

Overview of Role

Reporting to the production sound mixer and first assistant sound, the second assistant sound in High-end TV and scripted film is usually a fully, or almost fully skilled assistant with less experience than the first assistant sound. Areas of activity are in relation to the preparation of sound equipment during both pre-production and principal photography.

Depending on the allocation of the workload, the second assistant sound may be responsible for specific tasks within these areas or share them with the first assistant sound. In addition, they may be required to operate a second boom microphone or playback system during principal photography.

Core Responsibilities:

These core responsibilities are provided as a guide and are not exhaustive. The exact responsibilities on a particular production will vary depending on the scale and budget band.

1. Assist with preparing sound equipment during pre-production

- Set up and test sound equipment under the supervision of the production sound mixer
- Become familiar with equipment and script
- Complete minor repairs of equipment and carry out basic cable soldering
- Prepare personal microphones, earpieces and accessories

2. Manage batteries and charging stations

- Set up battery charging station
- Change daily batteries
- Operate battery charging routines, sequencing and labelling charged batteries
- Maintain sufficient quantities of charged batteries throughout shooting
- Monitor battery use during shooting
- Change batteries during shooting with minimal disruption

3. Assist with setting up sound equipment during principal photography

- Help unload the sound cart and position sound equipment on location
- Check frequencies, settings and batteries of radio transmitters
- Apply radio transmitters to boom poles, cast and cameras when required
- Prepare time code devices and apply them to cameras
- Help rig playback systems as instructed by production sound mixer
- Prepare in-ear monitors and distribute them to crew and production
- Clean and prepare equipment for the following day

4. Fit and adjust personal microphones on cast

- Apply personal microphones to cast, so they avoid rustling, are invisible to cameras and obtain the most natural sound
- Check microphones placement is comfortable for cast and optimise transmission

5. Operate equipment during principal photography when requested by production sound mixer

- Operate playback systems as instructed by production sound mixer

- Operate second boom to capture sound, positioning it on the edge of the frame and aiming it precisely at sound source
- Operate second boom unobtrusively without casting shadows or producing handling noises

6. Assist with securing sound equipment when not in use

- Secure microphones and other pieces of equipment when not in use during breaks or at wrap time
- Help store sound cart and other pieces of equipment for the night

7. Monitor supplies of consumables

- Monitor use of sound department consumables and stock levels
- Assist with the replenishment of stocks of consumables when required

8. Supervise and support the sound trainee

- Explain production protocols and set etiquette to sound trainees
- Demonstrate how to pack, unpack, clean and prepare equipment
- Instruct sound trainees to carry out assigned tasks and supervise their completion

9. Follow health and safety requirements for sound production

- Work in line with health and safety requirements as per production's policy
- Ensure that general health and safety procedures are enforced at all times

Role Specific Skills:

- Applying the physics of sound and acoustic principles to achieve quality production sound
- Setting up and operating sound equipment
- Operating booms during takes

Other / Transferable Skills:

- Communication: managing some of the communication between the sound department and the rest of the film crew on set with minimal disruption to filming
- Organisation: meticulously charging batteries, preparing equipment and monitoring consumables
- Problem-solving: identifying faults in equipment and completing minor repairs and basic cable soldering to resolve them

Attributes:

- Resilience, enthusiasm and curiosity: adapts positively to changing work priorities and patterns, ensuring deadlines continue to be met. Proactive and explores new ideas and non-standard ways of working which will enhance and deliver the best results for the production
- Productivity: organises work effectively and achieves required results within deadlines. Demonstrates the drive and energy to get things done in pressurised situations and escalates appropriately when necessary
- Ethics and integrity: honest and principled in all of their actions and interactions. Respectful and inclusive of others, and meets the ethical requirements of their profession
- Flexibility: willing to both listen and respond to changing priorities and working requirements as required, while at all times maintaining high standards in a constantly changing production environment