

Sewing & Dressmaking Skills Assessment Guidelines

Our Sewing and Dressmaking Workshops and Courses are carefully worked out and designed to cover a range of skill levels. To ensure the best possible learning experience, it is important that all of our clients join our workshops at the right level, so we have put together some guidelines which will help to guide you towards the right TBR workshops for your skills.

These guidelines are to help identify skill levels for TBR workshops ONLY - please read through all levels to enable an accurate as possible placement for your skill level. If you feel you fall "in between" levels, we advise you place yourself in the lower of the two levels you fall between, to be sure you are taught at a level comfortable for you.

NB - You do not need to match every criteria within a level - a majority match is enough to indicate the correct level

Level 1

You have never used a sewing machine before

You have used a sewing machine before but are very out of practice / not confident / do not know what all the knobs and dials do

You struggle to keep your stitching straight

You only know how to use the straight stitch on your machine

You don't know how to negotiate stitching corners and curves

Level 2

You have mastered the basic controls of your sewing machine, can fill a bobbin, and thread both top and bottom threads without help

You can generally reliably sew in a straight line, and know how to use the zigzag function, and change stitch width and length

Level 3

You are confident and comfortable in controlling your machine, can start and stop stitching where required with generally reliable accuracy

You have never used a commercial pattern before and/or you have never done any dressmaking before

You have used a commercial pattern before but struggled with it / did not really understand it / it was a long time ago and you've mostly forgotten

You have done some dressmaking before but didn't really understand what you were doing / were not confident you were doing it right / never managed to finish anything / it went a bit wrong!

Level 4

You are confident and accurate with your machine sewing

You have at least practiced putting in zips and making machine buttonholes, even if not in a dressmaking context

You have successfully done some simple dressmaking before

You have used a commercial pattern before and understand the basics of how to use them

You have done some moderately complex dressmaking before but could not get anything to fit correctly

Level 5

You are confident, accurate and speedy with your machine sewing

You are able to diagnose and fix common non mechanical machine problems such as bad tension and incorrect threading

You have sewn with at least a few different kinds of fabrics

You know how to set in a sleeve or have at least attempted to set in a sleeve before

You have used commercial patterns and know how to make basic alterations to the fabric pieces of the pattern during construction to achieve a better fit

You understand the majority of dressmaking terminology (facings, darts, pleats, tucks, interlining, lining etc)

You have attempted curved seams before with varying degrees of success

You would like to experiment with deviating from commercial pattern designs through altering shapings or combining aspects of two or more patterns