

Post Production Supervisor

Post Production Supervisors are responsible for the post production process, during which they maintain clarity of information and good channels of communication between the Producer, Editor, Supervising Sound Editor, the Facilities Companies (such as film labs, CGI studios and negative cutters) and the Production Accountant. Although this is not a creative role, it is pivotal in ensuring that the film's Post Production budget is manageable and achievable, and that all deadlines are met. Because large amounts of money are involved, and most of a film's budget is spent during Production, the Post Production period can often be difficult and challenging.

The role can be stressful and requires ingenuity, empathy and the ability to make tough decisions under pressure, while working long hours, to tight deadlines. They are employed on a freelance basis, by the Producer, often also with approval from a Completion Bond Guarantee company.

They usually work alone, but on larger productions may employ an Assistant. The role varies according to the type of film and the budget. On big budget films using complex CGI (Computer Generated Images), they start work during pre-production, liaising with the CGI Company and ensuring that the Producer is aware of all the creative and budgetary considerations and how they may impact on the post production period.

On smaller budget films they also advise about any limits that may need to be applied to the shoot, as well as providing an overall picture of what can be realistically achieved in post production. Most Post Production Supervisors also liaise with the Editor and Producer (and sometimes the Director), about the hiring of post production personnel (Sound Editors, Titles Designers, Mixers, etc). During post production, they work closely with the Production Accountant, supplying accurate information for the Cost Reports, which are prepared every 3-4 weeks and show how actual expenditure compares to the original budget.

Post Production Supervisors work with the Editor, Supervising Sound Editor, and Re-Recording Sound Mixer throughout post production, making sure that each different stage of the process is delivered on time and within budget. They usually continue to work on the production until all the elements needed for the completion of the film are delivered, including the Music and Effects version which allows the dialogue track to be replaced with different languages.

Although there is no typical career route, most Post Production Supervisors have a wide experience of working as an Assistant Editor, or in a specialized area of sound, such as ADR (Automated Dialogue Replacement). Because the work involves dealing with those who are responsible for the highly complex processes involved in post production, first hand experience of the challenges they face is vital.

Expert knowledge of the full post production process is the basic requirement for Post Production Supervisors. Because of the rapid changes in digital post production technology, it is vital that Post Production Supervisors keep up to date with developments by staying in regular contact with Facilities Houses, Equipment Manufacturers and the Trade Press. Knowledge and experience of film budgeting software is also vital.