

Studio Roles

In general, we'll break the roles up into what we call "Above the Line" (ATL) and "Below the Line" (BTL).

The ATL portion of is "in charge" of the production – they know all of the key elements and produce all key components of the production. They are the Deciders, and they do most of the key jobs in the day-to-day running of the production. They produce all paperwork (who does what paperwork is covered in a moment), and they print out and provide paperwork for the necessary individuals both ATL and BTL.

The BTL portion is supervised by the ATL portion, and they follow the instructions, paperwork, and so forth produced by the ATL team.

In this class, you'll be ATL and BTL at least once for the production cycle. Depending on class size and/or production complexity, some of these positions may be doubled up or omitted.

ATL Team Components

Producer – Coordinates the production. Schedules what happens on each day. Works with the director to schedule out a given day's timeline. Approves of the work done by the team, from paperwork to finished product. In productions where runtime is important, this person, the AD, or the TD may run the stopwatch/timer and call out relevant times.

Director – In-charge of the shoot. It's this person's "vision" that guides the production work. Determines blocking, movement, shot choice, and so forth. Sets the tone for the production, and approves the key decisions of the production team. They are the unifying force of the production. During the shoot, they literally call the shots. Produces the annotated script (if required), the storyboard (if required), the master shot sheet, the camera shot sheet.

Assistant Director – Manages cameras, making sure they know their shots and are in the correct position. Coaches cameras before and during the shoot to adjust and make the shots match the director's instruction. Works with the director to make sure the director's "vision" of the production makes sense.

Technical Director – Runs the switcher. In charge of paying attention to pace and energy. Follows the director's cues. Coordinates the lower thirds, graphics, and other video inputs available to the production team. Note the possibility of additional work for the TD based on the CG/Graphics role.

Floor Director/Manager – Runs the studio. Works with talent on blocking and placement. Relays key information from the booth to the studio floor. Helps cameras

move from position. In charge of making sure the setup and strike go smoothly. Cues the talent. Produces the floorplan.

Production Designer – Decides on the color energy, visual appearance, set, and costuming. Produced the production design document (if required).

Audio Director – In charge of coordinating mics and all other audio inputs. Mixes the production live. Finds or produces (this depends on the assignment) all non-diegetic and diegetic sound effects and music. Produces the audio design document (if required).

Lighting Director – Produces the lighting plan. Lights the set based on camera and talent position and blocking.

May be ATL or BTL

Character Generator and Graphics – Types up and lays out the lower thirds. Creates/finds (depending on the assignment) appropriate still imagery, including formatting it properly. Makes sure the appropriate video sources (playback, switcher, or CG computer) have the correct files and that they work correctly. Triggers/sequences them during the production as cued by the director. If this is a BTL position, the TD will be the person who produces the content and the CG/Graphics person will sequence the work during the production.

Talent – Performs the script, following the instructions of the director. In most non-journalistic environments or cases in which this person doesn't have power, this person is BTL.

BTL Team Components

Camera Operator – Follows the camera shot sheet. Works with the AD to make sure shots are correct and works with the FD to make sure the camera is in the correct position.

Audio Assistant – Works with the Audio Director to make sure all mics are working correctly. May trigger and sequence particular sounds for the production.

Teleprompter/Recorder – Presses record on the recorder. Runs the teleprompter.

Playback – Plays any prerecorded elements as cued by the director.