

- Liaising with the costume supervisor and designer, identify appropriate costumes for purchase and rental, and plan the costume acquisition
- Provide suppliers with accurate and complete specifications for each item required
- Request samples of potential costumes and keep the supervisor up to date with all costs, potential and actual
- Schedule purchase or hiring time to ensure production schedules are met, liaising with costume supervisor
- Agree the terms, conditions and documentation for the supply and return of costumes, materials or accessories with the suppliers
- Record details of selected costumes, materials and accessories in a 'costume bible', including keeping sample books
- Arrange the receipt and log of costumes within a suitable storage area with the costume supervisor
- Check costumes against order descriptions and report discrepancies
- Identify and report lost or damaged goods and potential lost or damaged fees
- Return unwanted items, minimising financial loss to the department
- Produce and process complete and legible documents for the receipt and return of items
- Analyse and resolve problems related to costume resources, availability, quantity, or quality
- Follow the booking out process confirming numbers, sizes and delivery and return details
- Ensure agreed repairs, improvements, cleaning or alterations are carried out
- Oversee costume use and communicate potential damage fines and other financial implications to the costume supervisor
- Dress mannequins and present costumes in "show and tells"

## **2. Conduct costume fittings**

- Liaise and arrange convenient fitting times in line with the production schedule and designer's diary
- Line up and prepare if required, the selected costumes and accessories
- Take comprehensive measurements of the performers
- Kit out the fitting room or area with all the necessary tools, including note taking and measurement sheets
- Assist with the fitting in accordance with fitting room etiquette and procedures
- Make sure clear and informative photographs are taken with the best lighting possible
- Digitally present fitting photos and file all pictures and notes in a fitting / costume bible
- Communicate with the performers in a polite, sensitive and professional manner
- Assess requirements and recognise faults in garments make, fit, and finish. Take notes, label all alterations clearly with the date required for communication with workroom
- Discuss the alterations required and the timescale to the person(s) carrying out the alteration work
- Consider any stunt rigging or special effects when fitting
- Prepare costumes for alternations or re-make
- Use a labelling system that all the team are familiar with
- Check costumes for correct fit following alterations

## **3. Prepare costumes for shooting**

- Clarify and agree the costume requirements and production schedule

- Work with the head cutter or workroom lead and the supervisor to ensure that crew are on hand, ordered materials have arrived and all makes and alterations are ready for fitting or filming
- Attend production meetings and flag up costume issues, taking notes of anything that will impact the costume department
- Select and prepare the costumes and accessories in discussion with the designer, and confirm all are correct and ready to work
- Inform the relevant person immediately when costumes are not available or in an unacceptable condition
- Label costumes appropriately for ease of other crew's understanding
- Ensure costumes are stored properly
- Pack and prepare costumes for safe and secure transfer under supervisor's direction when required
- Provide the on-set team with fitting pictures and notes

#### **4. Assist with costumes on set**

- Check daily call sheet, liaise with the second assistant director (2<sup>nd</sup> AD) to confirm running order and any specific requirements or issues
- Establish a new costume on set when required
- Assist the standby with the establishment of any new costume for dressing performers and advise on how to put on and wear the costume if required
- Liaise with on-set team, checking that they have everything they need, they are clear about what is required with each costume, and help to solve any issues that may arise
- Follow on-set etiquette including rules on the use of mobile phones or other modes of communication, and sensitivity of the scene
- Liaise with other departments that may impact on new costumes, such as hair and make-up, stunts and props

#### **5. Costume continuity**

- Review the script, schedule, design brief and costume breakdown to develop a costume continuity plan
- Agree changes when alterations are required as a result of unscripted events during the shoot
- Ensure changes are approved and are made in accordance with the script
- Check completed costume continuity records, ensuring they are current, accurate and accessible

#### **6. Costume maintenance**

- Liaise with on-set team of any ongoing requirements, with clear labelling of instructions for work required, such as cleaning, repair, or further break down
- Ensure work is carried out and delivered back to the on-set team
- Check terms of agreement if using a hire company, and service costumes accordingly, liaising with the costume supervisor
- Inform the supervisor if any costumes are damaged during servicing
- Re-label serviced costumes with relevant information
- Store serviced items and ensure that they are readily available to meet production requirements

#### **Role Specific Skills:**

- Script breakdown and communication of costume requirements
- Costume design and creation as per design expectations

- Keeping clear and accessible records of the costumes being created
- Liaise with other departments, for example, ADs, stunts, hair and make-up, or props, to discuss continuity and any changes to the design
- Working with costume trainees to ensure they have a fulfilling and complete experience of working in various positions within the department

### **Other / Transferable Skills:**

- Communication: liaising clearly with cast, crew and colleagues regarding the costumes and keeping up to date information
- Leadership and management: as a senior member of the team you are expected to lead by example. This includes upholding ethics and demonstrating respect when dealing with others and supporting and encouraging junior members of the team
- Teamworking: collaboration within own and with other departments such as hair and make-up and props
- Problem-solving: contingency planning and resolving issues with supplies and changes so that production remains on schedule
- Negotiation: balancing the various needs and working practices of all on the production and finding the way to collaborate effectively
- Research and analytical: planning practical requirements against brief breakdown and production vision

### **Attributes:**

- Resilience and enthusiasm: adapt positively to changing work priorities and patterns, ensuring deadlines continue to be met. Proactive and explores new ideas and non-standard ways of working which will enhance and deliver the best results for the production
- Ethics and integrity: honest and principled in all of their actions and interactions. Respectful and inclusive of others, and meets the ethical requirements of their profession
- Flexibility: willing to both listen and learn and to accept changing priorities and working requirements and has the flexibility to maintain high standards in a changing production environment