

Who is in charge

This is a training module from the ScreenSkills 'From Script to Screen' programme.

The text includes multiple choice questions for you to answer. Each question is identified with the words 'Multiple choice question' and finishes like this:

Question end

That's so you can stop and think. Each question end is followed by the correct answer or answers, and feedback.

Links for navigation within this document:

- [Section A: Introduction](#)
- [Section B: Clear hierarchies help us get the job done](#)
- [Section C: Hierarchies in other departments](#)
- [Section D: Where to go for help](#)

Section A: Introduction

Hi there, I'm Samira. I'm a Script Assistant.

To do my job – actually, for any of us to do our jobs – we need to know who's in charge of what. So what are the typical reporting lines in the entertainment industry? We'll find out in this module.

Understanding these relationships, and who's in charge of the work you're doing, will help you do a better job, to communicate more effectively, and help your work run smoothly. I'm here to give you an overview.

This is a global industry, and some job roles have different titles in different parts of the world. Titles might also vary depending on the content being produced and whether there's a union involved.

We use the most common titles in these modules, but if you're not sure about any role, check the Glossary to find out what it involves and what it may be called in different countries.

Section B: Clear hierarchies help us get the job done

Multiple choice question. As you know from earlier modules, there's quite a lot of hierarchy in the film and TV production business. Why do you think that might be?

- A. It lets people focus on what they need to do
- B. It makes communication more efficient
- C. It prevents duplication of activity
- D. It makes bosses feel good

Question end

The correct answers are A, B, and C. All these hierarchies and reporting lines are there for a purpose. If we don't work together effectively and respond to change rapidly, the production process won't work well.

So, the roles and responsibilities we'll be covering here have been established to help the whole team operate as effectively as possible. Whichever department you work in, it will have a hierarchy of roles.

Multiple choice question. Put this list of roles from within the Cinematography Team into the correct order of reporting and responsibility.

- A. Camera Operator
- B. 2nd AC
- C. 1st AC
- D. Director of Photography
- E. Camera Trainee

Question end

The correct order is Director of Photography, then Camera Operator, then 1st AC, 2nd AC, and finally Camera Trainee. This is the order of roles and responsibilities for the Cinematography Team. Sometimes there will be more than one Camera Trainee, and the hierarchy might involve other roles linked to this department like DIT or Data Wranglers.

Understanding the hierarchy in other departments as well as your own will help you know who to speak to, and when you need to speak to them. It will also help you prioritise your activities.

Whenever you have a question about your work, a good general principle is to ask the person directly above you in the hierarchy.

As you know from other modules, the leader of each function is called the Head of Department. You'll usually hear them referred to as 'HODs', as we covered before.

The HODs collaborate with the Director, Producers, and Creator on the creative vision of the project and how to execute that in their areas of expertise.

They coordinate the range of people and skills that support the production – making sure the work of Costume, Location, Rigging, Design, Construction, Casting, Continuity and all of the other departments come together so that the Cast and Director can develop the best content possible.

Here are a few examples of the HODs that are involved in a production:

- The Director of Photography is the HOD for the Camera and Lighting Department.
- The Production Designer is the HOD for the Art Department.
- The Financial Controller or Production Accountant is the HOD for the Production Accounting Department.

Use the Production Family Tree to see the full range of departments and roles.

Section C: Hierarchies in other departments

We've seen that each Department has a hierarchy of roles and responsibilities, and why this is helpful. These are just a few examples of the HODs that are involved in a production. It's important to know who's in charge of key aspects of production. So let's find out a bit more.

Have a go at these questions about who's in charge of some key aspects of production.

Multiple choice question. Who's in charge of Development? Choose the best answer from the list.

- A. Production Coordinator
- B. Director
- C. Creator

Question end

It's C. The Creator oversees the Development of the original idea into a script and, on a series, they will lead the Writer's Room. They'll also work very closely with the producers and directors to recruit the HODs and begin the casting process.

For content that isn't script led, producers often create format and content ideas which they will develop into pitch documents and treatments with the aim of getting picked up and optioned, or bought.

Usually they won't work with writers for this, but the process of developing the content and co-ordinating with Production to recruit HODs is the same as for scripted content.

Now let's think about who's in charge of realising the creative vision for the shoot.

Multiple choice question. Who do you think is in charge of the creativity of the shoot? Choose the best answer from the list.

- A. Production Designer
- B. Director
- C. Director of Photography

Question end

The answer is B. The Director is in charge of realising a creative vision for the production. All the crew works to their requirements, to make sure that the Director and Cast have the best possible platform to use their creative talents.

The Creator is also making sure that the Director's vision is aligned to the overall creative intent of the project.

Multiple choice question. While the Director is working to realise their creative vision, who's in charge of running the set?

- A. Creator
- B. 1st Assistant Director (1st AD)
- C. Director of Photography

Question end

The answer is B. As you saw in an earlier module, the 1st AD is in charge of the set. They will develop and constantly revise the schedule for the shoot, so they know what needs to happen and when. They make sure that everything runs smoothly and on time. They're working on behalf of the Producer and Line Producer.

The 1st AD coordinates with HODs to respond rapidly in a fast-changing environment, and that's where those departmental hierarchies help with efficient and rapid communication.

Multiple choice question. Who's in charge of managing the production, the cast, and the crew?

- A. Producer/Line Producer
- B. Financial Controller
- C. Director

Question end

The answer is A. The Producer or Line Producer is in charge of the logistics of the production and for the ultimate management of the cast and crew.

Producers often deal with cast issues, and Line Producers and/or UPMs deal with everything else. Sometimes there's just one person handling everything.

Multiple choice question. When thinking about roles and responsibilities, do you think this statement is true or false?

“The Producer or Line Producer has ultimate legal responsibility for the production.”

Question end

It’s true. The Producer or Line Producer, along with the production company, carry ultimate legal responsibility for all aspects of the production, including things like health and safety, contracts, copyright and cast and crew wellbeing.

You can see that the person in charge will depend on what department you work in, and what aspect of the production you’re working on.

Being aware of who that person is, and the responsibilities they have, will help you be as effective as possible in your role.

Section D: Where to go for help

So far, we’ve covered hierarchies and reporting lines relating to the production itself.

Multiple choice question. What happens if you have a question or concern that relates to you personally, or to something that you’ve seen or experienced at work? Who would you speak to?

- A. Producer/Line Producer
- B. 1st AD
- C. Production Secretary
- D. Your immediate superior

Question end

The correct answer is D. In the first instance, your immediate superior within your department is the person to talk to.

If it's not possible to speak to that person (if your concern was about them, for example) then you should go to your Head of Department.

And if that isn't possible either, then ultimately you could speak with the Line Producer, who would then advise further and make sure that your issue is dealt with appropriately. In some regions you can contact the studio or production company's Human Resources department.

To summarise, remember these key points...

Hierarchies and reporting lines in production help with clear communication and efficiency.

There are multiple hierarchies and reporting lines, so get to know who does what. Believe me, it will make your job so much easier.

If you have a question about your work, speak to your immediate superior in the first instance.

That's it! I hope this has been a helpful overview of who's in charge of making TV and film, and who to go to with any questions or concerns. If you need more details about any roles or departments then check the Glossary.

And that's the end of this module. This was created by ScreenSkills.