



# Quality Standards Checklist for Sewing Competitions

This checklist can help define quality standards required when entering or judging competitions.

Identified standards apply to almost all construction techniques. Many techniques can produce the same result. Impartial evaluation is not based on method used, **but on the end result.**

The construction techniques used should be compatible with the fabric type, style and purpose of the garment.

**Self evaluation** of construction skill is most important when entering garments into any competition.

## GENERAL APPEARANCE

- Garment must be wearable and suitable for purpose
- Overall neatness and well pressed garment
- Style and fabric compatible
- Fabrics directional design, nap or flowers or design placement must be in one direction
- Stripes and plaids matching unless as a design feature
- Notions compatible with colour, fibre, fabric weight and design
- All construction markings and basting removed
- Presented free from stains, watermarks and visible fabric markings

## DESIGN AND CREATIVITY

- The garment or article should have visual impact. This can be achieved with fabric, embellishments colour combinations or simply design
- Remember good design principles
- One focal point **ONLY**, with other areas enhancing the design
- Creativity is important. Dare to be different. Be creative in your design with colour, texture, technique and different finishes.

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## EMBELLISHMENTS

- Embellishments enhance a design but can also overpower and destroy the concept. When choosing to embellish remember the embellishment must.....
- be to scale with the garment
- not distort the fit or hang of the garment
- have the same laundry capabilities as the garment.....there are exceptions
- have no visible threads or loose beads
- be securely attached
- no puckers or twists

## FITTING

- Adequate ease for comfort
- Crosswise grain, lines parallel to floor,
- Lengthwise grain, perpendicular to the floor
- Bias cut garments not twisting
- Balance; garment hangs evenly from the body
- Free from wrinkles and twists
- Dart positions and length even, tapered and smooth

## PHOTOGRAPHY

If garments have to be photographed prior to, or be presented with, the entry .....

- Garments are not photographed in the shade and so obscure design and colour of garment
- Full front and full back pictures taken...not just shoulders
- Use an interesting background but not one that detracts from the garment, use props e.g. chair, stairs
- Assume interesting poses to enhance a particular feature i.e. flare of skirt or sleeve
- Ensure no straps or other articles such as linings are showing
- Take many photos and only use the BEST

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## STITCHED BUTTONHOLES

- Even in length, appropriate length for button, evenly spaced
- Placed with the grain of the fabric
- Thread matching or contrast according to design
- Stitching smooth and even
- Interfacing used and appropriate for fabric and design
- Placed in the area of most strain
- Overlap wide enough to cover buttons
- Correct button size for garment style unless used as a feature (with appropriate closing)
- Correct placement on cuffs, waistbands
- Right side for ladies, left side for gents

## BOUND BUTTONHOLES

- Rectangle had perfect square corners, on grain and correct length
- Ideal width, 6mm wide for lips, lips meeting in the centre
- Facing secure and neat on back of buttonhole or larger worked buttonhole in correct position
- All buttonholes even length and width, wide enough to accommodate buttons
- Pressed well
- If decorative, (striped lips, diagonal placement, vertical placement) ensure all are even length, positioned evenly with even lips and matching stripes or checks

## BUTTONS

- Have a purpose, functional or decorative
- Secure fastening, neat back of fastening matching thread or contrast
- Has worked shank for ease of movement
- Properly aligned button to buttonholes
- Suitable for fabric type and colour matching or contrast
- Appropriate for design, dressy, sporty or heavy weight, covered or textured

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## COLLARS

- Top stitching even width from edge, stitch length appropriate for fabric, corners with even points
- Colour of thread matching or suitable for design (top stitching thread for contrast)
- No bulkiness, seams graded and notched
- Top collar visible with built in roll to prevent under-collar showing
- Interfacing appropriate for design and fabric, maintains shape
- No impressions from seam allowances, pressed well
- Position in relation to design, even and balanced, points same length, curves even
- Collar stand even width

## CUFFS

- Flat, smooth and even width
- Interfacing suitable for design and fabric, maintains shape provides stability for shape and size
- Even width, built in roll to prevent facing (underside) showing
- Button and buttonhole placement appropriate for style, fabric and purpose
- Top stitching even and secure

## DARTS

- Tapered and smooth, finish with a point to conform with body shape
- Horizontal darts press down, vertical darts pressed towards centre front or centre back, bulky darts slashed and pressed open
- Ends of darts securely fastened
- Wide darts in sheer fabric can be reduced in size either by overlocking or hand overcasting
- Darts in lace, use a lace join rather than conventional dart-sewing method
- Stitching line smooth, free from puckers or bubbles. (even length legs of dart )

## FACINGS

- Flat, smooth fitting, no strains or seams not matching
- Suitable interfacing and weight appropriate for fabric used
- Enclosed seam, graded, notched to prevent pulling.
- Edge finish suitable, hand or machine finished
- Not visible from right side of garment. Edge stitching, even width from edge.
- Secured at seams, darts or other appropriate positions
- Self fabric or other suitable fabric for purpose
- Pressed well

## INTERFACING (FUSING)

- Interfacings are secure, no bubbles (either too much pressing or too much steam)
- Interfacing weight suitable for purpose
- Does not change hand, (weight) texture or colour of fabric
- Before construction ensure all interfacing is fused to fabric....too late after

## FASTENINGS

- Hooks and eyes, press studs
- Suitable for purpose. Hooks and worked eyes for dresses, hooks end metal eyes for costumes and heavier type garments, hooks and bars for skirts / pants
- Reinforced on wrong side
- Positioned in appropriate place and aligned as a set
- Hooks placed 3mm from edge of overlap so it will be secure, not seen and lie flat
- Press studs, suitable for purpose. Cover large press studs with fabric if occasionally seen on unsecured garment. Cover with circle of lining, silk organza, matching colour or if desperate, paint with nail varnish.....prior to attachment.
- Use fur hooks for bulky garments, insert eye into facing seam or make a slit in fabric to insert and secure
- Secure press studs with minimum of four stitched per space with matching thread
- For a couture finish on hooks and eyes, cover eye and hook with blanket stitches using matching thread

## FINISHINGS

- Garment finishing is crucial to the overall appearance of garment. Seam finishing, hem finishes and fastenings
- Overlocking requires test pieces to establish stitch width, colour and tension. Overlocking is not suitable for all garments. Hong Kong binds, hand overcasting, French seams, flat felled seams and enclosed seams can be used on different fabrics and garments
- Unlined heavier fabrics, Hong Kong binds suitable. Ensure binds are narrow, too wide unsightly
- French seams on sheers and fine fabrics
- Colour matching of overlocking thread crucial. Choose several colours if floral or multi coloured fabric TEST first
- Finishing will make or break a garment

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## GATHERS, PLEATS AND TUCKS

- Gathers are uniform and evenly distributed
- Fullness appropriate for fabric and garment style
- Positioned evenly, not pressed flat..... gathers are not pleats
- Tucks pressed in one direction, hang straight with even fullness. No pin or basting marks visible
- Pleats stitched down, pressed flat or partial pressing
- Even width pleats, placed suitably and for purpose on garment
- Tuck ends tied off, no visible back tack
- Twin needle tucks, no twists or puckers, even tension

## HEMS

- Width appropriate for fabric, garment style
- Finishing ....hand or machine
- Machine finished acceptable for casual garments, some narrow hems on evening wear and linings
- Hand sewn hems for more delicate fabrics and eveningwear
- A badly sewn hand hem is NOT GOOD!
- A FINE NEEDLE, #10 OR #9 CREWEL NEEDLE is ideal for hand hemming
- Use short thread lengths and thread from needle from reel then cut length. This prevents tangles
- Hemming types; hand sewn..... hemming into a fold of fabric, a slip hem, hand sewn stitches into overlocking and garment, a blind hem, hand sewn hem into a pin tuck a Mantu finish. Hand sewing must be evenly spaced and secure, inconspicuous from front of garment
- Seams are matching
- Flat and smooth, no hem impressions from pressing
- No bulk visible
- Fullness controlled by easing or shrinking. Free from tucks and pleats.
- General rule..... Narrow hems machined and wider hems hand or machine finished using suitable stitch.....blind hemming
- Narrow hand rolled hems on fine fabric

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## LININGS

- Used to hide inner construction of garment.
- Loose linings in coats or jackets below fingertip length.
- Sewn in linings on jackets and tops.
- Loose linings on long garments and skirts.
- Linings may be secured to prevent movement by inserting a bar tack at the hem of lining and garment, between the hem and garment about 1cm long.
- Suitable lining weight for fabric, colour choice coordinated. Full lining length a better choice
- Laundering capabilities of the lining, same as garment
- Neatened seams, seam lines aligned
- Ease fold on jacket hems, sleeve and an ease pleat at CB of jacket
- Fits smoothly inside garment
- Ensure no static problems between garment, lining and wearer
- Use good quality lining used

## PLACKETS

- Suitable for garment design and purpose
- Flat smooth and even on length and shape
- No bulk evident
- Sits well on garment, no pulling or twisting
- Well pressed
- Size, wide enough for ease of use
- Contrast or matching fabric and thread, coordinated well

## POCKETS

### Patch pocket

- Flat, pressed well, even stitching, positioned correctly on garment / body. Lined or unlined
- Mitred corners Cut on grain or on bias for effect. Seam allowances inconspicuous

### In Seam pocket

- Not visible, lies flat, no gap or lining visible. Fabric patch on bag used if necessary
- Reinforced edge to prevent stretching

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### Bound Pocket

- Flat and smooth, pressed well. No impressions visible on front
- Lips even, on bound pocket. Corners square, even width and length. On grain unless on the diagonal

### Welt pocket

- Welt even, no lining showing, corners even, diagonal seam on end of pocket
- No pressing impressions. Small welt on pocket edge even, square corners, no puckers
- Pocket bags sitting flat, suitable fabric, not pulling at corners

## PRESSING

- A well pressed garment presents well, looks good and stays looking good
- Over pressing a garment, too much pressing while under construction can be worse than not pressing. The garment will look soft and not crisp on presentation
- Press from the wrong side where possible or use a sheer pressing cloth, silk organza or muslin works well Use these to press on the right side to avoid problems
- No iron imprints or impression of seams or hems
- Seams, darts pressed to shape over ham if necessary
- No folds, tucks or bubbles evident
- No water marks or shine
- DO NOT PRESS VELVET ON RIGHT SIDE WITH THE IRON. Steam from above to enhance pile. Steam open seams from above, holding iron above work, finger press seams open gently. Use a velvet board\* if available. An old rough towel will work if needed.

*\*Looks like a wire brush only flat and about 40cm x 20cm in size*

## SLEEVES

- Fits into armhole, ease distributed evenly, no gathers or evident excess fullness. No ease stitching visible
- Finishes appropriate for fabric, garment and design. Overlocked from the correct side
- Hangs straight from shoulder. Grain line straight
- Hems even width, no puckers
- Sleeve seam finished and pressed
- Sleeve seam allowances correct for garment



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## SEAMS

- Stitch length appropriate for fabric, correct balanced tension, thread colour matching
- Choose a darker rather than lighter thread as the lighter one reflect light and appears too light on the fabric.
- No puckers or skipped stitches. Back tacking even and no too long. Secured seams beginning and end
- Thread suitable for fabric. Overlocking even and not puckered.
- Seam width even and appropriate width. Standard open seam 1.5cm, closed overlocked seam 1cm to 1.3cm wide. Lapped seams 1.3cm and French seams not more than 0.4mm
- No impressions on right side
- Reinforced seams on crotch, shoulders, waistline
- Curved seams smooth and even
- Crossed seams meet..... armhole, crotch, waist, yokes

## RIBBING

- Smooth, even, no pulling, puckers, stretching
- Size, width and type (texture) suitable to garment

## WAIST BAND AND WAIST LINES

- Smooth fitting waist band, no pulling, puckers. Even width. Interfacing firm enough for purpose
- Corners square and free from bulk. Stitching even on band
- Overlap flush with zipper / placket and underlap extends beyond placket to accommodate button or suitable fastening
- Fastening suitable; skirt hook for pants and skirts, button occasionally for skirt and pants
- Back of waistband turnings even if overlocked. Turned under smoothly and hand sewn.....to suit garment and style
- Belt loops correct width and length. Positioned at appropriate anchor points
- Waist lines finished as a closed seam on wrong side Piping inserted into waist line to give a dressier and finished look
- Belt loops, worked or fabric ( Rouleau loops) inserted at side seams. Insert at waist seam and into side seam for belt width plus 0.5cm
- Seams at zipper closure, matching and even
- Side seams matching

## ZIPPERS

- Stitching straight and even
- Appropriate zipper insertion for garment, Invisible, lapped, centred and fly front, open-ended zipper.
- No puckers and pulling
- Zipper tape and teeth covered at top and hem
- Horizontal seams meet
- Zipper does not buckle and twist
- Zipper length appropriate for use. Compatible weight with fabric.
- Slides easily and does not catch fabric or lining
- Colour matching or good contrast
- Exposed zipper..... even exposure for tape and teeth, even stitching or enclosed in pocket or as a trim. Even opening

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Read the brief, schedule or instruction CAREFULLY. Note important points i.e. colour required, no sleeves, strapless bodice, stripes, appliqued child's dress etc.
- Do not deviate as this is the criteria used for judging your garment.
- Consult with a friend, brainstorm ideas.
- Make a list of things you will need, collect all notions etc. at the same time so matching threads and other items all relate to your fabric. Time saved here saves frustration later.
- Choose suitable interfacing and TEST, TEST before you use it on your garment.
- Test stitching, tension, colour and length for all fabrics
- Use a NEW needle before you begin to sew.
- If you need help, ASK, don't struggle on and spoil your garment.

Make a style sheet as a prompt and check list.

- Fabric swatch, lining swatch, illustration or pattern number used
- Make a list of finishes you will use on the garment i.e. French seams on sheer jacket, open seams on silk skirt. Lining, where and finishes
- Button holes and buttons.
- Give yourself a realistic finish date...no last minute rushing
- Cross off items as you finish them

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