

CAREERS IN

TV PRODUCTION

Editorial and Production Roles



Introduction to Careers in Non-Scripted TV Production

The UK is home to thousands of talented television creators and is internationally respected for delivering quality programming across all genres. Working in UK TV opens up a world of opportunities - you could even be contracted for regional and global travel.

What Is Non-Scripted Television?

The term non-scripted really means 'without actors'. But it may include other performers like presenters, contributors and entertainers. In truth, every TV programme has a narrative and script. Non-scripted genres include children's, documentary, factual, factual entertainment, entertainment, natural history and news.

While there is often movement for roles between these genres, they don't usually cross over into comedy or drama (scripted or fiction).

Factual

Television that documents actual events and real people. Some programmes are presented by known TV personalities, journalists or professional experts. Types of programmes include; cooking, current affairs, docudrama, genealogy, natural history, observational and fixed rig documentary, survivalist and sports.

Factual Entertainment

Television that documents real events and people but with a stronger entertainment element than serious factual programmes. The entertainment angle is controlled by the production company. Often hosted by TV personalities, programmes include celebrity or expert led experience like travelogues or learning a skill, dating and makeover formats, daytime magazine shows and reality.

News

News from around the world is packaged into short bulletins through the day and longer programmes at lunchtime and in the evening. The news is presented by a trained journalist, who will usually write their own scripts with help from a small production team. News is collated from agency reports, video from external sources, live reports "in the field" and pre-recorded interviews. There is often a guest who can comment on a story.

Entertainment

What it says on the tin - formatted programming meant to entertain. It often contains the same segments every episode but props or guests will change. Entertainment is usually hosted by a known presenter, although sometimes just their voice will accompany the footage. Programmes are fast paced and visually exciting. Entertainment programmes recorded in a purpose-built studio are sometimes referred to as 'shiny floor' because the vinyl floors reflect the studio lights. Programmes are very heavily produced and all elements are controlled by the production company. Programmes include game shows, festival coverage, panel shows, live music events, quiz shows, talent elimination formats and talk shows. On occasion, an event is produced by other companies separately to TV coverage; concerts, festivals, ceremonial events.

Children's

All programmes produced specifically for children aged up to 15 years old. Themes and language used reflect the age of the intended audience from pre-school to teen. Content is created to encourage the viewer's imagination and educate outside the classroom environment.

Why Choose A Career In Non-Scripted Television?

Careers behind the camera in TV production can be varied, exciting, stimulating, influential, surprising and rewarding with real 'money can't buy' experiences. It could be discovering the next superstar, meeting world leaders, observing pioneering surgery or working inside volcanoes. You'll work with incredible talent, make friends for life and develop personal skills you never knew you had.



50,000+
TV Production
Jobs in the UK

Routes In

There is no set route into a career in television. Every professional you speak to will have a different story about how they got their first job. Once you get started, you can change your mind about the job you do, programmes you work on or even the sector. It's not necessary to go to university or film school but some technical roles will require qualifications.

The Vocational Training Route

There are lots of internships and skills programmes at broadcasters and independent production companies. But there is also lots of competition. Annual recruitment involves intensive application forms, assessments and interviews. But on the upside, training can lead to long contracts at companies where you learn on the job and sometimes they will pay for additional courses for you. Keep tabs on company websites and social accounts to be alerted to opportunities.

The Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships combine actual work and on-the-job training with industry relevant courses and assessments tracked by government. They are set at all industry levels and cover a wide range of skills. Keep an eye on companies offering apprenticeships via websites and social media.

The University Route

University courses in film and TV are a great way to learn skills and progress your personal development. It's a good idea to find a course that has great relationships with industry and access to very high tech kit and software. It's important to recognise that university is not a golden ticket into a job and everyone has to start at the bottom. Some courses have been awarded the Creative Skillset Tick, a quality mark that ensures strong industry links.

You can learn more at:

www.creativeskillset.org

Entry Level Jobs

While not very glamorous, these jobs are essential to the smooth running of a production. They don't have a high level of responsibility so make a perfect starter job for new entrants. This includes university graduates who still have to start at entry level the same as everyone else. Typical roles include Runner, Receptionist and Personal Assistant.

Employment Prospects

As a large amount of programmes are project based, many roles are freelance. Depending on the size of the production, you may work for a company for a day, a week, a few months, or even years. Then you have to find a new programme to work on, often at a new company. Every job will be different although you'll often bump into past colleagues so don't burn any bridges!

You may be required to work from home, on location, in an office or at a studio. Jobs can also involve a lot of travelling and being away from home for long periods. Permanent staff roles are rare to find and tend to be for very senior professionals, or in other sectors like post-production and broadcast.

Pay

Pay is usually negotiated on daily or weekly rates, depending on the role and production. The following rates are a guide to potential freelance salaries. Entry level pay can range from UK minimum wage (NMW) to London Living Wage (LLW) rates and the general estimation is that most freelancers will usually work 9 months out of 12. This means workers receive 75% of the figures below, on average. But don't fret - the rates are higher than permanent staff jobs to compensate for potential periods of unemployment. Senior Executives are usually permanently employed staff and salaries are often £65k and up.



Job Level	Annual Gross Salary
Entry	£NMW – £23k
Junior	£23k – £30k
Mid	£31k – £47k
Senior	£52k – £97k

Inclusivity



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

Getting Jobs

Expect to be in a job 70% of the time and looking for a job (or resting) the other 30%. To find work, usual ways are browsing company social accounts for leads, reading trade press, registering with industry agencies (make sure you check reviews first), requesting meetings with people that may need you later, subscribing to industry community pages on social media and specialist websites, telling your networks when you're available and uploading your CV to company online databases. You can also contact talent managers who look for people to work behind the camera in editorial or production management roles. You can find out who they are on company websites.

Hours of Work

Hours are often unpredictable and long with early starts and late finishes. Television is not often a Monday to Friday job or even a five day week job. Expect to work weekends and bank holidays during busy times. On the plus side, you can have days off in the middle of the week! Some roles, particularly those that are based in studios, will work a single day at a time so it's important to have many contacts to maintain a steady income. If you need to have stability and set hours, this is probably not the industry for you!

Networking

TV relies on personal introductions and recommendations. Don't believe the old saying that 'it's all about who you know' - it's usually more about 'who knows you'. You need to meet new people all the time but also introduce people to each other and they will do the same for you. Increase your connections by going to industry events, do some skills training, create your own content and reconnect with former colleagues. Update your social platforms and let people know when you are available to hire.



Which Department Could You Work In?



ENTRY LEVEL

Entry level roles give you a great understanding of the structure of a production or company. These roles will help you to identify what you are most interested in as a career, while learning on the job and fulfilling essential tasks. All of these jobs can lead into the next level in your chosen department. Even if you're a graduate, you'll still be expected to start in an entry level role. It's up to you how quickly you learn the essentials and progress.

DEVELOPMENT

The development team are responsible for creating new business for the company. Responding to briefs from clients and coming up with original content, they are passionate about ideas, stories and angles. It's their business to know the client's audience, what they're currently broadcasting and what programmes have been commissioned from competitors. Teams vary in size and experience and will have a diverse mix of strengths and backgrounds.

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

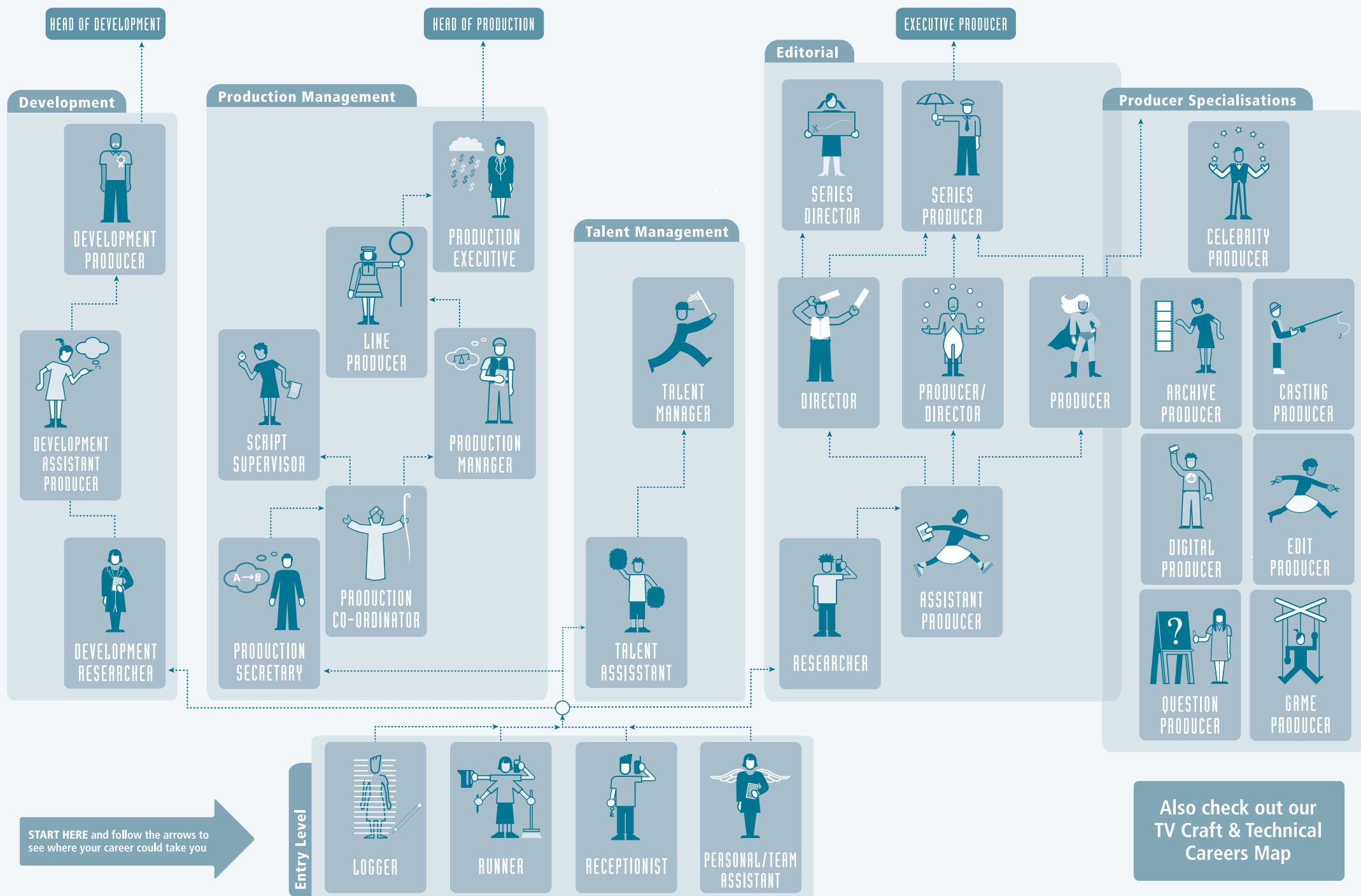
Often shortened to just 'production', the production management department manages all the logistics of making a programme. The aim is to balance the creative vision with financial and time constraints. Team structure changes according to the programme and budget and some people specialise in particular genres. People skills and empathy are essential. Tasks include budgeting, cost management, editorial ethics, health and safety, legal issues, logistics, OFCOM compliance, scheduling and team management.

EDITORIAL

The editorial team are responsible for the story content of the programme. The structure of this department changes according to the programme and its budget, but there are a few things common to all (or most!) people in the department. Producers are responsible for the creative vision, editorial ethics, health and safety, legal issues, money, people, OFCOM compliance and workflows with an emphasis on programme content, while production management focus on the smooth running of production and crew. They make quick decisions they can justify with experience.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

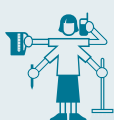
Within a production company, talent management researches and recruits people with particular skills, to work behind the camera in editorial or production management roles, mainly in freelance contracts. People skills are a must - you need to be good at diplomacy, empathy, interviewing and negotiation. In some cases, you may be required to manage exit interviews, contract termination or disciplinary action. Jobs in this area can be rare and in smaller companies, this function is sometimes filled by senior production management and producers.



TV PRODUCTION CAREER MAP: EDITORIAL & PRODUCTION

Download this map and other resources:
hiive.co.uk/careers

ENTRY LEVEL



Runners do anything and everything that's required. Yes, anything. Runners learn how to assist everyone on the team, be persistent, communicate effectively, prioritise and keep track of receipts (that last one is very important). They may work in the office, on location or simply run errands everywhere. They may also do some logging, keeping the production running smoothly and covering Reception. A driving licence is an advantage but not essential.



Loggers don't work in the forest and chop down trees. But they do watch rushes and write logs. They describe what's happening on-screen to assist the post-production teams in the edit. Excellent typing speed, language, spelling and grammar skills are essential. Loggers work efficiently and accurately to meet daily targets. Some loggers work in an office after the shoot, while 'live loggers' record data while shooting takes place.



Personal / Team Assistants look after senior staff. They help to manage diaries, documents, errands, expenses, meetings, minutes, reports, research, travel and accommodation. They also generally assist where needed. Sometimes they go to set as an extra pair of hands. This is a great place to get insider knowledge of senior roles and can lead to great introductions and recommendations.



Receptionists are usually the first point of contact with a company. They are most often attached to facility teams in larger companies or an Office Manager in smaller ones, and work in shifts to accommodate opening hours. Responsibilities include answering phones, greeting clients, processing mail and deliveries and opening the building. Sometimes they do general admin work, book rooms, manage petty cash and order supplies. In some companies, Receptionists help out productions with research and practical tasks between their other work.

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT



Production Secretary is a step-up from Runner with more admin responsibility. Sometimes there is no Production Coordinator so this role may report directly to the Production Manager. Tasks include monitoring and ordering stationery supplies, organising couriers and shipments, organising timesheets and release forms, processing invoices, researching travel, transport and accommodation requirements, taking notes at meetings and providing support to the Production Manager and Production Coordinator. There are a lot of spreadsheets involved!



Production Coordinators usually do a lot of admin support in the office. However, they should also spend time on set and location to understand other roles and departments. This will help with logistics like accommodation, booking personnel, checking invoices, creating callsheets, diversity monitoring, booking equipment, maintaining contact lists, obtaining music clearance, processing paperwork, travel and work permits/visas. Senior Production Coordinators may become **Junior Production Managers** who can manage most tasks of the Production Manager role but require a little more support from senior team members.



Line Producers are senior Production Managers with considerable experience. LPs oversee all production activities, including budgeting, cost management, engagement with contributors, performers and agents, Health & Safety, recruitment, insurance, location access, monitoring progress, regulation compliance, scheduling, setting up shoots and studios, sourcing equipment and suppliers, on-the-job training and troubleshooting.



Script Supervisors don't write scripts but do ensure all elements of the programme are included. Working closely with Directors on multi-camera programmes, they prepare scripts, running orders, shot information and VT (videotape) clips. Sitting next to the Director during shooting, they manage timings, perform countdowns and check all elements are standing by. Being very organised, accurate and good at maths (and counting backwards!) is essential! Many Production Coordinators become a **Gallery PA**, performing many tasks of a Script Supervisor on simpler programmes.



Production Managers do a similar job to Line Producers but with fewer years experience in the role. Most large productions will have a Line Producer and Production Manager. Tasks include preparing contracts, liaising with local authorities for permits and permissions, overseeing location searches, signing location releases and recruitment. They also use specialist accounting software to enter accrual, forecast and actual expenditure. A whiz at paperwork, they ensure bills are paid, supervise callsheets and rushes logs, manage music/archive clearance and petty cash floats. They'll also sign off risk assessments prepared by the most senior editorial person on the shoot.



Production Executives are the bridge between the Head of Production and the Line Producer or Production Manager. This role exists in medium-sized companies with a number of projects in production. Prod Execs set up budgets, schedules and editorial specification documents to create contracts from. They also provide support and troubleshoot issues and may deal with client finance teams.

TALENT MANAGEMENT



Talent Managers* are often Senior or Series Producers with experience in hiring the right talent for different productions. They have many contacts built up over time but are also passionate about making new ones. In some companies, they negotiate rates and terms and issue contracts. *AKA **Talent Executives** depending on level of experience in programme making and size of the company.



Talent Assistants are often the gatekeepers to the senior staff. They process email, screen calls and can arrange interviews. They may also fulfil admin tasks and prepare contracts. They need to be good with databases and spreadsheets, communication and prioritising. They don't need a great deal of production experience at this level.

EDITORIAL



Researchers are briefed and managed by Producers. They often spend a LOT of time talking on the phone finding people to be on-camera, locations and props. They have lots of good ideas, organise travel and access to places.

Key skills are reading, listening and condensing loads of information into small chunks for Producers, Directors and Production Managers. Starting as a Runner, they move to **Junior Researcher** first.



Assistant Producers have a little less responsibility and experience than a Producer, but are not entry level. They are also not the assistant to the producer – that's often the job of the Runner! APs take on many of the tasks a

Producer does but do not have the final say on big decisions. This is usually the next step up from Researcher.



Directors* visualise and define the style and structure of the programme, then work out how to achieve it, both for multi-camera studio or single-camera style, programmes.

Directors link the production, technical and creative teams and instruct crew, editors and performers. They have exceptional artistic vision and strong leadership, make decisions, and (importantly!) remain calm under great pressure. They also oversee the technical aspects including the camera, sound, lighting, music, design, script and graphics. ***Series Directors** are responsible for an entire series of programmes.



Producer/Directors are skilled at producing the programme and managing a team. They'll also direct performers, contributors and technical crew. Sometimes, they will need to also shoot the action too so excellent technical knowledge of

equipment, shooting technique, sound and lighting skills is essential. A big juggling act!

DEVELOPMENT



Development Researchers need to have millions of ideas and are often relied upon to be the 'voice of youth' in the team. They must be able to check facts accurately, condense information, have great IT and verbal phone skills, work to briefs and write engaging content.



Development Assistant Producers generate programme ideas, researching all kinds of subjects, getting access to people, places and industries and responding to briefs. They have good technical knowledge and can operate basic cameras, lights, audio and editing packages to create casting tapes (err.. yes, we still call them tapes) and visual references.



Development Producers are wizards at ideas generating for TV programmes. They know broadcasters and their audiences, write crucial treatments, conduct research, get access to people and manage junior team members. They are skilled at creating short-form videos (sizzle tapes) that sell the idea visually. Confident pitching to clients, they are good decision makers and understand how an idea becomes a programme. At this level, they are expected to have had ideas successfully commissioned into programmes.



Producers manage the editorial details. This could be anything from writing ideas for games, finding celebrities to take part, setting up shooting locations and props, deciding what will make the final cut, managing shooting activity, writing scripts, selecting music to recruiting other freelancers – and that's just for starters! At this level there are a few specialist areas of experience:



Series Producers* run the day-to-day production from a content angle. They ensure the programme is being made according to the contract. They manage the team, schedules, content decisions, contributors and key elements like music, graphics, title sequences, scripts and edits. They work closely with senior production management *AKA **Series Editors** on daily, magazine style, programmes.



Game Producers are responsible for coming up with ideas and creating activities to be filmed for entertainment purposes. Games are used as a device leading to another outcome, such as elimination, immunity from eviction and award of points or prizes. Often working closely with an art department, they will visualise the activity, design and source props, create and manage risk assessments, explain the game play in the script and tally the results.



Edit Producers are engaged solely for post-production, when the schedule doesn't have room for the Director to edit every episode, so they are naturally very experienced Producer/Directors. They work with the Editor to create a programme from rushes (raw video material), set notes, interview transcripts and guidance from the Series or Executive Producer.



Digital Producers are responsible for (you guessed it) digital content. They develop a digital strategy to attract and engage greater audiences. This could be developing stand-alone content, re-cutting popular sequences for shareable short-form video, creating animations, scripting content, live tweeting and producing polls, comments or questions for the main show. They need technical skills, knowledge of editorial ethics and OFCOM compliance, plus awareness of digital platform cultures and trends.



Casting Producers specialise in, yep, casting. From members of the public to professional experts, they'll cast according to the editorial brief. They know a lot about where to find people with particular cultures, interests and abilities, and know if someone will be good telly. They are also able to confidently pitch their potential cast to the Series and Executive Producers.



Archive Producers source and acquire content already made by other companies. This can include news footage, viral videos, commercials, overseas programmes, film and music clips, published text - anything to illustrate a point. They negotiate rates and terms to acquire clearance (permission) for use in the programme. It's important to get the correct permissions or the programme makers can be sued!



Question Producers are responsible for writing and verifying questions for game and quiz show formats. They have an excellent command of language and can structure question rounds with increasing difficulty. With a wide general knowledge they know where to go to verify facts, verify answers given by players and tally the results. They manage a team of question writing Assistant Producers and Researchers.



Celebrity Producers know the most popular (or infamous) talent like actors, singers, presenters, filmmakers, authors and artists - but also politicians, sports personalities, reality TV stars or activists. They'll be clued in on what activities they do outside what they are known for, plus they're well-connected with agents. It's a politically sensitive job sometimes that requires diplomacy. They select, pitch and secure individuals, negotiate contracts with agents and may have direct contact with celebrities.

LOOKING FOR RESOURCES OR FURTHER ADVICE?

You can find lots of information and resources about careers in screen industries online. Start with these sites and check their social media for more.

BAFTA guru.bafta.org
BBC Academy bbc.co.uk/academy
BFI bfi.org.uk/education-research
Creative Skillset creativeskillset.org/tv
Hiive hiive.co.uk/careers
Royal Television Society rts.org.uk/education-training



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Supported by the BBC, Channel 4 and Channel 5 via the TV Skills Fund, managed by Creative Skillset

Commissioned by Creative Skillset © 2018

Original research and text by Jude Winstanley, www.judewinstanley.com

Design updated by Greg Cowling, Greg Cowling Design

Additional design work by Dave Gray, www.iamdavegray.com

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Original concept by Ian Murphy and Allan Burrell, Compositing Coach commissioned by IntoFilm