

Costume Production and Fabrication Studio Recommended Practices The Department of Theatre and Dance, the University of Texas at Austin

The Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Texas at Austin has adopted the following Costume Production and Fabrication Studio recommended practices in alignment with evolving industry recommended practices and standards for theatre training and intimacy.

As an educational institution, please consider that you may encounter someone: an actor, a designer, a costume technician, a director, etc., who may be doing something for the first time. These guidelines are a commitment to mutual respect designed to help facilitate safety and clarity of communication that lead to a positive learning experience for everyone involved. With that in mind, we invite everyone to come prepared to communicate through challenges so that we may all learn and grow if mistakes happen.

Costume Fittings:

Performers shall always be given privacy when changing or removing personal clothing or garments provided by the Costume Production and Fabrication Studio. Costume fittings are conducted in semi-private areas of the Costume Production and Fabrication Studio that include a curtained private changing area and involve:

- Open and continuous communication, beginning with studio and/or production staff introducing their role and how they will be involved in the fitting.
- Sharing and acknowledging personal boundaries before fittings begin. For example asking, Do you have any boundaries I should be aware of before we begin today? *or* I'd like to share my boundaries today before we get started.
- Private removal of personal clothing down to undergarments. For the most efficient fitting experience and for the comfort of everyone involved, performers are asked to wear opaque, neutral-tone, full-coverage undergarments to all fittings.
- Wearing bike shorts and a t-shirt provided by the Costume Studio during fittings.
- Wearing a robe if a costume requires specialty undergarments.
- The fitting of garments and accessories on the body.
- Physical touch to adjust fit to designer specification.
- Interaction, including physical touch, by various personnel, including the draper, designer, show manager, and advisors.
- The photographing or recording of fittings for documentation and reference. Actors will not be photographed in undergarments; and fitting photos and recordings are never displayed. Fitting and measurement photos are saved to the UT Box, Costume Production folder for the production team to refer to as they work on the show. The UT Box Costume Production folder is not public.
- Extended time in measurement and/or costume fittings for the educational benefit of student designers and technicians.

Wig Fittings:

All wig fittings are conducted in semi-private areas of the Costume Production and Fabrication Studio and involve:

- Open and continuous communication, beginning with studio and/or production staff introducing their role and how they will be involved in the fitting.
- Sharing and acknowledging personal boundaries before fittings begin. For example asking, Do you have any boundaries I should be aware of before we begin today? *or* I'd like to share my boundaries today before we get started.
- Discussion of hair color, length, and style.
- Touching of the head and hair to demonstrate styles or to prepare for a wig cap and wig fitting.
- Touching of the skin (face and body) for the application and demonstration of the application of makeup designs
- Physical touch to adjust fit and/or application to designer specification.
- The photographing or recording of the fitting for costume studio production documentation and reference. Fitting and measurement photos are saved to the UT Box, Costume Production folder for the production team to refer to as they work on the show. The UT Box, Costume Production folder is not public.
- Interaction, including physical touch, by various personnel, including the Wig/Hair/Makeup specialist, designer, show manager, and advisors.
- Extended time in a wig, hairstyle, and/or makeup fittings for the educational benefit of student designers and technicians.

Self Advocacy Tools:

Self-advocacy tools are designed to help create a culture of consent and empower everyone involved in the process; please use them for the benefit of everyone's growth and safety. It's much easier to accommodate, adapt, learn from missteps or grow our practice if we know about concerns early. Students, advisors, and studio personnel have the following tools available to them in all fittings:

- Saying dept self-care cue or exit words – “**tapping out**,” to hold or step out of a moment.
- Request a break and/or water.
- Request a reduction in the number of people in the room.
- Request that the curtain to the fitting area be opened or closed.
- Request help or additional privacy for dressing or undressing.
- Request that the appropriate faculty or staff member make the adjustments rather than a student draper.
- Ask questions for clarification and share concerns.
- Discuss concerns with the Intimacy Director

Measuring Fittings:

Measuring fittings for costumes happen separately from costume fittings, and require accuracy. This process involves physical contact with the measuring tape over clothing and minimal touch from the measurer. After boundaries are established the measurer will announce where they are measuring before they make contact with the performer's body, and may ask the performer for assistance in holding the measuring tape near the groin or other areas of high sensitivity. The measurer will verbally relay the measurements to another costume studio staff member for recording, however, studio staff will ask permission to do so before the process begins. Performers may request the measurer both take the measurements and record the numbers without verbalizing them. Photos taken during measuring fittings are stored in the UT Box Costume Production Measurements folder until the student performer graduates. Students and studio personnel have the same tools available during measurements as listed above.

Communication Recommended Practices

In production, if you have a concern regarding theatrical intimacy, instructional touch, or costume studio fitting practices, speak with a faculty or staff member associated with the production area (i.e., Costume Production Director, Stage Management Advisor, Academic Production Manager, Department Chair, etc.) and/or the Resident Intimacy Director, Andy Grapko (andrea.grapko@austin.utexas.edu). Intimacy concerns should not be reported to undergraduate or graduate students.

Student Productions:

All student productions associated with the Department of Theatre and Dance that do not directly involve the Costume Production and Fabrication Studio in the production process should also strive to meet the above recommended practices.

*This policy was created based on content originally created by Theatrical Intimacy Education.