

## Costume Shop Fittings

In order to achieve the costumes created by the design students for the productions/outcomes in the Department of Theatre, fittings are carried out at the costume shop during each semester.

These fittings are supervised by the Head of the Costume shop and involve the design students, the costume shop assistants and the performers participating in each production.

The fitting process involves body measurement appointments as well as “try-on” sessions.

Fittings are a sensitive process, which demand professionalism, maturity and privacy to ensure that all students feel welcome and safe.

The following are the guidelines and expectations for all parties involved in a fitting:

### Design Students

In preparation for the fittings, the student designers will create a schedule, along with the head of the costume shop, and a student stage manager. The stage manager will then distribute/email the schedule to the performers to sign up for a specific date and time. Fittings take approximately 30-45 minutes. To ensure the safety and comfort of all the students, as well as the integrity of the costumes, all fittings are carried out in the costume shop (GM 540) under the supervision of the Head of Costume shop.

Design teams are expected to arrive prior to the scheduled fitting time. It is the design team’s responsibility to have all wardrobe items ready for the performer prior to their fitting. This includes any accessories or undergarments that may be needed for a costume.

Designers are responsible for searching and creating items that ensure the safety and comfort of each performer. Designers should attend rehearsals as often as possible. They should listen to the performer’s requests, assure their comfort level when wearing their costumes and be empathetic to any body image issues they may have. Additionally, designers should avoid pressuring performers into wearing garments they feel or look uncomfortable in. Designers can build trust by developing a dialogue with the performer about their character and their movements in order to choose the appropriate garments.

Designers should be sensitive to performers’ position and avoid speaking about size or a performer’s shape. *It is very important that designers use the body measurement sheets of each performer to accurately pull items for fittings and avoid garments or shoes that do not fit properly.*

Designers are expected to keep proper photographic documentation of the fitting process so that they can share their conclusions with the director and design supervisor for design approval. Once the design decisions have been made, all unrelated photographs should be destroyed/deleted from files.

### **Costume Shop Assistants** (This includes casual staff, and any students involved in the production)

It is the function of the costume shop assistants to facilitate fittings by helping designers prepare, take notes or measurements, and assist in tidying up.

Costume shop assistants are present at a fitting when asked. Otherwise, they should avoid walking into the dressing room area during a fitting as it can be a sensitive and vulnerable moment for the performer.

Costume shop assistants should avoid making any comments about the performers' bodies and measurements.

When carrying out body measurements, the assistants should avoid touching the performers' bodies as much as possible. When measuring sensitive areas such as chest and hips, assistants should let the performer know that they are about to do so and be attentive to expressions of discomfort with the process. Similarly, if they are asked to help dress/un-dress a performer they should avoid touching the performers' bodies as much as possible.

### **Performers/Acting Students**

Creating the wardrobe for a theatre production is an intensive and time sensitive process; therefore, performers are expected to sign up for a fitting as soon as they can so that the design team can complete the costumes on schedule.

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Performers should arrive on time for the scheduled fitting. If you are going to be more than 5 minutes late to your fitting, please call the costume shop (514) 848-2424 ext 4735 at least 30 minutes in advance. If you are more than 10 minutes late, your fitting may be rescheduled.

Any late and/or missed fittings will be reported to the director and Chair of the Department. If you need to change the fitting date, you are expected to contact the stage manager and designer as soon as possible and at the latest **24 hours in advance** to reschedule.

Performers should carry themselves with professionalism during a fitting. This means having a polite and open attitude towards the designers' vision, treating the costumes and costume shop crew with respect, not inviting friends to a fitting, and avoid walking outside the fittings area in undergarments or while they are getting changed.

Performers should be aware that during the fittings a small group of people will be working very near their bodies and as such they should be conscious of personal hygiene and wear a light deodorant.

Performers should never use a heavy white anti-perspirant, as it may stain the costumes. Removable dress shields can be added to costumes upon request. Please avoid wearing overpowering perfumes or colognes.

Performers should provide appropriate undergarments for their fittings. For example: performers should wear briefs or boxer briefs (no boxer shorts) and an undershirt or wear full coverage underwear (avoid thongs) as well as a correctly sized bra or sports bra without extreme padding. Please note that appropriate undergarments apply to all genders.

Performers should not alter or change any costume pieces in any way. Any requests for changes should be mentioned to the designer and head of the costume shop.

It is very important that performers speak up and are honest about their comfort level with a costume. If there is a problem, they should state it clearly and respectfully to the stage manager or to the design team, so that the design team and costume assistants can address it.

The costume shop is a safe and judgement-free environment for all students, and although we work towards realizing the vision of the designers and director, it is very important that we collaborate within the boundaries of all performers. It is also important that the performers give their feedback in a timely manner and not wait until the costume team is finalizing the wardrobe to bring up major issues.

If a performer feels uncomfortable with the fitting process they should contact the designer, the stage manager, faculty member or head of the costume shop prior to the fitting with any special requests.

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