

### **Overview of Role**

The script supervisor in High-end TV, scripted film and drama, acts as a link between the director and editorial. This is an head of department (HOD) role which has responsibility for ensuring the script is fully shot, by monitoring coverage and allowing for some freedom in the edit. They represent the editor on set and have overall responsibility for continuity. Traditionally, the script supervisor is a department of one but, as multi-camera productions become more commonplace, the script supervisor may have an assistant and / or trainee.

Before production in preparation, the script supervisor creates detailed breakdowns of the story and timings during which they will raise any potential story or continuity queries. The breakdowns are used by all departments to ensure consistency in the storyline. In addition, the script supervisor will provide an estimated screen time which is vital for producers and the assistant directors' department to help schedule shoot days. During principal photography, they monitor physical and emotional continuity, any changes to action, dialogue and timings and record the description, set up, and preferred takes for each shot. They advise all departments on continuity and provide slate information to the camera, sound and visual effects (VFX) departments. Finally, they require adequate wrap time to ensure that editorial and production have all the information they require to complete the production.

### **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. Produce timings and pages breakdown of script during pre-production**

- Allocate a page length to each scene
- Time the scenes: a best estimate of the duration of each scene
- Calculate estimated run time for the entire production
- Share this information with production and assistant directors' department
- Time scenes during script read-throughs with actors, updating estimated scene durations and run time when necessary

#### **2. Produce scene or story day breakdown of script during pre-production**

- Work out the chronology of the story, identifying story days within the script and, if necessary, the time of day for the scenes
- Identify and record key scripted information about each scene that may impact continuity such as costume, make-up or props
- Cross check dialogue for any potential issues
- Resolve any inconsistencies relating to continuity, story days, story dates and time of day with the script writers or script editors
- Once satisfied with this breakdown, share it with production to distribute to heads of department

#### **3. Keep up-to-date with future shooting requirements**

- Check new shooting schedules for any extra crew requirements, such as second unit days
- Cross-check story days and scene breakdowns against advanced call sheets
- Communicate any corrections to call sheets to the second assistant director

#### 4. Prepare for each day's shooting

- Position self near director, ideally in sight of a monitor, and away from unnecessary noise
- Collate relevant information from own breakdowns, production call sheets, reference stills or playback footage and own facing pages / editor's log when necessary
- Verify continuity requirements and story days for scheduled scenes
- When picking up or completing a partially shot scene, collect relevant information on shot coverage, referring to any pre-existing continuity notes, the dailies playlist and coordinating with video department for playback when necessary
- For stunt or heavy visual effects sequences, check if a pre-vis is available, and if so, request a copy in advance to ascertain scene composition and estimated run time, adjusting the estimated time for the scene as required

#### 5. Monitor the continuity of technical details during principal shooting

- Provide slate information of each shot to second assistant camera technician
- Record lighting exposure index (ISO) and colour temperature settings and for each shot when required.
- Record whether sound for each shot is synced, no sound, wild track or a guide track
- Record data for each camera involved in each shot, including but not limited to: lens, focal length, t-stop, filters, and shutter speed and FPS, if different to the norm
- Describe camera moves and the composition of each shot, making accurate notes about screen direction and eyelines
- During pick-ups or re-shoots, communicate with other departments to relay relevant continuity details and technical information so as to ensure as much consistency as possible
- Provide script supervisors covering additional units with relevant continuity information

#### 6. Monitor the continuity of actors and props during principal shooting

- Note any changes to dialogue and action within scenes and raise any potential continuity issues during blocks (private rehearsals with director and cast)
- Compile accurate notes on relevant props and the costume, hair and make-up of the cast in each scene, referring to visual references when necessary
- Record information and any changes to dialogue from the blocking / rehearsal
- Communicate with the standby art director or props master to ensure that clocks and any other visual indicators of time are consistent with specified time of day for each shot
- Monitor the consistency of line delivery, actions and emotions between rehearsal, filming, related shots and any pick-up shots
- Log changes to dialogue and action within the marked-up script
- Prompt actors dialogue when necessary, or coordinate with the first assistant director as to which lines may need to be fed to the actor if their screen partner is not present
- When a new set up is being rigged with stand-ins, double check that planned positions of actors and their eyelines work in accordance to previously captured shots
- Communicate with the director, director of photography, and possibly the first assistant director and camera operators, if any adjustments to eyelines are required
- Ensure continuity of costume, hair, make-up, props and any other relevant area is achieved in related shots or pick-up shots, communicating with other departments to achieve this when necessary

## **7. Monitor progress of shooting**

- Keep on top of revisions by logging any relevant changes within the marked-up script
- Keep scene and story day breakdowns updated including adjusting estimated timings and page length for revised scenes and updating continuity and story day information
- Make sure all required scripted dialogue and action are captured for each scene
- Log the visual coverage of shots via tram lines within marked up script pages
- Communicate with director when required, to ensure there is sufficient coverage of each scene for the edit, including making sure that overlapping action and dialogue is shot
- Record information about the viability of each take and the reasons, logging the director's preferred takes when they communicate them
- Make sure the whole of each scene is captured by viable takes
- Log relevant visual effects information when required
- Time each take and record the actual duration within editors' cutting points
- Update estimated running time with actual run time for scenes that have been shot
- Produce progress reports which track the duration of the scheduled shoot day, the completion and actual run time of scheduled scenes, any coverage owed, and timings and pages changes via script revision, circulating them to production at the end of each day
- Keep a summarised log of overall coverage information for each scene when required, including date shot, estimated time, actual time, slates covered and status of the scene, sharing this frequently with production and first and second assistant directors

## **8. Support post-production**

- Produce and upload marked-up script pages for the day, and continuity notes such as the editor's daily log sheets, any facing pages, and a selects or print log for each shoot day
- Share relevant notes with visual effects
- Ensure that editorial will eventually have a complete set of continuity notes and a fully marked-up script
- Check that production will eventually have a complete set of progress reports in which timings and pages add up correctly
- Liaise with editors and visual effects and provide any additional information they may require

### **Role Specific Skills:**

- Identifying technical information about cameras, visual effects and sound
- Interpreting and breaking down scripts
- Identifying continuity requirements, monitoring continuity and anticipating potential continuity issues

### **Other / Transferable Skills:**

- Organisation: simultaneously monitoring information about cameras, special effects, visual effects, costume, make-up, props, dialogue, movement and shot duration
- Reporting: keeping comprehensive records about shots and continuity
- Communication, diplomacy and team-work. Communicating continuity requirements and issues coherently and patiently to others
- Management and leadership: delegating to the assistant and / or trainee, displaying patience as they learn and offering professional support and advice when required

**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 their actions and interactions. Respectful and inclusive of others, and meets the ethical requirements of their profession.
- Flexibility: willing to both listen and learn and to accept changing priorities and working requirements and has the flexibility to maintain high standards in a changing production environment