

Overview of Role

First assistant editors (1st AE) manage the day-to-day running of the cutting room, leaving the editor free to concentrate on editing their episode(s). They manage editorial workflow, organise materials and assist the edit, providing the editor with all the material and creative work they need. They are also the point of contact between the cutting room and other departments, including post production management, production, camera and sound. First assistant editors might be helped by several assistants and trainees, depending on the size of the production.

Core Responsibilities:

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

1. Set up and manage the cutting room

- ❑ Liaise with the post production supervisors (PPS), editor(s) and hire companies to establish kit preferences and requirements, the Avid version, size of the NEXIS file system and any special software requirements
- ❑ Confirm that the hardware and software is correct and working
- ❑ Download required software, for example Pix and Evercast, according to the production's data protection and security regulations
- ❑ Organise the workspaces to suit the needs of the project and preferences of the team to store materials including media, dailies, SFX, music, imports, exports and paperwork
- ❑ Monitor and maintain the workspaces by increasing, decreasing or re-allocating space
- ❑ Create the Avid project(s) and set project formats, resolutions, raster dimension, frame rates, and colour space and media creation settings on all computers
- ❑ Organise the Avid project(s) and establish a clear organisational structure for folders and bins and monitor the project files and Avid attic size
- ❑ Establish a clear organisational structure for each workspace to store materials including media, dailies, SFX, music, imports, exports and paperwork
- ❑ Organise Avid MediaFiles and establish a clear organisational structure for media so that it can be easily located
- ❑ Troubleshoot offline media including relinking, refreshing database files and using the media tool
- ❑ Assess storage requirements and liaise with the PPS to create a system for backing up projects and media

- Back up the media and projects storage manually or by using software
- Liaise with the hire company to obtain passwords and store securely
- Set up and manage remote workflow as required

2. Set up and test the offline workflow

- Establish contact with other departments including camera, sound, art, script supervisor, DIT / lab, picture post, and sound post
- Attend dailies workflow meetings or liaise with the PPS, editors, DIT/ lab, VFX sound recordist and script supervisor
- Format, naming and slating conventions and spec of picture and sound dailies and method of delivery to the cutting room
- Test the dailies workflow by requesting and ingesting lighting and camera tests to check media comes across correctly, and required metadata is present
- Send conform tests to picture and sound by turning over a selection of shots. Receive confidence QuickTimes (QTs) and ensure that these are correct and that there are no discrepancies
- Set up the editorial workflow to establish systems for the editorial team including naming conventions, settings, colour coding, scene bins, methods for the exchanging of sequences, clips, and other work between editors, assistant editors and trainees
- Import any frame leaders, title cards, masks, watermarks, burn ins, or effects, and make these available to the team in an organised way, such as a toolbox bin or folder
- Ensure the team is using the tools correctly and consistently
- Attend turnover workflow meetings or liaise with the PPS, editors, DIT, lab and post facilities to determine the turnover specifications, delivery requirements and final delivery format

3. Manage the editorial team

- Liaise with the editor(s) and PPS to recommend candidates for the roles of assistant editors and editorial trainees
- Interview potential candidates to assess their experience, abilities and suitability
- Create guides or checklists to outline editorial workflows such as NEXIS, and project organisation, dailies, turnovers, exports and imports and pass these onto the editorial team
- Oversee and manage the workload and delegate tasks to assistant editors and editorial trainees as appropriate
- Check the work of assistant editors and editorial trainees and provide feedback on their progress

- Train the assistant editor(s) and editorial trainees; assess their skills and strengths and use development plans and the assistant editor's toolkit to fill gaps

4. Manage production and post production information

- Store production information in a secure location according to the production's data protection and security regulations and procedures
- Organise and store the production paperwork which may include cast grids, continuity breakdowns, shooting schedules, scripts, story orders and unit lists
- Receive and manage script updates and amendments, ensuring editors always have the current version of the script
- Read the shooting schedule, call sheets and continuity notes to assess shoot progress and inform editor(s) of what dailies they can expect to receive as the shoot progresses, as well as any changes
- Organise and store the dailies paperwork which may include call sheets, daily progress reports, editor's logs, facing pages, lined scripts, sound reports, camera reports, DIT / lab reports and LUT (lookup table) trackers
- Check that all paperwork is complete and accounted for, and flag any missing paperwork with the relevant department
- Liaise with editor(s) to confirm they are happy with the organisation of information. This may include printing paperwork, filing electronically, or a combination of these
- Organise and manage editorial paperwork, such as dailies information, scene cards, assembly timings, episode information and cut continuity
- Organise and manage turnover paperwork, to accompany picture, sound, music and ADR (automated dialogue replacement) turnovers as required
- Establish a clear and straightforward organisational structure for all material on viewing platforms
- Liaise with the editors and PPS to source and confirm which exports go to which distribution lists in the case of restricted viewing, closed sets, or sensitive material

5. Process dailies

- Download, ingest, organise the dailies in the workspaces and project and backup the delivery from the DIT / lab
- Check clips and metadata against reports and continuity notes to ensure all dailies are correctly slated, labelled, accounted for and online
- Check that metadata is coming through the ALE (Avid log exchange) and CDLs (colour decision lists)
- Sync picture to audio and check sync for each clip. Re-time, group and sub-clip where necessary and label MOS (mit out sound) clips and wild tracks

- Troubleshoot out of sync clips, missing picture and audio clips, incorrectly slated and labelled clips and refer back to the continuity reports camera reports, sound reports, DIT / lab reports if any discrepancies exist
- Flag any general issues with slating, syncing, sound, continuity and inform the relevant departments
- Prepare scene bins for the editor(s) according to their preferences
- Create sequences and reels for the editor(s) according to their preferences
- Create and export dailies sequences, or individual clips as required, and upload to the viewing platform, sending to required recipients and distribution lists
- Create and update an assembly timings spreadsheet that compares the timing of current assemblies to the script and shoot timings
- Complete mag clearance checks against the continuity notes, camera reports, sound reports, DIT / lab reports and LTO (linear tape open) reports
- Export and upload assemblies or stills for reference to relevant departments when required for re-shoots and pickups

6. Assist the edit

- Read the script to understand the context, style, tone and story and to assess where sound effects, music, stock footage and graphics may be needed
- Collate existing series materials as appropriate, to keep with the style and conventions of the series such as sound effects, music, stock footage, graphics, or GVs (general views)
- Ingest sound and music libraries and keep track of online libraries to source music, sound effects, stock footage and graphics
- Receive, import and inform the editor(s) of new material from other departments which has been requested to be added to the cut such as dialogue and effects, stems, music cues and stems, graphics and logos
- Reference dailies, metadata, and paperwork to find specific shots, scenes, and lines of dialogue when required
- Interpret the editor's briefings and watch cuts to understand the context of creative work for editors. Make adjustments for the editor's feedback and notes
- Complete temp sound work including dialogue cleanups, spot effects, atmospheres and levelling
- Complete online comps, including split screens, animates, paint outs, picture in picture, and basic cleanups
- Source and lay up music, making music edits and levelling
- Source and prepare stock footage and graphics
- Cut wrap reels, and material when required by production, at the editor's discretion

- Prepare, check and upload exports such as dailies sequences, assemblies, full episodes and reference clips when required, and send to required recipients and distribution lists
- Prepare the cutting room or online meeting, for viewings, screenings, music and sound spots
- Liaise with the editor(s) to prepare the cut and attend the meeting to drive the Avid as required

7. Process turnovers

- Prepare turnovers to meet all delivery specifications including slates, burn ins, handles, metadata, naming conventions and formats
- Liaise with picture and sound facilities to troubleshoot any errors or difficulties conforming
- Create picture turnover deliverables per the specification, which may include reference QuickTimes (QTs), AAFs, EDLs, WAVs, AVBs and change lists. Receive and check confidence QTs
- Create sound turnover deliverables per the specifications which may include reference QTs, AAFs, EDLs, WAVs and change lists. Sending sound dailies and reports
- Create ADR turnover deliverables per the specifications, which may include reference QTs and WAVs
- Create music turnover deliverables per the specifications, which may include reference QTs, AAFs, EDLs, WAVs and change lists
- Liaise with the PPS to create turnover paperwork which may include online or optical lists, music cue sheets and ADR lists

8. Archive the cutting room

- Liaise with the PPS to create an inventory list of cutting room hardware and kit
- Complete a final backup and archive of the edit, projects and media
- Compile GVs, sound effects, music and other materials which may be required for the next series
- Establish an organisational structure of the backup for future teams to navigate the projects, files and media
- Create a handover guide and a directory of the backup storage for the assistant editors for future series as required
- Liaise with post production supervisor to ensure backups are stored correctly, according to the guidelines of the production company

Role Specific Skills:

- Process dailies and turnovers
- Apply technical knowledge of formats, codecs, frame rates, settings and understanding deliverables
- Manage and organise editorial materials, projects and media
- Use editing tools such as Avid Media Composer, Adobe After Effects and DaVinci Resolve, and ScriptSync
- Use additional tools such as Shutter Encoder, Auto QT, Media Encoder, Google Suite, Microsoft Office, Aspera, PIX, MediaSilo, FileMaker, Evercast and Clearview
- Use creative editing and storytelling techniques for picture, sound and music
- Liaise with the assistant editors, editor, PPS and other departments

Transferable Skills:

- Communication: interpreting other's requirements and communicating requirements to departments and colleagues
- Diplomacy: receiving various information and tasks from colleagues, understanding their points of views and diplomatically addressing them
- Problem-solving: troubleshooting and assessing basic issues with hardware and software
- Leadership and management: lead the assistant editors, uphold ethics and maintain respect when dealing with others. Support, train and encourage junior members of the team

Attributes:

- Resilience and enthusiasm: adapt 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 learn and to accept changing priorities and working requirements and has the flexibility to maintain high standards in a changing production environment
- Professional development: develop an ethos to learn and seek out learning and networking opportunities, identifying those that will be most beneficial