

Haute Couture Techniques
On-Site Course
Beginner Level

Tailoring

11—13.09.2026



CRISTÓBAL BALENCIAGA MUSEOA

Introduction

This course provides a specialised insight into the methods and procedures traditionally used in the tailoring ateliers at the Balenciaga House. Thanks to technical demonstrations, guided exercises and emphasis on practical work, the participants will get acquainted with the traditional preparation, assembly and finishing processes that are characteristic of this trade.

The programme has been designed to be a mainly hands-on training experience, aimed at developing manual skills and understanding the technical criteria used to produce wool garments made by hand. The sessions will not only be an opportunity to learn about the typical sewing and ironing techniques of haute couture tailoring, but also the constructive logic that defines the quality, volume and final outcome of the garment.

During the course, the focus will be on handling wool fabrics, how to fit interfacing correctly, controlling ironing as a shaping tool, and hand finishing. There will be special emphasis on making a short wool cape—a standard and regular item in Cristóbal Balenciaga’s designs—and adding a Balenciaga collar. This exercise will allow the participants to understand some of the characteristic constructive and technical solutions of the couturier; it will show how the collar is one of the most typical and complex elements of the final garment in tailoring.

Tailoring	Duration	Format
Level 1. Beginner	20 hours	On-Site
Level 2. Intermediate	25hours	Online
Level 2. Intermediate [new]	25 hours	Online
Level 3. Advanced	35 hours	On-Site

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">— Introduce the participants to the fundamental techniques of haute couture tailoring linked to the tradition of the House of Balenciaga.— Understand the properties and behaviour of the main fabric used for tailoring—particularly the wool ones—and how they influence the construction and finish of the garment.— Develop practical skills in specific operations to prepare, cut, assemble, baste, sew and iron applied to structured garments.— Learn to use interfacing, twill tape and other internal materials used for the structure and stability of tailored garments.— Learn traditional techniques to add fullness by ironing and handling the fabric.— Add typical technical details, such as bound buttonholes, facings, hems and inner finishing.— Understand the process to construct and assemble a Balenciaga collar for a short cape; both its formal and technical aspects will be considered.— Foster accuracy, observation and technical rigour when making the garments by hand.— Provide the participants with an insight into the cultural and heritage value of the haute couture trades and into the passing on of artisan expertise.
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Methodology	<p>The course methodology is based on progressive and practical learning, by combining technical demonstrations by the instructor with individual exercises to apply the skills.</p> <p>Each block will include explanations about the processes and materials, supported by live sewing, assembly and ironing demonstrations and sampling. Participants will then carry out the set exercises, using the demonstrated techniques and applying them to the pieces envisaged for the course.</p> <p>The methodology prioritises direct experimenting and developing manual skills; the aim is for the participants to end the course with practical understanding of the demonstrated techniques and with resources that they can use for future design, pattern and garment making projects.</p>
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I. Presentation of the Course and of the Programme

II. Introduction to Haute Couture Tailoring Techniques

III. Tailoring Fabrics and Their Characteristics

- Worsted
 - Wool
 - Twill
 - Cashmere
 - Gabardine
 - Double face
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IV. Practical Exercise: Front of a Short Wool Cape

- Fabric preparation and delustering
 - Marking the front, selvedge and back
 - Cutting interfacing
 - Open dart
 - Balanced dart
 - Open front seam
 - Back seam
 - Applying twill tape to the front edge
 - Making a bound buttonhole
 - Placing the buttonhole in the facing
 - Sewing the facing
 - Applying the interfacing to the hem
 - Sewing the hem
 - Ironing
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V. Practical Exercise: Making a Balenciaga Collar

- Preparing and cutting out the collar
- Applying the interfacing
- Pad stitching of the collar
- Preparing the collar hem
- Cutting out the upper collar
- Sewing and rounding the collar
- Sewing the collar to the jacket

Javier Martín

Javier Martín, originally from Ávila but now residing in Madrid, graduated as a Senior Fashion Designer from the Polytechnic University of Madrid in 1991. Early on, he met Carmen and Emilia Carriches, seamstresses at the Eisa atelier in the capital and who were first assistants to the head couturier, Felisa Irigoyen. They taught Javier the specific dressmaking techniques of the couturier from Getaria and he learned how to create fullness which would shape his designs.

Javier was part of the team at Sybilla for ten years, until 2005, when he decided to create his own haute-couture brand, Nihil Obstat. He has combined his work as a designer with collaborations with other creative artists of the ilk of Carmen March, Jesús del Pozo and Joaquín Trías—the latter is the grandson of a Balenciaga model and to whom he provides technical advice. He worked for the Spanish company Delpozo from 2012 to 2019, where his remit was to model and develop volumes of part of the collection and to develop luxury *prêt-à-porter* garments with an international outreach.

Javier is also a lecturer and has been involved in educational projects of the Spanish Government's Ministry of Education; he has lectured on design and modelling at the Higher Fashion Design Centre at the Polytechnique University of, the European Design Institute of Madrid, and at the Estación Diseño School in Granada, to name a few. Since 2015, he has been collaborating with the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa education programme; that has involved compiling and passing on the sewing techniques used at the Balenciaga ateliers.



Dates	September 11-13, 2026 Total dedication of 20 hours
Timetable	Friday, September 11, 14:30–18:30 Saturday and Sunday, 12 and 13, 09:30–13:30 / 14:30–18:30
Language	Although the course will be primarily in Spanish, English-speaking participants are also very welcome, as explanations can additionally be provided in English whenever needed. Furthermore, as this is a hands-on methodology, the language of sewing itself helps make the content accessible and easy to follow in a universal way.
Participants	Students or people holding qualifications in Fashion Design, Pattern Design and Dressmaking, fashion professionals and all those interested in learning or improving their knowledge with Haute Couture techniques. The maximum number of participants will be 20. The participants will be selected based on the requested documentation and the allocation of places will be confirmed from 30 June.
Requirements	Those interested in participating must be able to prove that they have prior knowledge of haute couture techniques and that they are capable of cutting, basting and sewing a garment.
Registration	Registration will be open from the day this course is announced until 15 June (both inclusive; deadline, 2.00 p.m. Spanish time). Those wishing to participate must complete the online registration form. Candidates are required to submit a curriculum vitae specifying their training and experience in the world of fashion, and a cover letter stating why they want to participate in the activity and their connection to its content.

Price 290€. The price includes the materials for the development of the exercises for a value of 35€. The Museum will supply each participant with the necessary kit, consisting of wool, interlining and cotton fabric. Participants must, in turn, come equipped with basic sewing tools (scissors, pins & needles, thread, measuring tape, tailors chalk, etc.).

The net registration fee to be received by the Cristóbal Balenciaga Foundation is the above-mentioned. All bank charges are to be paid by the participant.

The discount that may correspond to "Friends of the Museum" is restricted to those friends with a demonstrable seniority of at least two years at the time of registration.

Places limited/Registration is required

In the event of failing to meet the minimum number of participants, all interested parties will be informed of the activity cancellation and any registration fees paid will be refunded

A certificate of attendance will be issued at the end of the activity.

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Partnership

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