FILM CREW JOB DESCRIPTIONS

This is a partial list and explanation of typical roles on the filmmaking team.

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with the exception of the descriptions of the UPM, 1st AD, and 2nd AD;
which come from *The Film Director's Team* by Silver and Ward.

To the lay person (a.k.a. "civilians"), learning about the vast number of jobs on a motion picture project can be astonishing. It can help to group them by department. For the cinema production student, it can be helpful to view them by the craft areas that can are typically taught in school.

Writer/writing
e.g. Ben Hecht, Charles Brackett, Michael Wilson, William Goldman, Paddy Chayefsky, Robert Benton, Jane Campion, Wes Anderson, Joel & Ethan Coen, Nora Ephron, Quentin Tarantino

Producer/producing
e.g. Gene O. Selznick, Jerry Bruckheimer, Joel Silver, Scott Rudin, Harvey Weinstein.

Director/directing
e.g. Orson Welles, Billy Wilder, Ang Lee, Lee Daniels, James Cameron, Katharine Bigelow

Cinematographer, a.k.a. Director of Photography/cinematography
e.g. Gregg Toland, James Wong Howe, Conrad Hall, Januz Kaminski, Maurio Fiore, Robert Richardson

Film or Picture Editor, a.k.a. Editor/editing
e.g. Dede Allen, Walter Murch, Sally Menke

Production Sound or Sound Designer/Sound Editor
e.g. Walter Murch, Ben Burtt, Gary Rydstorm, Steve Flick.

There are many more positions and they are often learned either through specialized private programs, e.g. script supervision, make-up, or through direct experience/apprenticeship, e.g. production design, art direction, hair & make-up, set decoration, property master.

PRODUCTION STAFF:

PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT:

Producer
A film producer creates the conditions for making movies. The producer initiates, coordinates, supervises and controls matters such as fundraising, hiring key personnel, and arranging for distributors. The producer is involved throughout all phases of the filmmaking process from development to completion of a project.

Casting Director
Works closely with the director to *cast the film*. Specific duties will include:
- Assist in the organization and administration of casting calls and auditions
- Assist in the recruitment and hiring of cast

Unit Production Manager
The UPM, under the supervision of the Exec Producer, *coordinates, facilitates, and oversees the preparation of the production unit*, including: all off-set logistics, day to day

production decisions, locations, budget schedules and personnel. Specific duties will include:

• Prepare script breakdown and preliminary shooting schedule with the 1st AD
• Prepare and coordinate the budget
• Oversee search and survey of all locations and the completion of business arrangements for the same
• Assist in the preparation of the production with a mind towards efficiency collaboration
• Supervise completion of the production report for each day's work, showing work covered and the status of the production, and arrange for distribution of that report to proper channels
• Coordinate arrangements for the transportation and housing of cast, crew, and staff
• Oversee the securing of releases and negotiations for locations and personnel
• Maintain a liaison with the local authorities regarding locations and the operation of the company

1st Assistant Director

During preproduction the 1st AD works in conjunction with the UPM in organizing the crew, securing equipment, script break down, stripboard (production board) prep, and shooting schedule. During production he/she assists the director with respect to on-set production details, coordinates and supervises crew and cast activities and *facilitates an organized flow of production activity*. Specific duties will include:

• Prepare script breakdown and preliminary shooting schedule with the UPM
• Aid in location business, as delegated by the UPM
• Check weather reports
• Prepare day-out-of-day schedules for talent employment and determine the cast and crew calls
• Supervise the preparation of the call sheet for cast and crew
• Direct background action and supervise crowd control
• Supervise the functioning of the shooting set and crew

2nd Assistant Director

The 2nd AD is the *chief assistant to the 1st AD in conducting the business of the set or the location site*. Specific duties will include:

• Prepare the call sheet, in conjunction with the 1st AD
• Prepare the daily production report, in conjunction with the UPM
• Distribute scripts, sides, changes, and call sheets to cast and crew
• Communicate advance scheduling to cast and crew
• Aid in location managing as required by the UPM, 1st AD, or Location Manager
• Facilitate transportation of equipment and personnel, under the supervision of the UPM
• Schedule food, lodging, and other facilities
• Supervise set and location wrap
• Maintain liaison between UPM and 1st AD
• Assist in the direction of background action and the supervision of crowd control

Script Supervisor

The script supervisor *maintains a daily log of the shots covered and their relation to the script* during the course of a production, *acts as chief continuity person*, and acts as an *on-set liaison to the post-production staff*. Specific duties will include:

• Maintain of log of all shots, including the following information: shot number(s) as seen on script, actual slated shot number(s), comments by director or DP, continuity information including digital stills references, tape/reel#, camera settings, date, time, production statistics, etc.
• Act as continuity person on set
• Daily cross-referencing with continuity stills photographer to ensure accessibility of continuity stills during production

• Maintain liaison with 2nd AD, provide information for daily production reports
• Provide editor, other postproduction staff with log of footage

Key Production Assistant

The key PA is the *chief on-set/on-location assistant of the 1st AD in terms of set operations*. Specific duties will include:
• Management of walkie-talkies, traffic cones, and other production staff equipment
• Management of other production assistants
• Assist in the direction of background action and the supervision of crowd control
• Assist in set lock-downs
• Assist in the functioning of the shooting set and crew

Production Accountant

The production accountant works closely with the UPM to *maintain the production's budget*. Specific duties will include:
• Preparation of the budget, in conjunction with UPM
• Maintenance of production accounts
• Facilitate release of expenditures
• Accounting for costs, filling out cost reports

Location Manager

The location manager works with the UPM and the 2nd AD to *manage the discovery and securing of locations*. The locations manager maintains a liaison between the production and the local authorities, and obtains the necessary clearance and release for use of locations.

Publicist

Working closely with the executive producer, director, art director, and publicity designer, the publicist works to *publicize and promote the film during all phases of production*. Specific duties will include:
• Securing permission for and supervising placement of posters, flyers, and other promo ads
• Supervising the generation and distribution of press releases
• Maintaining a liaison with the press
• Assisting in fundraising activities

ART DEPARTMENT:

Production Designer

Working under the supervision of the director and in coordination with the Art Director, the Production Designer *develops, coordinates, facilitates, and oversees the overall design of the production, i.e. anything that will appear in front of the camera*. The Production Designer acts as a supervisor to the makeup, hair, and wardrobe departments, and as a consultant to the camera, art director, special effects, and compositing departments. Specific duties will include:
• Early development of attitude boards for characters, locations, scenes, etc.
• Coordinate the work of the costume designer, production designer, and compositors with the DP and the director.
• Supervise the work of the publicity designer
• Supervise the creation of title sequences and credits

Art Director

Working under the supervision of the director and in coordination with the Production Designer, the Art Director *develops, coordinates, facilitates, and oversees the design of the sets*, whether on stage or practical locations. The Art Director supervises the work

of the construction crew, set decorating crew, and property department in conjunction with the director and DP. Specific duties will include:
• Participation in location scouting *recces*
• Design of sets
• Supervision of set construction and dressing
• Coordination, via the art director, with the make up, wardrobe, camera, property, and compositing departments

Publicity Designer

Working under the supervision of the director and in coordination with the art director and the publicist, the publicity designer *develops, coordinates, facilitates, and oversees the design of publicity materials* including posters, promo shots, and the website. Specific duties will include:
• Design and implementation of production website
• Design of posters and other promotional materials
• Design of Electronic Press Kit materials
• Design of DVD

Key Makeup Person

The key makeup person *applies and maintains the cast's makeup*. Specific duties will include:
• Applying makeup to cast members
• Maintaining actor's makeup during shooting, in coordination with the script supervisor and the continuity stills photographer

Key Hairdresser

The key hairdresser *dresses and maintains the cast's hair*. Specific duties will include:
• Dressing cast members hair
• Maintaining actor's hair during shooting, in coordination with the script supervisor and the continuity stills photographer

Costumer Designer

The costume designer works under the supervision of the director and the art director to *design, obtain, assemble, and maintain the costumes for a production*. Specific duties will include:
• The development of costuming concepts and design of costumes
• Coordination with the art director, production designer, and DP
• The obtaining of all costume components
• The final assembly of all costumes
• The maintenance of all costumes

Set Costumer

The set costumer works as an assistant to the costume designer, helping to *assemble and maintain the costumes*, and also *managing and facilitating the use of the costumes during production*. Specific duties will include:
• Assist the costume design in design, obtaining, and assembly of costumes
• Organization, maintenance, and management of costumes
• Helping the actors change

Property Manager

The property manager works in coordination with the art director, production designer, and DP to *gather, maintain, and manage all the props for a production*. Specific duties will include:
• Seeking and obtaining props
• Maintenance and management of props

Set Decorator

The set decorator works closely with the art director, production designer, construction foreman, and DP to *dress and decorate the sets*. Specific duties will include:

• Painting, draping, arranging props
• Small-scale landscaping

CAMERA DEPARTMENT

Director of Photography

The DP, or Cinematographer, is the *camera and lighting supervisor on the production*. DP is in charge of the visual look and design of the entire movie. This means figuring out, with the Director during Preproduction, how to visually bring the script to life and how that should be photographed. DPs involvement is now pushing into postproduction as well to insure that the visual design is being executed or to help decide revisions to that design. Understanding the "workflow" of the imagery, and the creative and financial implications of that workflow from production through postproduction, is becoming increasingly crucial.

Besides overseeing the work of the camera crew, the DP is also assisted by the grips and electricians in preparing the technical aspects of recording an image on film or CCD. Specific duties will include:

• Operation of cameras
• Coordination of lighting, angle, motion control, media, settings, etc.

Camera Operator

The camera operator *assists the DP in camera operation*. Specific duties will include:

• Operation of cameras
• Focus marking & pulling
• Maintenance and management of camera equipment

1st Assistant Cameraperson

The 1st AC *assists the DP in camera operation and maintenance*. Specific duties will include:

• Operation of cameras
• Slating & loading
• Focus marking and pulling
• Preparation, Maintenance and management of camera equipment

2nd Assistant Cameraperson

The 2nd AC *assists the DP in camera operation and maintenance* and works in coordination with the script supervisor in naming, slating, and logging shots and reels/tapes. Specific duties will include:

• Slating & loading
• Preparation, Maintenance and management of camera equipment
• Maintenance, labeling, logging, and safekeeping of reels/tapes

Continuity Stills Photographer

The continuity still photographer uses a digital still camera to *establish continuity referents for each shot covered in a day of shooting*. These shots are cross-referenced with the script supervisor's log for accessibility on set. Specific duties will include:

• Taking pictures of each shot covered, with particular attention to in-point and out-point of a shot. This means a photograph should be taken before the director says "action," and immediately after the director says "cut." These photographs should not use a flash…
• Daily cross-referencing with script supervisor to ensure accessibility of continuity stills during production

Production Still Photographer

The still photographer *documents the production by taking still photographs*. These pictures are used for documentary and publicity purposes. Specific duties will include:

• Taking pictures of set operations, poster shots, portraits, etc

Documentary Videographer

The documentary videographer *captures "behind the scenes" footage* for the Electronic Press Kit and other documentary purposes. Specific duties will include:

• Filming set operations
• Filming interviews with cast and crew

ELECTRICAL:

Gaffer

Also sometimes called the *lighting designer*, the gaffer is the chief electrician who *supervises set lighting in accordance with the requirements of the DP*. Specific duties will include:

• Lighting of sets and locations
• Maintenance and management of lights and lighting equipment
• Specialized electrical work such as generator operation

Best-Boy Electric

The best-boy electric is the chief assistant to the gaffer in the *lighting of sets and the operation of electrical systems*. Specific duties will include:

• Lighting of sets and locations
• Maintenance and management of lights and lighting equipment
• Specialized electrical work such as generator operation

Electrician

The electrician works under the direction of the Gaffer in the *lighting of sets and the operation of electrical systems*. Specific duties will include:

• Lighting of sets and locations
• Running electrical cabling and distributing all electrical power
• Maintenance and management of lights and lighting equipment
• Specialized electrical work such as generator operation

PRODUCTION SOUND:

Mixer/Recordist

The mixer, aka recordist, is the on-set/on-location sound engineer *responsible for the recording of production sound* and any sync-related on-set sound mixing and playback. Specific duties will include:

• Supervising capture of audio onto various devices from various sources
• Maintenance and management of on-set sound equipment
• Assist in the recording of ADR, foley, & music during postproduction

Boom Operators

The boom operators *work under the supervision of the mixer/recordist in the recording of production sound*, holding mic booms, placing mics, holding cables, and operating various recording devices. Specific duties will include:

• Holding mic booms and cables
• Headphone monitoring of mics
• Mic placement, set-up, and tear-down
• Operation of recording devices

Sound Assistant

The sound assistant acts mainly as a *liaison between the mixer/recordist and the script supervisor*, managing and logging media assets. Specific duties include:

• Labeling, Maintenance and management of tapes and media.
• Report of tape/shot info to script supervisor for log
• Maintenance of tape logging forms

SET OPERATIONS:

Key Grip

The key grip works with the gaffer in *setting and cutting lights to creating shadow effects for the set lighting and supervises camera cranes, dollies, platforms, and "wild wall" movements according to the DP*. Specific duties will include:

• Creating shadow, reflection, reduction, and diffusion effects
• Supervising dollie, crane, and other camera movement
• Maintenance and management of grip equipment

Best-Boy Grip

The best-boy grip is the chief assistant to the key grip, aiding him/her in *rigging, cutting light, and carrying out camera movements*. Specific duties will include:

• Assisting the key grip in light cutting, reflection, and diffusion
• Assisting in the various technical set operations required by the DP

Set Ops Grips

The set ops grips are assistants to the key grip, aiding him/her in *rigging, cutting light, and carrying out camera movements*. Specific duties will include:

• Assisting the key grip in light cutting
• Holding flags and bounces
• Laying dolly track
• Assisting in the various technical set operations required by the DP

Dolly Grip

The dolly grip is the chief grip *responsible for operating the camera dolly*, usually in conjunction with the best-boy grip. Specific duties will include:

• Operating the camera dolly

Construction Foreman

The construction foreman works in coordination with the art director, production designer, DP, and set dressers, *overseeing the construction and demolition of sets, special equipment, car mounts and platforms*. Specific duties will include:

• Coordination and collaboration with the production designer on the design of sets
• supervision of the construction of sets
• The construction and implementation of special equipment such as camera jibs, dollies, or car-mounts
• The demolition of sets and equipment

Construction Grips

The construction grips aid the construction foreman in *set construction and demolition*. Specific duties will include:

• The construction of sets
• The demolition of sets

POSTPRODUCTION STAFF:

EDITORIAL:

Editor

The editor works under the supervision of the director and executive producer to *assemble the film*. Specific duties will include:

• The assembly of the footage into successive cuts until a final cut is reached
• Assist the DP with color correction and other post-production effects
• The output of the final cut to several formats

Assistant Editor

The assistant editor works as an assistant to the editor, helping him/her with by *logging and capturing footage, organizing and managing media* in coordination with the script supervisor's log. Specific duties will include:

• Logging and capture media
• Preparing offline edit timelines for the director
• Managing media in coordination with the script supervisor's log
• Maintaining a system of backups
• Assisting with compression and multi-format output

COMPOSITING:

Lead Compositor/Visual Effects Supervisor

The lead compositor works under the supervision of the director, DP, and art director and in coordination with the editor to *design and implement compositing effects*. Specific duties will include:

• Supervision of all compositing work
• Assist the art director and DP in the creative and technical design of composite shots
• Implementation of composite shots

Compositors

The compositors work under the supervision of the lead compositor and the art director to *implement compositing effects*. Specific duties will include:

• Digital scrubbing and cleaning
• Implementation of composite shots

POSTPRODUCTION SOUND & MUSIC:

Sound Designer, a.k.a. Sound Editor

The sound designer, working in conjunction with the director, is *responsible for the ideation and creation of the overall soundtrack* of the film. The sound designer supervises the mix of music, dialogue, ADR, foley, and sound effects. Specific duties will include:

• Sonic mis-en-scene
• Realization of sound effects, textures, and landscapes
• Supervision of the mix for various output formats

Composer

The composer *writes original music* to be heard in the film, both diagetic and nondiagetic. Specific duties will include:

• Writing music as demanded in both pre and postproduction
• Supervising the recording of the music

Mixing Engineer

The mixing engineer, under the supervision of the sound designer, *mixes the overall soundtrack* into its final mixes for a variety of output formats. Specific duties will include:

• Mixing sound in stereo and/or multi-channel formats, for home system and theatrical release
• Preparing final mixes for mastering
• Mastering audio

Foley Artist

The foley artist *creates sound effects to accompany specific visual objects, movements, and sound sources*, such as footsteps or punches. Specific duties will include:

• Generating and recording sounds to accompany specific on-screen sound sources.