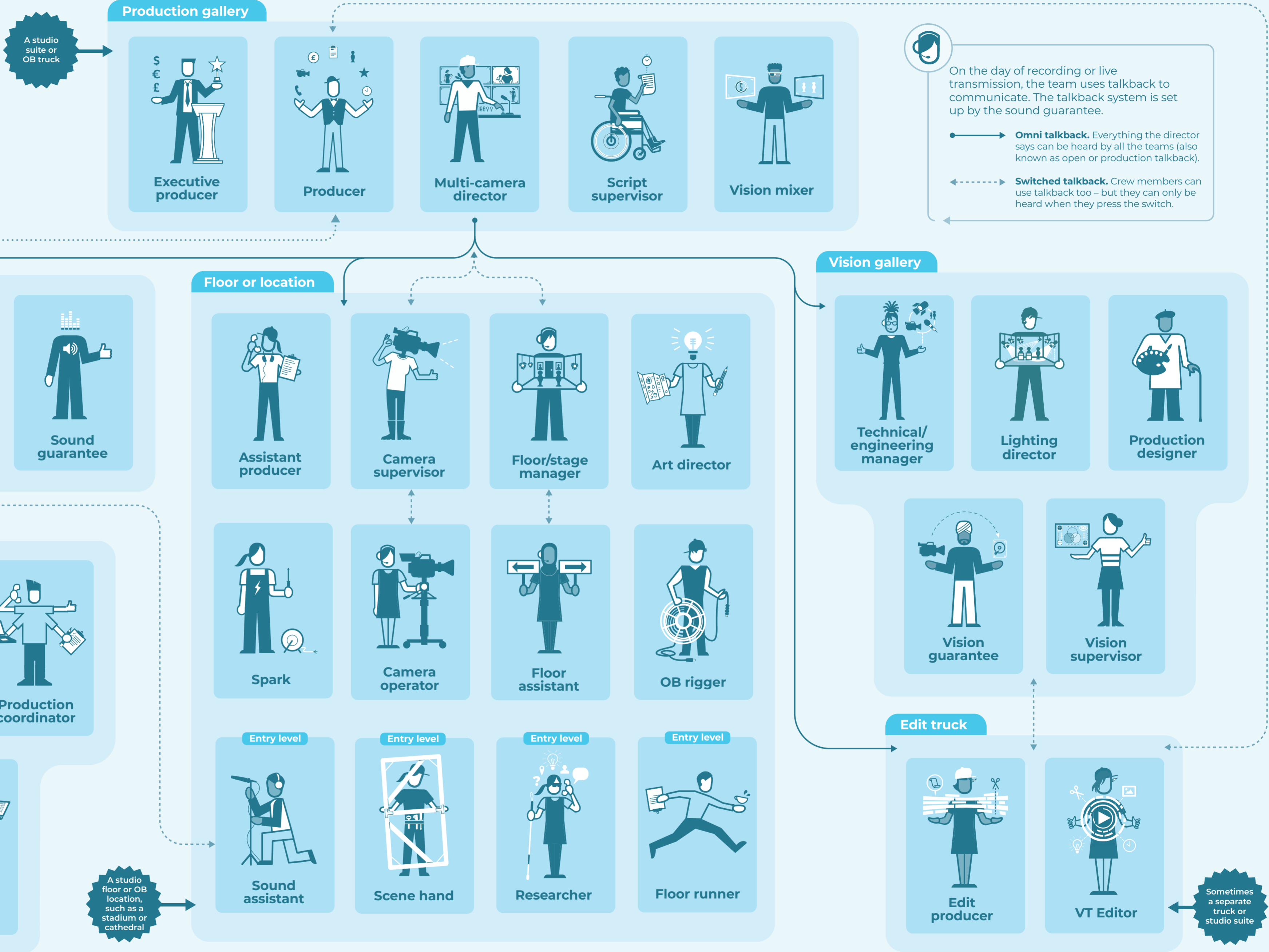


A studio or outside broadcast (OB) production on the day or recording or live transmission



Studio and outside broadcast career map

Go to ScreenSkills for more details:
www.screenskills.com/careers-in-tv



Studio and outside broadcast productions

Many of the programmes that Britain loves most – Saturday night entertainment shows, cup finals and royal weddings – have been made in TV studios or on outside broadcasts. The expertise of the UK in making programmes like *Strictly Come Dancing*, *X-Factor* and *Last Night of the Proms* is recognised all over the world.

Multi-camera productions

Programmes made in TV studios are known as studio productions. They are produced in a bespoke space where the team has complete control of the environment. By contrast, outside broadcasts can be made anywhere – a concert hall, a football stadium, a music festival – and are often subject to the vagaries of the British weather. OBs are more often made with partners, like a rock promoter, the Premier League or the Royal Shakespeare Company, than studio productions.

What they have in common is that they're multi-camera. This means the cameras are not working independently but as a team. The team offers shots to the director, who can see all the cameras' output on a huge number of monitors in the production gallery. Sometimes a director works with 30 cameras or even more. This is very different to a genre like documentary where a single camera can shoot a complete sequence.

Working multi-camera means programmes can be transmitted live or a whole programme can be recorded in a few hours. Celebrity chat shows, for example, may be recorded over one or two hours and then cut down to thirty minutes. Whether live or recorded, everyone needs to be at the top of their game. If anyone makes a mistake it could be seen live on air. Or, in the case of a comedy panel show, a mistake could mean the funniest moment is missed.

Some people prefer the studio, while others prefer being on outside broadcasts, and many are happy to work on both. Whichever you prefer, you must enjoy working in teams and with deadlines that can't be moved.

Who makes multi-camera TV?

All the leading broadcasters in the UK rely on programmes made in television studios and on outside broadcasts. Programmes like *Strictly Come Dancing*, *Britain's Got Talent*, *Children in Need* and *Match of the Day* are shows that help define a channel. These programmes are often made by the production arm of the broadcaster such as BBC Studios or ITV Studios. Or they might be made by independent production companies (indies) that specialise in entertainment, music or sport.

Some drama and comedy productions are multi-camera too. Most daily soaps – *Emmerdale*, *EastEnders* and *Coronation Street* – are shot using a multi-camera set-up and are made by the broadcaster's studios.

There's also a growing market for live events streamed online. There's now a crossover between outside broadcasts and theatre, for example. When organisations like the National Theatre distribute their live performances from the stage straight into cinemas and our homes, they are using a multi-camera technique in a similar way to the way it's used on *Strictly*.

Why choose a career in studios and OB production?

There are a huge number of different roles in studios and on outside broadcasts, ranging from engineering to production and management. The team is drawn from all sorts of different educational backgrounds.

What's more, the best producers, lighting, camera, sound and technical crews are very much in demand. If you learn your trade and get a good reputation, you could end up working anywhere in the world on shows like the Oscars or

the opening ceremony of the Olympic games. If you're lucky enough to work on a programme such as *Comic Relief* or a royal wedding, you will know you're part of an event that has the power to bring the nation together, and sometimes the whole world.

Employment prospects

Studios and outside broadcast companies take on some people as employees. This is most likely to be in business, engineering or management roles. However, if you want to work in the technical or editorial roles of a programme, it's more likely you'll be freelance, working on a production-by-production basis rather than having a continuing contract. If you're employed on a long-running programme, you might have a contract that could last a few months, but many in the team, like the vision mixer and camera operators, are more likely to be employed for just one or two days at a time. This can be tough to begin with, but if you're hard-working, talented and reliable you can become sought after. Go to [screenskills.com/freelance-toolkit](https://www.screenskills.com/freelance-toolkit) to learn how to be a successful freelancer.

Routes in

There is no set route into a career in studio and outside broadcasts. Every professional you speak to will have a different story about how they got their first job. Here are some routes to pursue:

The vocational training route

Some people get into the industry through training programmes. There's a lot of competition for places on these schemes, but they're worth trying because they can lead to long contracts with companies where you can learn on the job. Check out the websites and social media accounts of film and TV studios, outside broadcast companies and broadcasters like the BBC, Channel 4, ITV and Sky.

The apprenticeship route

An apprenticeship is a job combined with training, so it's a great opportunity to earn as you learn. Go to the websites of broadcasters, film and TV studios and outside broadcast companies to see what

apprenticeships they offer. If you aren't successful, or there aren't any where you live, it might be worth taking an apprenticeship in a related industry. An apprenticeship in accountancy, business administration or project management could equip you with the skills for roles in production management, for example. Go to [screenskills.com/careers-in-TV](https://www.screenskills.com/careers-in-TV). Find the roles that interest you and learn how to find the related apprenticeships.

The university route

It isn't necessary to get a degree to break into TV, but you might find university is a good place in which to develop yourself and prepare for work. If you want to be a technical manager, you might want to take a broadcast engineering degree. If you're more interested in the story-telling roles, why not take a degree in whatever subject interests you most? Or take a look at ScreenSkills' Select list of recommended courses at [screenskills.com/courses](https://www.screenskills.com/courses) and select one in unscripted TV. We recognise courses where they have strong links to industry.

The entry-level job route

Getting an entry-level job is a great way to get to know the industry, build contacts and make your way up to your chosen role. Look at the websites of broadcasters, studios, outside broadcast companies and independent production companies to see what's on offer. Subscribe to production companies' social media accounts. Read the trade press. Register with industry agencies (make sure you check reviews first). Tell your networks when you're available and upload your CV to company online databases.

Inclusivity

The television industry is committed to building an inclusive and culturally diverse workforce, welcoming talent regardless of age, disability, ethnic or socioeconomic background, gender, religion or sexual orientation.

Pay

Pay for freelancers is usually negotiated on daily or weekly rates, depending on the role and production. Senior executives are usually permanently employed and

salaries are often £65k and up. Entry-level pay can start with the UK minimum wage. It's a good idea to check out the rate cards published by Bectu, the media and entertainment union ([bectu.org.uk](https://www.bectu.org.uk)) to assess what's reasonable in your role.

Hours of work

Working in TV usually involves early starts and late finishes. Days are usually scheduled for eight, ten or twelve hours, but there can be travel too. It's rarely a Monday-to-Friday job, or even a five-day week job, so expect to work weekends regularly. If you need workplace stability and set hours, this is probably not the industry for you.

What is a TV studio?

Celebrity chat shows, current affairs programmes and huge Saturday night entertainment shows are all made in studios. Studios vary in size. Some, used for sports or news bulletins, are not much bigger than a normal front room. Others are as large as aircraft hangers, big enough to hold a huge set, an orchestra and an audience.

Whether large or small, studios offer the same thing – they are spaces that allow complete control over lighting and sound. A studio should have good access, to get the sets in and out quickly, and a perfectly level floor, which allows cameras to move smoothly and quickly. Most studios have a production gallery for the director and producer. Some have separate galleries for lighting and sound.

Studios are often part of a large complex where other facilities are available, like satellite links, set construction areas, dressing rooms, green rooms, make-up and wardrobe, production offices and a canteen. An outside broadcast, is, essentially, a studio environment that is taken out on the road with the production, sound and lighting galleries in articulated trucks.

People who aren't suited to being freelancers might like to work in studio management. You're more likely to get a job with a continuing contract in studio management than in technical or editorial roles.

Networking

TV relies on personal introductions and recommendations. You need to meet new people all the time. Increase your connections by going to industry events. [ScreenSkills.com/training](https://www.screenskills.com/training) is a good place to start. Introduce people to each other and they will do the same for you. Update your social platforms and let people know when you are available to hire.

What next?

Go to [ScreenSkills.com/careers-in-TV](https://www.screenskills.com/careers-in-TV) to find detailed information on each job role mentioned in this map. We have other maps on careers in TV. Check them out at [ScreenSkills.com/career-maps](https://www.screenskills.com/career-maps).

Studio management job roles



Studio manager

Runs the studio. If it's a small independent operation, the manager may do everything from setting the rate card (the daily or hourly cost to hire the studio), securing new clients, ensuring each production runs smoothly, recruiting staff and overseeing health and safety. However, studios are often part of a larger group of companies; in which case the different roles will be shared.



Studio coordinator

Supports the studio manager in the day-to-day running of the studio facilities, including liaising with the regular clients, checking availability and, often, skilfully juggling dates with a number of different productions to make sure everyone gets the time they need. Once the booking is confirmed they will be on hand to greet the production team and make sure everything runs smoothly.



Studio assistant – entry level

Takes on many of the day-to-day jobs that come up all the time in a busy studio facility, such as providing admin support, greeting the cast and crew, printing timesheets or rate cards, answering the phone, ordering taxis, or making sure there is enough tea and coffee and ordering the lunch for meetings.

Production gallery



Executive producer

Usually oversees the programme from beginning to end. The executive producer is the most senior person on a production. They often recruit the key members of the production team, sign off the most important decisions and keep a close eye on the budget. They manage the relationships with the presenters, the commissioners, the legal advisors and the media and are on hand to troubleshoot or give advice.



Producer

Manages the programme on a day-to-day basis. Producers are responsible for the content of the show and so could be doing anything from writing scripts and selecting music to finding contributors and briefing presenters. On the day of recording or live transmission, producers work closely with the multi-camera director in the gallery, being on hand to deal with urgent content issues, such as correcting a mistake made by a presenter.



Multi-camera director

Works right at the heart of a largestudio or OB production. When the red light goes on for recording or live transmission, multi-camera directors are in the gallery in front of a huge bank of monitors, running the programme from moment to moment. They direct the camera crew, guide the lighting and sound team, cue the presenters and set the pace and style of the production.



Script supervisor

Prepares running orders and keeps the programme on time. Script supervisors work closely with the multi-camera directors in the gallery, and in a live show count how many seconds are left before moving to the next item. They are organised, accurate, good at maths and counting backwards.



Vision mixer

Works in the production gallery in front of an array of monitors. Vision mixers select which pictures the viewers will see in their homes, expertly crafting the programme narrative in real time. Often, the vision mixer will follow the director's instructions on which camera to select, but sometimes they will make their own decisions.

Sound gallery



Sound supervisor

Heads up the sound team. During pre-production, sound supervisors go out on a recon and advise on potential audio issues. They recruit their team and are experts at choosing microphones and operating mixing desks and recording devices. During a recording or transmission they may work at one end of the production gallery, but often have their own sound gallery or specially equipped OB vehicle.



Grams operator

Plays music or sound effects during recording or live transmission, usually on entertainment or sports programmes. Grams operators prepare the sound files for use and follow the script and director's instructions on when to play them in. They know how to operate bespoke hardware, edit efficiently and work with MIDI and GPI software to enable sound cue relays from the vision mixer's desk and graphics machines. Grams operators are also known as deputy sound supervisors.



Sound guarantee

Makes sure all the sound equipment in a studio, or on an outside broadcast truck, works. Sound guarantees' main focus is the sound desk, cable runs and microphones. They also set up the talkback systems. Talkback is the way all the members of the production team communicate using headsets and microphones.

Floor or location



Assistant producer

Comes up with content ideas and writes research briefs. Assistant producers (APs) help plan the recording or live transmission and ensure the contributors know what's expected of them on the day. Depending on the programme, they may also write short scripts. This role is similar to a producer, but APs don't have the final sign-off on important decisions. It's one step up from being a researcher.



Camera supervisor

Is responsible for the whole camera department. Camera supervisors work out what cameras and crew will be needed for a programme. During a recording or live broadcast, they respond constantly to the director, helping to realise the director's vision and ensuring the crew are all performing their allocated tasks.



Floor manager

Is the eyes and ears of the director on the studio floor. Floor managers are there before rehearsals begin, making sure the studio is prepared and safe and greeting the programme's presenters and contributors. If they are good, they will be ahead of the director, liaising with cameras, lighting and sound to make sure each sequence is ready to rehearse. On an outside broadcast, this role might be known as stage manager.



Art director

Turns the creative vision into props and sets. Working to the designer's plans, art directors manage the art department, including construction. They attend reces, plan and recruit a team. They might use skills in technical drawing and specialist design software to draft sets and plan special effects like fake snow, pyrotechnics and gunc.



Spark

Makes sure all electrical aspects of a set work. Sparks work with the lighting director to position the lighting and help the camera operators illuminate a shot to create the desired effect.



Camera operator

Ensures cameras and equipment are rigged and ready to use. During rehearsal and recording or transmission they operate the camera, always following the director's instructions.



Floor assistant

Helps the floor manager with jobs such as checking all the props are in position and finding out if presenters have arrived safely. Floor managers can't leave the floor, so they depend on the assistants to chase up latecomers. In very big studio productions, or perhaps on a large outside broadcast such as in a football stadium or stately home, floor assistants might need to cue some of the presenters.



OB rigger

Lays out the cables for the cameras on an outside broadcast. Many OB riggers have HGV licences and drive the outside broadcast vehicles to and from the location. These are some of the largest and most expensive vehicles on the road so it requires a great deal of experience. As a result, OB riggers are often known as rigger-drivers.



Sound assistant – entry level

Responsible for setting up sound equipment. In studios and OBs, sound assistants attach microphones, secure cables and charge and replace batteries. They are specialists in hiding radio mics in clothes or hair. At the end of the day, they label the sound files, tidy the cables and file the paperwork. They are sometimes called sound floor operators.



Scene hand – entry level

Sets up the scenery for a production in a studio or on an outside broadcast. Usually the scenery is made up of 'flats' (the panels that make up the scenery) that have been prepared off-site. Scene shifters put in the set before the production team arrive, working closely with lighting, cameras and sound to make sure all the different elements fit together – whether it's a commentary box or a stage for an orchestra.



Researcher – entry level

Finds the people, the places, the facts, figures and stories that are at the heart of every TV show. Researchers spend a lot of the time on the phone and looking online trying to find the right material, from stories and locations to props, products and information. Sometimes on an outside broadcast, like a royal wedding or a football match, they might sit next to the presenter, feeding them the information they need as the event unfolds.



Floor runner – entry level

Is the most junior role on the floor team. Floor runners meet and greet the presenters, helping them with their bags and showing them to make-up or costume. Runners also help the production team and crew and often visit the production gallery to see if anyone needs help, a coffee or some water.

Vision gallery



Technical manager

Has overall responsibility for all the technical equipment - lights, cameras and sound. Technical managers are the most senior technicians in a TV studio. They are the point of contact for the many suppliers who bring in specialist kit like rock'n'roll lighting or huge LED screens. Technical managers manage the crew and are responsible for health and safety. On an outside broadcast, where there are often more factors

to consider (like the weather), they are known as engineering managers.



Lighting director

Designs the lighting. Lighting directors make extensive preparations before recording days. They prepare a lighting plan (plot) with information about the light position, type and colour, as well as the staff required and the schedule. They may also oversee the programming and design for the LED screens and moving lights. On an outside broadcast, this role involves being able to adapt to constantly changing natural light.



Production designer

Designs the sets, whether that be for a talent show, quiz, award ceremony, music programme or sports fixture. They consider the content that needs to be produced within their set and how to style and dress it, whilst also ensuring it meets the technical requirements of the other departments. They work especially closely with the lighting director and also with the floor manager, camera and sound supervisors to ensure the set they design incorporates the needs of the whole production.



Vision guarantee

Ensures all aspects of the 'vision chain' work from end to end – from the cameras in a studio or on location to the monitors in the gallery. Vision guarantees make sure all the cameras are ready for the start of rehearsals and that the enormous number of monitors are perfectly set up so the director, producer and lighting director can rely on the accuracy of the pictures.



Vision supervisor

Works closely with the lighting director and vision guarantee to make sure the pictures are as good as they can be. Vision supervisors make sure all the cameras are correctly exposed and the colours match precisely, so that when the director cuts quickly between the different cameras the shots don't change colour.

Looking for further advice?

If you're interested in a career in unscripted TV, check out these websites to find out more:

ScreenSkills, for information on careers and courses: [screenskills.com/careers-in-TV](https://www.screenskills.com/careers-in-TV)

BBC Academy, training and development for the BBC and wider industry: [bbc.co.uk/academy](https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy)

Royal Television Society, bursaries, jobs and training schemes in the TV industry: [rts.org.uk/education-training](https://www.rts.org.uk/education-training)

The Institution of Engineering and Technology, membership organisation with careers information in engineering: [theiet.org/career](https://www.theiet.org/career)

Studios and stage space, list of UK studios compiled by the BFI: [britishfilmcommission.org.uk/plan-your-production/studios](https://www.britishfilmcommission.org.uk/plan-your-production/studios)

Bectu, the media and entertainment union: [bectu.org.uk](https://www.bectu.org.uk)

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