

Role Outline: Costume Production Work placement

Responsible to:	Department HOD
Liaises with:	Costume Workroom, Costume Buyers, Costume Administrator, Textile Studio, Costume Props
Guidance from:	Workforce Development Advisor, Head of Costume production, Safety Risk Management Team

The National Theatre

The National Theatre is central to the creative life of the country. In its three theatres on the South Bank in London it presents up to 25 new shows a year and productions also play in the West End and on tour. It broadcasts to cinemas worldwide through National Theatre Live, streams plays free to UK schools and produces a wealth of digital content about theatre.

Through an extensive programme of amplifying activities – platform performances, backstage tours, publications, exhibitions and outdoor events – it recognises that theatre doesn't begin and end with the rise and fall of the curtain.

Costume Production Department

The Costume Production Department at the National Theatre comprises of the Costume Workroom, Textile Studio, Costume Props, Costume Supervising and Costume/Stock Buying. Our work is intrinsically linked to that of the Running Wardrobe Department, utilizing shared workspaces on the 4th and 5th floors as well as in each of the Theatre's designated wardrobes. We also work alongside the offsite Hire and Transport department, an invaluable resource and have a close relationship with WH&M. The department is supported by a Costume and WH&M Office Manager who works with the HODs to ensure the creative teams are supported administratively. The nature of the work is fast paced and constantly varied, and the staff are specialised and experienced.

The Placement

A placement within the Costume Production department lasts up to two weeks (sometimes longer by arrangement) and will provide the opportunity to develop skills to enhance your existing training. As the nature of costume work is constantly varied, no guarantees can be given as to specific techniques or skills you will encounter at the time of the placement however in order to gain the most from your experience we do ask you to select from the area you want to work in and that it be relevant to your skill base. While here you will be able to gain an accurate view of our work and experience a busy working Costume Department.

If you have a specific area of the costume department that interests you, please let us know and we will try to accommodate.

Likely Requirements (as relevant to the area applied for)

- To be currently be on a relevant HE course for the area chosen. (Costume making/ design/ supervising/ Textile effect etc) or equivalent experience.
- Be willing to work as part of a team
- Interest in theatre costume
- Able to work with all types of people and respond to instruction
- The ability to understand, interpret and realise creative requirements

The following will be required as relevant to the area applied for:

- Have a basic knowledge of modern and period costume construction and terminology- All areas
- Be competent in the use of sewing machines and over-lockers - Costume Workroom
- Have a basic knowledge of different stitches and their application- Costume Workroom
- Have some experience of domestic and industrial pressing and steaming equipment - Costume Workroom
- Have the relevant basic dyeing and breaking down skills. - Textile Studio
- Have a good interest in textile affects and costume breakdown.- Textile Studio
- Have an interest and knowledge in the properties and uses of different fabrics. -All areas
- Have some knowledge of London shopping areas and be confident to navigate oneself around the city. - Costume Supervision/ Buying
- Good working knowledge of computers; using Word and Excel. - Costume Supervision/ Buying.
- To be aware the role may require considerable shopping and carrying of heavy items. - Costume Supervision/ Buying.

Application process

1. Work placements are advertised on the NT website and applicants are invited to complete an online application form.
2. Applicants will either be accepted on the merit of their application form or for some departments will be invited in for a workshop or informal interview. This will help us to assess your suitability for a particular placement.
3. Successful applicants will then be invited for a work placement with us for a period of up to two weeks in most cases, Costume Supervision/ Buying could be over a longer period.

Ideal Preparatory Qualifications & Experience

1. To currently be in the 2nd or 3rd year of a relevant HE course for the area chosen or equivalent relevant experience.

Please include photographs of your work in your covering letter as well your availability (as much as possible) until March 2026.

Applications should be made using online system.

You will need to answer a few questions about you and upload a CV and covering letter (which does not have to be in letter form, it can be a supporting document, with links or photographs if preferred.) You can upload a separate portfolio if needed. Guidance on content is available on our website.

Placements will be paid receipted travel and food expenses (in line with policy). All placements to take place between May 2025 – March 2026.

(Owing to the large quantity of applications expected it is not possible to offer all applicants a placement within our theatre, please allow time for us to review your applications)