

LOCATIONS DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE

The locations department finds, secures and manages the places (locations) where filming happens. The size of the team will depend on the project. Many shows will have a Location Manager and Scout(s), but on larger projects the team may include:

HoD

(Supervising) Location Manager

- Oversees Locations Department
- Will start work on a project 6 months/a year prior to filming, working with the production designer, cinematographer and producer(s) to set the vision.
- Typical day varies: role is a mixture of administration, scouting and on-set work. In prep, mostly scouting and paperwork. Closer to the shoot the team may grow and Location Manager also manages it.

Scout

- Responsible for finding potential locations
- Not on set; more traditional working hours
- Involves lots of travel

Unit Manager

- On-set role
- Manages the Unit Base (where the trailers are)
- Oversees power & water supplies, waste, parking

Assistant Location Manager

- Sometimes allocated to specific location: key contact for location.
- On-set role
- May involve supporting prep and strike, or leading the floors with the assistant directors during the shoot

Location Coordinator

- Coordinates locations paperwork, eg. location releases, permits, recce schedules, locations lists, movement orders
- Monitors locations budget

Location Assistant

- On-set role
- Support with setting up and striking (packing up after a shoot wraps)

Marshall

- On set role
- Public interface: locking off a location (eg. streets, building) to ensure members of the public don't walk on set

Entry Level



The Film & TV
Educators Network

LOCATION MANAGEMENT CAREER SPOTLIGHT PANEL NOTES



Required/Desirable Skills

Soft Skills

- **Communication:** being a people person is essential. Being friendly, chatty, and able to talk to lots of different people: you might be convincing the owner of a stately home to use their house for filming, or trying to keep members of the public away from set.
- **Timeliness:** *always* be on time to set
- **Resilience:** able to keep a positive attitude, even during long hours or bad weather on set

Hard Skills — not necessary in early-career, but useful as you progress in the department:

- **Photography:** you'll need to take good photos (levelled, well-lit) when scouting locations
- **Numeracy:** an understanding of budgets is helpful in more senior roles

A career in locations may suit you if...

- You enjoy being both practical *and* creative. Other departments on a film set will tend to lean more heavily towards one or the other.
- You enjoy variety: no two days are the same
- If you like to travel, visit lots of different places, and getting out and meeting different people
- You're not in it for the glamour: the job may involve managing waste and rubbish! It is not a well-known area in filmmaking: but that means there is also a skills shortage in this department.
- Not sure about a freelance career? Contracted jobs are available in this area, eg. admin staff at regional film offices, or runner/receptionists at film studios.
- Marshalling in a great entry-level role in film/tv generally: it allows you to observe life on a film set, and you can sidestep to careers in other departments.

LOCATION MANAGEMENT CAREER SPOTLIGHT PANEL NOTES



Working Conditions

Hours: will depend on the role. Location Managers and Scouts, for example, are not always on set, and scouting/admin days will be shorter. On-set hours are long: the Standard Working Day in High-End TV (HETV) is 10 hours + 1 hour for lunch, and on a Major Motion Picture (budget over £30 million) it is 11 hours + 1 hour lunch. For more detail, see [BECTU Agreements](#) for the sector.

Pay: will depend on the size of the production for each role. Marshalls can expect c. £13-15 per hour, Supervising Location Managers from £37 per hour. See [BECTU Ratecards](#) for recommended payscales across the entire department.

Getting Started

- Join UK Film/TV production Facebook groups where a lot of marshall roles are posted (see our [Screen Careers Directory](#) for a list). LinkedIn is also useful.
- Word of mouth is key once you have a foot in the door: create a network of other location marshalls, keep in touch with line managers, etc.
- Marshalls may sometimes be needed at the last minute: you may see jobs advertised one day for the next.
- There may be up to 25-30 marshalls on a location: this means it is fairly low-risk to hire you, but work hard to impress and get called back. Don't sit in a corner on your phone.
- Marshalling is entry-level, and no prior experience or formal qualifications are needed. In more senior roles, an understanding of budgets/contracts is helpful.
- Develop your regional/local knowledge and your own locations database. Take photos when you travel, and keep them stored and labelled by category (eg. train stations, arcades, etc.)
- Training Schemes are available: eg. [CrewHQ](#), [ScreenSkills](#), [BBC apprenticeships](#), [Screen Scotland](#), [Screen Alliance Wales](#)

LOCATION MANAGEMENT CAREER SPOTLIGHT PANEL NOTES



CV Top Tips

- Keep it to one page, and simple (no heavy graphics, etc)
- Do not include your date of birth or full address
- Always tailor the CV to the job
- If you don't have a lot of film experience, experience in sales, hospitality or care can help you demonstrate some of the required skills
- Name drop the people you have worked with

For Educators: teaching Location Management

For most specs students work on solo/small group projects, and cannot replicate large-scale productions. The Location Manager role can be introduced when teaching pre-production:

- Script breakdowns: exercises where students break down each others' script encourage collaboration and models industry practice
- Location recces: eg. run an exercise with 3 potential locations: one unsuitable, one requiring adjustments, one suitable. Students very often forget about practicalities such as catering.
- Permits & release forms: this connects well to BTEC Unit 4
- The Locations team work closely with the art & camera departments, so teaching mood boards & floor plans is very helpful
- Teaching radio and set etiquette
- Teaching production paperwork such as Risk Assessments, Call Sheets or Crew Lists (even if students just put their names down in every box) makes students comfortable with industry-level paperwork

With huge thanks to our panellists: Oliver Laurenson-Gore, Tate Pollington and Sabrina Logan