

1st AD

1st ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

In contrast to the first Assistant Director in the German system (1. RA) the 1st AD is a Head of Department (HoD), with a whole team of subordinates assisting him/her.

The 1st AD is the organisational backbone of a film production. S/he structures and masterminds all processes during Pre-Production and the shoot and acts as the liaison between the Director, the Production Department and all other departments.

The main objective is to achieve the best possible artistic output – within a clearly defined financial scope and taking into consideration all labour-law and health and safety requirements. It is quite common for the 1st AD to compile and assess timeframes and financial frameworks for all HoDs – naturally according to the specifications of and in consultation with the Producers and Line Producers.

PREP

Devising and fleshing out all organisational constructs is one of the responsibilities of the 1st AD. However, the execution and implementation of various tasks such as rehearsals, fittings and pre-production is usually delegated to the AD department.

- Very detailed **knowledge and understanding** of the script.
- **Review** of the contents and tangibility of the script. Any changes made to the script in the course of a production must be marked by the so called 'coloured script changes' and have to be distributed and incorporated into the shooting schedule and the breakdown.
- **Compiling the shooting schedule** taking into account any blocked days the cast may have, the demands of each department, as well as the directorial vision and the specification set by the Production Department. Continuous updates according to the latest information with regards to realisation, shot list, costs, availability of locations, cast etc. are necessary.
- **According to the blocked days** (restriction of the actor's availability) the casting for each part must be checked and discussed to assess whether it is reasonable, problematic or untenable.
- **Creating the scene breakdown entails a complete list** of actors, numbers of extras, vehicles, animals, camera, lighting and stage technology in consultation with the respective HoDs. Additionally the requirements for SFX, VFX, stunts and additional staff are listed. Set prep and strike, advance productions, training sessions, coaching sessions, and rights clearance are just as much part of the scene breakdown as potential location splits, with all the corresponding necessities. For all intents and purposes, all factors that are relevant with regards to the shoot and the generation of cost need to be listed here.
- **Determination of dramaturgical days and dates within the timeline of the film.** The Script Supervisor usually provides the determination of time of day.
- **The development and continuous updating of the Pre-Production plan** in consultation with all departments. All appointments such as tech recces, meetings, rehearsals, training sessions, tests etc. are logged there. **Planning** all the appointments listed in the Pre-Production Plan is the responsibility of the AD departments.
- **Assembly of the AD team** including any additional staff, within the limits of the budget and in consultation with the Production Department.
- **Definition of the numbers of extras and creation of the extras budget** in consultation with the Director and the Production Department.
- **Scheduling** of casting sessions, advance productions (photos, films, music), tests and training sessions (driving vehicles, singing or playing musical instruments, stunts, athletic or linguistic requirements etc.) required for the shoot.
- The framework of a good preparation for the shoot is the **constant communication** with the Director, the Production Department and all other departments.

SHOOT

The aim is to achieve the optimal result within a clearly defined scope of time, budget and labour-laws. This is a continual process requiring clear communication, a quick mind and rapid responses.

The main tasks are:

- **Executing and structuring** the individual shooting days by creating a concrete schedule, ideally based on the shot list provided by the Director and the DoP.
- **Distributing the shot list** to the team.
- **Coordinating all departments on set** with **clear instructions** and commands and a continual review of the processes that have been prepared.
- **Guaranteeing efficient time- and cost management.** This includes, among other things, adhering to working hours, avoiding overtime, complying with turn-around, establishing a shift system, if necessary, reducing cast and crew once they have wrapped and are no longer needed.
- **Specification** of call times for cast and crew, determining set times for set-prep, shoot and breaks and the shooting order for the call sheet. Checking and signing off on the call sheet.
- **Directing and organising background** (extras, vehicles, animals etc.) in collaboration with the 3rd AD and/ or Crowd AD and Picture Vehicles Co-Ordinator
- **Coordination** of rehearsals and video or photo production, wild tracks etc.
- **Checking and controlling** the extras budget.
- Planning of **set approvals** by Director and DoP.
- **In case of budget overages**, discussing and implementing cost cutting measures – naturally in collaboration with the Director and the Production Department.
- **In case of non-compliance of the shooting schedule** or exceedance of projected times, suggesting to the Director and the Production Department, how to simplify, shorten or transfer scenes.
- **Maintaining a good of information to the Production Department** regarding the progress of each shooting day.

REQUIRED PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Outstanding organisational skills, highly developed communication skills, economic expertise and artistic understanding are prerequisites for this profession, as are diplomacy, persuasiveness and the ability to deal with conflicts.
- Physical and emotional resilience, a large degree of flexibility with regards to working hours and work locations, strong team leadership and motivational skills, as well as the willingness to shoulder responsibility.
- A very good general education and an inherent interest in literature, art, architecture and music as well as cultural, societal and political issues.
- Extensive knowledge of dramaturgy, editing, shot construction, film equipment and their uses.
- Understanding of the film and TV industry and its commercial working methods. Solid business knowledge with regards to budgeting.
- Detailed and profound knowledge of the current laws regarding film, labour and agreement on tariffs. On international productions it is necessary to acquire a solid understanding of the various legal systems and the agreement on tariffs.
- Expertise in using the film software Movie Magic, which prevails internationally. Fuzzlecheck is only used in Germany and is NOT compatible internationally. Expertise in Word, Excel and other common communication media.
- Precise understanding of the processes, costs and the framework and prerequisites of (German) film funding
- Very good written and spoken English and knowledge of the industry terms.
- Knowledge of additional foreign languages can be useful.