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11/28/2020

Career Kit: Fashion Industry Careers

Costume designers manage the costumes of a production. The type of production has a wide range, including, but not limited to: television, film, stage, and theater. Not only are they in charge of designing costumes to be worn by actors and performers, they oversee the creating and ordering needed costumes. Sometimes it needs to be an original work, sometimes it needs to be existing garments.

Costume designers require heavy research and history skills. Whether it is for historical fiction or science fiction, the costume designer needs the history knowledge of clothing, whether they are replicating or creating something new. Other needed skills include attention to detail, accuracy, authenticity, sketching, pattern making, innovation, and improvisation. Also, in many cases, the costume designer is the head the costume department, so leadership, management, and organizational skills are needed there.

According to an article on the Backstage website, the average annual salary of costume designers is \$86,110. They are also represented by the Costume Designer's Guild, which guarantees minimum rates when they work on union productions. Where a costume designer works depends on where the productions is.

There does not seem to be any set path in becoming a costume designer. In many cases, a costume designer starts as part of the costuming team then works to climb the hierarchy ladder. Such positions include seamstresses, costume assistants, wardrobe trainees and supervisors.

No degree or specific credentials are required to become a costume designer. Many either enroll in a design school or study theater, fashion design, or graphic design in college.

Sources:

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/byui/reader.action?docID=1876091&ppg=8#>

<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/costume-designer-job-description-info-backstage-70396/>

A pattern maker, or cutter, creates patterns from the initial drawings and specifications. Working with design teams or a single designer is essential. They make the patterns that will be used to produce many garments. Patterns can be drafted on paper or by using computer aided drafting (CAD) tools.

Attention to detail and accuracy are vital skills to have. Pattern makers need to be able to understand and learn new pattern-making software to remain competent in the work field. In most cases, there will be deadlines due for patterns, so being able to work under pressure is also a required skill.

A college degree is not required to be a pattern maker. Training in a fashion or technical production related course can be enough to get started in an entry level position. Those that have a college degree study areas like fashion, designing, art, textiles, pattern cutting and grading, production, or other related fields.

According to the Owl Guru website, the average salary of a fabric pattern maker is \$49,180. The average hourly wage is \$24. The salary for pattern maker with almost no experience is likely to be between \$23,360 and \$29,990. For those considered to have a considerable amount of experience, the salary tends to be over \$65,230. Having a degree is a factor that can increase salary.

Currently, the top five states in America with the highest salaries are, in order: New York, California, Massachusetts, Washington, and Maryland. All of these states have major businesses in the fashion industry. It is possible to work remotely as a pattern maker. Besides working for a company, pattern makers can also be free lancers.

For people that like hands-on work, patternmaking is a suitable job. It also is compatible for those valuing bonds with workers and customers in friendly, non-competitive work place. However, salary is considered below average and the demand is not seeing any incline.

Sources:

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/byui/reader.action?docID=1876091&ppg=51>

<https://www.owlguru.com/career/fabric-and-apparel-patternmakers/>