Professional Certificate in Film Production Management

Film Production Scheduling

The term production schedule is the backbone of any film project, representing a detailed timeline that maps out every activity from pre-production through post-production. It is not a single document but a hierarchy of interlocking schedules that together ensure that each department knows when its tasks begin, how long they last, and how they intersect with other units. Understanding the vocabulary associated with these schedules is essential for any aspiring film production manager, because precise communication reduces costly errors, keeps the crew on track, and helps maintain the creative vision within budget constraints.

Script breakdown is the first analytical step. A script breakdown involves reading the screenplay line by line and extracting every element that will require resources. These elements are categorized as cast, props, wardrobe, makeup, locations, special effects, stunts, and any other items that appear on screen. The result is a series of breakdown sheets that list each element with a unique identifier, often called a “slug” or “code”. For example, a scene that requires a vintage 1960s convertible might be coded as PROP-VINT-CAR. The breakdown sheet will note the quantity needed, the department responsible, and any special handling instructions. This granular data feeds directly into the production budget and informs the creation of the master schedule.

Once the script is broken down, the next major term is stripboard (also known as a strip schedule). A stripboard is a visual representation of the shooting order, laid out as a series of horizontal strips that each represent a single scene or unit. Strips are arranged in chronological order of shooting, not necessarily in script order, allowing the scheduler to see at a glance which scenes can be grouped together to maximize efficiency. For instance, if three scenes all take place in the same coffee shop, the stripboard will place them sequentially, even if they appear on opposite sides of the script, thereby reducing the number of location moves. Modern productions often use software such as Movie Magic Scheduling or Gorilla Scheduling to generate electronic stripboards, but the underlying concept remains the same.

A master schedule is the comprehensive timeline that integrates all departmental schedules, from casting and rehearsals to post-production editing and sound mixing. It is typically presented as a Gantt chart, with bars indicating the start and end dates of each task. The master schedule is the reference point for the production manager and the assistant director (AD) team, who use it to coordinate daily activities and to anticipate potential conflicts. For example, if the set construction crew needs two weeks to complete a period street set, the master schedule will show that construction must begin no later than six weeks before the first shoot day that requires that set.

The shooting schedule (sometimes called the day-by-day schedule) is derived from the master schedule and stripboard, translating the broader plan into a daily itinerary for the cast and crew. It lists each shooting day, the scenes to be filmed, the locations, the required cast members, and the call times for each department. The shooting schedule is the primary document that the 1st AD uses to create the daily call sheet. Because

the shooting schedule reflects real-world constraints such as daylight hours, weather forecasts, and actor availability, it often requires adjustments during the production. A common challenge is “schedule creep,” where minor delays accumulate, pushing subsequent days later and potentially overrunning the allocated budget.

The call sheet is the daily communication tool sent to everyone involved in the production. It contains essential information: The shooting date, the weather forecast, the location address, the call time for each department, the scenes to be shot, a map of the set, and contact numbers for key personnel. Call sheets also include a “day out of days” (DOOD) chart, which tracks each actor’s days of work and helps the accounting department calculate per-diem payments. For example, a principal actor who works five days on a ten-day shoot will see five entries marked “X” on the DOOD, indicating paid days, while the remaining days are marked “–” to denote no work.

A critical term related to actor compensation is day out of days itself. DOOD is a matrix that lists each cast member on the vertical axis and each shooting day on the horizontal axis. It indicates on which days the actor is required on set, which days they are on standby, and which days they are off entirely. This matrix is indispensable for calculating union fees, per-diem allowances, and overtime. Production managers must keep the DOOD updated whenever shooting order changes, as a shift in one scene can ripple across the entire matrix, affecting multiple contracts.

The concept of call time refers to the specific time a person must report for work on a given day. Call times vary by department: The 1st AD might arrive at 6:00 Am to begin the day’s prep, while actors might have a call time of 9:00 Am, and the catering crew might be scheduled for a later call to ensure meals are ready when needed. Call times are determined by the earliest required activity for that day, such as a location lock-up, a lighting test, or a rehearsal. Properly staggered call times prevent congestion on set and allow for a smoother workflow.

Another essential term is turnover, which describes the process of handing over a set or location from one department to another. For example, after the art department finishes dressing a location, they will “turn over” the set to the lighting department, which then rigs the lights and places the equipment. Turnover includes a checklist to confirm that all required items are in place and that any hazards have been addressed. Efficient turnover minimizes downtime and keeps the shooting schedule on track.

The wrap is the point at which a shooting day, a location, or the entire production is completed. A day wrap occurs when all scheduled scenes for that day have been filmed, and the crew can leave the site. A location wrap involves clearing the set, returning rented equipment, and completing any required paperwork. The final production wrap marks the end of principal photography and triggers the transition to post-production. Understanding the difference between “day wrap” and “production wrap” is crucial for budgeting, as each has distinct cost implications.

When discussing the amount of footage captured, the term shooting ratio is frequently used. The shooting ratio is the proportion of total footage filmed to the final runtime of the edited product. For example, a shooting ratio of 10:1 Means that ten minutes of raw footage are captured for every minute that appears in the final cut. High shooting ratios can provide editors with more creative options but also increase storage

costs, data management workload, and post-production time. Production managers must negotiate a realistic shooting ratio with the director and the editor, balancing artistic freedom against logistical constraints.

The location scouting process yields another set of vocabulary. A “scouting report” documents the potential sites, noting factors such as accessibility, power availability, ambient noise levels, and local permitting requirements. A “location permit” is the official authorization required to film at a particular site, often obtained from municipal authorities. Failure to secure permits can lead to legal penalties or forced shutdowns, which would devastate the schedule. Production managers must track permit deadlines and expiration dates, integrating them into the master schedule.

The term production calendar refers to the calendar that outlines the entire duration of the production, marking key milestones such as pre-production meetings, rehearsals, principal photography start and end dates, and post-production deadlines. The calendar is a high-level view that helps senior management monitor progress and allocate resources appropriately. It often includes buffer days—extra days set aside to absorb unforeseen delays, such as inclement weather or equipment failure. These buffers are critical for preventing schedule overruns.

A unit breakdown is the division of the overall production into separate “units,” each responsible for a distinct portion of the shoot. The “first unit” typically handles the principal photography with the main cast, while a “second unit” may film stunts, inserts, or establishing shots. In large productions, a “third unit” might be tasked with special effects or background plates. Each unit has its own schedule, crew, and equipment, coordinated through the master schedule to avoid conflicts. Understanding unit breakdowns helps managers allocate budget and manpower efficiently.

The shooting day is the basic unit of time in the production schedule. It is defined by the number of hours that the crew works on a given day, often from “call time” to “wrap time.” Typical shooting days range from eight to twelve hours, depending on union regulations and the complexity of the scenes. The term “hard day” refers to a day when the schedule is tightly packed, leaving little room for error, whereas a “soft day” includes built-in flexibility for delays. Production managers must balance hard and soft days to keep morale high while meeting deadlines.

The phrase location lock-up denotes the moment when a location is secured for a specific set of shooting days. Lock-up involves finalizing the permit, arranging insurance, and confirming the availability of the site for the required dates. Once a location is locked, the production manager can schedule set construction, lighting tests, and rehearsals without fearing that the site will become unavailable. Any change after lock-up typically incurs additional fees, making it essential to confirm all details before committing.

A set construction schedule outlines the timeline for building, dressing, and striking sets. It includes milestones such as “foundation laid,” “walls erected,” “paint completed,” and “props placed.” This schedule must align with the shooting schedule, ensuring that the set is ready before the first call sheet that requires it. Delays in set construction can cascade into lost shooting days, which is why production managers often maintain a “critical path”—the sequence of tasks that directly determines the project’s finish date. Any delay on the critical path automatically pushes the entire schedule forward.

The term critical path comes from project management theory and applies directly to film scheduling. It is the longest chain of dependent tasks that dictates the minimum time required to complete the project. Identifying the critical path allows the production manager to prioritize resources, allocate overtime, or add additional crew to keep the project on schedule. For example, if set construction, lighting rigging, and costume fitting are all sequential tasks leading up to a major shoot day, they form part of the critical path. Any slippage in these areas must be mitigated immediately.

A related concept is float (or “slack”), which represents the amount of time a non-critical task can be delayed without affecting the overall project completion date. Float provides flexibility in scheduling, allowing managers to move resources between tasks when unexpected issues arise. For instance, if a costume department finishes its work early, the extra float can be used to assist with set dressing, thereby creating a buffer against potential delays elsewhere.

In the realm of equipment, the term rental schedule details when and where each piece of gear will be needed, for how long, and who is responsible for its return. Rental schedules must be synchronized with the shooting schedule to avoid gaps where equipment is unavailable, as well as to prevent unnecessary rental days that inflate costs. For example, a high-end camera may be rented for a total of ten days, but if the shooting schedule changes and the camera is needed for an additional day, the rental schedule must be updated and the budget adjusted accordingly.

Another essential term is crew call sheet, which differs from the general call sheet by focusing solely on the crew members. It lists each department’s call time, the specific tasks for that day, and any special instructions such as safety briefings or equipment checks. For example, the grip department may see a note indicating that a crane will be operated on that day, requiring a safety meeting before the first call time. The crew call sheet ensures that each crew member knows exactly when to arrive and what is expected, reducing confusion and idle time.

The production office is the hub where the schedule is maintained, updated, and distributed. The production office staff includes the production coordinator, who often serves as the primary liaison between the production manager and the various departments. They manage the flow of information, maintain the master schedule, and track changes. Effective communication from the production office is essential to keep the entire team aligned.

A schedule change request is a formal document used when a department needs to alter the existing schedule. This could be due to weather, actor illness, equipment failure, or creative decisions. The request outlines the reason for the change, the proposed new dates, and the impact on other departments. The production manager reviews the request, assesses its effect on the critical path, and either approves or negotiates an alternative solution. Proper documentation of schedule changes helps avoid disputes and ensures that all stakeholders are aware of the revised plan.

The term contingency refers to a reserve of time, money, or resources set aside to address unforeseen events. In scheduling, a time contingency might be an extra day added to the master schedule to accommodate potential weather delays. Financial contingency is a budget line that can be tapped if additional expenses arise, such as unexpected location fees. Production managers must balance the size of

the contingency against the overall budget, as too large a contingency can waste resources, while too small a contingency can leave the production vulnerable to overruns.

A weather forecast is a critical external factor that influences daily scheduling. Productions often monitor the forecast for the entire shooting period, noting any days with predicted rain, high winds, or extreme temperatures. When adverse weather is anticipated, the schedule may be adjusted to move indoor scenes into those days, or a “rain day” may be built into the plan as a buffer. Accurate weather tracking can prevent costly delays and protect the safety of cast and crew.

The shooting order is the sequence in which scenes are filmed. While the script may present scenes chronologically, the shooting order is determined by logistical considerations such as location availability, actor schedules, and equipment constraints. For example, a film may shoot all scenes set in a particular house consecutively, even if those scenes span the first and third acts of the story. Understanding the rationale behind the shooting order helps department heads plan their work and anticipate when they will need specific resources.

A related term is scene coverage, which refers to the amount of footage captured for each scene. Coverage includes the primary shots (master shots) as well as additional angles, close-ups, and inserts. The director and director of photography (DP) decide on the coverage plan, which influences the time needed on set. More extensive coverage can increase the shooting day length, while limited coverage may speed up the schedule but reduce flexibility in post-production. Production managers must balance coverage requirements with time constraints.

The shooting script is a version of the screenplay that incorporates notes about camera angles, shot sizes, and technical requirements. It serves as a reference for the AD team and the DP when creating the stripboard and shooting schedule. The shooting script may also include “notes” indicating changes from the original script, such as altered dialogue or revised blocking. Keeping the shooting script up to date ensures that the schedule reflects the most current creative decisions.

A day out of days (DOOD) chart is the same as the earlier DOOD matrix but often presented in a more visual format, with colored cells indicating paid days, standby days, and off days. The DOOD chart is crucial for payroll processing and for ensuring compliance with union rules, such as the requirement that an actor receive a minimum number of consecutive days off after a certain number of work days. Production managers must monitor the DOOD to avoid violations that could result in penalties.

The term call sheet distribution list refers to the list of individuals who receive the daily call sheet, typically via email or a production app. The distribution list includes cast, crew, department heads, location contacts, and any external vendors. Maintaining an accurate distribution list prevents miscommunication and ensures that everyone receives the latest information. In large productions, the distribution list can contain hundreds of names, requiring careful management.

A location lock-out is the opposite of a lock-up: It is a period during which a location is unavailable due to external factors, such as a public event, construction work, or a conflicting shoot. When a lock-out is identified, the production manager must re-schedule any scenes that were planned for that location, often

moving them to another site or adjusting the shooting order. Early identification of lock-outs helps preserve the integrity of the master schedule.

The phrase post-production schedule denotes the timeline for all activities after principal photography has wrapped. This includes editing, visual effects (VFX), sound design, color grading, and final delivery. The post-production schedule often runs concurrently with the final weeks of shooting, allowing editors to begin assembling rough cuts while the last scenes are still being filmed. Coordination between the post-production supervisor and the production manager ensures that any changes in shooting order do not disrupt delivery milestones.

A delivery schedule outlines the dates by which the final product, whether a feature film, TV episode, or commercial, must be delivered to the distributor or client. The delivery schedule includes deadlines for final picture lock, sound mix, subtitles, and any required format conversions. The production manager tracks progress against the delivery schedule, adjusting resources as needed to meet contractual obligations. Failure to meet delivery dates can result in penalties or loss of future business.

The term principal photography refers to the period when the majority of the film's footage is captured, typically the most intensive phase of production. Principal photography is distinct from pre-production (planning, casting, rehearsals) and post-production (editing, VFX). The schedule for principal photography is usually the most detailed and tightly controlled, as it directly impacts the budget and the ability to meet delivery deadlines.

A shooting day report is a daily log completed by the 1st AD that records the actual events of the day, including start and end times, scenes completed, any incidents, and notes on overtime or unscheduled breaks. The report is compared against the planned shooting schedule to identify variances. Persistent variances may indicate systemic issues, such as unrealistic time estimates or recurring equipment failures, prompting corrective action.

The production schedule variance is the difference between the planned schedule and the actual progress. Positive variance (ahead of schedule) can free up resources for other tasks, while negative variance (behind schedule) may require additional crew, overtime, or a re-sequencing of scenes. Tracking variance is a core responsibility of the production manager, who must communicate the status to producers and stakeholders regularly.

The term resource allocation describes how personnel, equipment, and budget are distributed across tasks in the schedule. Effective resource allocation ensures that each department has what it needs when it needs it, without over-committing any single resource. For instance, a high-end camera may be allocated to two separate units on different days, requiring careful planning to avoid a clash. Tools such as resource histograms or spreadsheets can help visualize allocation.

A crew shift is a defined period of work for crew members, often used in productions that run 24-hour cycles, such as night shoots or large-scale VFX projects. Shifts may be 8-hour or 12-hour blocks, with appropriate rest periods mandated by labor regulations. Scheduling crew shifts requires attention to fatigue management, as exhausted crew can lead to safety incidents and reduced productivity.

The production calendar also includes “key dates” such as the first day of principal photography, the date of the final shoot, the deadline for the first edit, and the date of the final mix. These key dates serve as anchor points for the entire schedule, allowing managers to work backward to determine when earlier tasks must be completed. For example, if the final edit must be delivered on June 1, and the post-production process requires six weeks, the last day of shooting must be scheduled no later than April 15.

A location scouting report typically includes photographs, measurements, power availability, parking options, and a risk assessment. The risk assessment may identify hazards such as uneven terrain, traffic patterns, or proximity to bodies of water, which could affect safety planning. The scouting report is used by the AD team to develop the location lock-up plan and to schedule any necessary permits or insurance.

The term insurance certificate is a document that proves the production has the required coverage, often including general liability, workers’ compensation, and equipment insurance. Insurance certificates must be obtained before a location lock-up and are sometimes required by local authorities as part of the permitting process. Failure to provide proof of insurance can delay or halt production.

A production meeting is a regular gathering—often weekly—where department heads review the schedule, discuss upcoming challenges, and coordinate resource needs. Production meetings are an opportunity to surface potential conflicts early, such as overlapping location requirements or actor availability issues. Minutes from these meetings are distributed to the team and used to update the master schedule.

The term script supervisor is the person responsible for maintaining continuity, tracking script changes, and ensuring that each take aligns with the script’s requirements. The script supervisor works closely with the AD team to record which scenes and takes have been completed, providing essential data for the shooting day report. Their notes also help editors during post-production by indicating which takes are “best” for continuity.

A continuity log is the record kept by the script supervisor that details wardrobe, makeup, prop placement, and camera angles for each shot. This log is referenced when shooting later scenes that must match earlier ones, preventing visual errors such as a character’s shirt changing color midway through a sequence. The continuity log is a vital component of the overall schedule, as it can affect the number of pickups required.

The pickup schedule outlines any additional shooting days needed after principal photography to capture missing or reshot material. Pickups are often scheduled after the initial wrap, once the edit reveals gaps or technical issues. The pickup schedule must be coordinated with actor availability and location permits, and it usually draws from the original contingency days to avoid extending the overall budget.

A production audit is a systematic review of the schedule, budget, and resource utilization, often conducted at the midpoint of production. The audit assesses whether the project is on track, identifies areas of overspend, and recommends corrective actions. Audits are essential for maintaining transparency with investors and for ensuring that the production adheres to contractual obligations.

The term strike refers to the process of dismantling sets, removing equipment, and clearing locations at the end of a shoot. A strike must be carefully scheduled to avoid lingering on location beyond the allowed time, which could incur additional fees. The strike schedule includes tasks such as returning rented gear, restoring

the location to its original condition, and completing paperwork for the location owner.

A set dressing schedule details when and how the set will be decorated with furniture, décor, and props. This schedule must align with the shooting schedule, ensuring that the set is ready before the first call sheet for that location. Set dressing may also involve “pre-lighting,” where the lighting department tests the set’s look before the actors arrive.

A lighting plan is a document that outlines the lighting setup for each scene, including the type of fixtures, gel colors, and power requirements. The lighting plan is coordinated with the shooting schedule to allocate time for rigging, testing, and adjustments. Complex lighting setups may require additional days on the master schedule, especially if they involve large rigs or special effects.

The term special effects (SFX) schedule refers specifically to practical effects that are created on set, such as explosions, rain machines, or prosthetic makeup. The SFX schedule must be tightly integrated with the shooting schedule, because practical effects often dictate the order of scenes due to safety considerations and the need for specialized crew. For example, an explosion scene may need to be shot before a later scene that uses the same location, to avoid rebuilding the set.

A visual effects (VFX) schedule outlines the timeline for post-production work on computer-generated elements, such as CGI characters, digital environments, or compositing. While VFX work occurs after principal photography, the VFX schedule influences the shooting schedule because certain shots may need to be captured with tracking markers or green screens. Early coordination between the VFX supervisor and the AD team ensures that the necessary plates are captured on time.

The term green-screen schedule is a subset of the VFX schedule, focusing on the days when actors perform in front of a chroma-key backdrop. Green-screen days often require additional lighting setups and careful coordination with the VFX team to place tracking markers. Because these days can be technically demanding, they are typically scheduled with extra buffer time.

A camera schedule details the allocation of cameras, lenses, and related accessories to each shooting day. It records which camera unit will be used, the planned lenses for each scene, and any special equipment such as rigs or drones. The camera schedule must be synchronized with the lighting plan and the set dressing schedule, as changes in one can affect the other.

The location logistics plan includes transportation routes, parking permits, and catering arrangements for each location. This plan ensures that crew and equipment can arrive and depart efficiently, minimizing downtime. For example, a remote mountain location may require a shuttle service for cast and crew, and the logistics plan will schedule those shuttles to align with the call times.

A catering schedule outlines meal times, menu selections, and dietary restrictions for each shooting day. Proper catering is essential for maintaining morale and complying with union regulations that mandate meal breaks after a certain number of hours. The catering schedule must be coordinated with the shooting schedule to avoid conflicts, such as a lunch break that cuts through a critical scene.

The term breakdown of days is sometimes used to describe the division of the shooting schedule into “day”

and “night” shoots. Night shoots typically require additional lighting and may have stricter call times due to labor laws. Scheduling night shoots often involves extra costs for overtime and may reduce the total number of shooting days available, influencing budget decisions.

A rushes (or “dailies”) session is a daily review of the footage captured that day. The rushes are screened to the director, AD, and sometimes producers to assess whether the material meets creative expectations. If the rushes reveal problems—such as poor focus, inadequate coverage, or performance issues—the production manager may need to schedule a pickup or an additional rehearsal, affecting the overall schedule.

The term rehearsal schedule outlines when actors will rehearse scenes before filming. Rehearsals can be scheduled during pre-production or on set, usually before a complex scene that involves stunts, choreography, or intricate camera movements. A well-planned rehearsal schedule reduces the number of takes needed on the shooting day, thereby preserving time and budget.

A stunt schedule coordinates the timing of dangerous or physically demanding sequences. Stunt work often requires additional safety personnel, specialized equipment, and insurance coverage. The stunt schedule must be integrated with the master schedule to ensure that the necessary safety measures are in place before the shooting day begins, and it may also dictate the order of scenes to minimize risk.

The term union compliance schedule refers to the tracking of all union rules and deadlines, such as the requirement to provide meals, rest periods, and overtime pay. Production managers maintain a compliance schedule to prevent violations that could lead to fines or work stoppages. For example, the Screen Actors Guild (SAG-AFA) mandates that actors receive a minimum of 12 hours off between shifts, and the schedule must reflect this rule.

A equipment checkout schedule lists the dates and times when each piece of equipment is borrowed from the rental house and when it must be returned. This schedule helps avoid conflicts where two departments need the same gear simultaneously. Late returns can incur penalties, so the schedule includes buffer periods for transport and inspection.

A post-production sound schedule outlines the timeline for dialogue editing, ADR (automatic dialogue replacement), sound effects, and final mixing. This schedule must align with the editing schedule, as sound work often cannot begin until a picture lock is achieved. Coordination between the sound supervisor and the production manager ensures that the final mix is completed before the delivery deadline.

The term picture lock marks the point at which the edited picture is considered final, with no further changes to the visual content. Picture lock is a critical milestone in the post-production schedule because it triggers the start of final sound mixing, color grading, and delivery preparation. Once picture lock is achieved, any additional changes typically require a formal amendment to the schedule and may incur extra costs.

A color grading schedule specifies the days allocated for the colorist to apply the final look to the film. Color grading is usually performed after picture lock and before final delivery. The schedule must allocate sufficient time for the colorist to work through each scene, make revisions, and obtain approval from the

director and producer.

The delivery milestone schedule lists all the required hand-offs to the distributor, such as the final cut, subtitles, closed captions, and format conversions. Each milestone has a due date, and the production manager monitors progress to ensure that all deliverables are completed on time. Failure to meet a delivery milestone can result in penalties or loss of distribution deals.

A post-production audit reviews the status of editing, VFX, sound, and other post-production elements against the schedule. The audit identifies any areas that are behind and recommends adjustments, such as allocating additional editors or extending VFX workdays. The post-production audit is analogous to the production audit conducted during principal photography.

The term final wrap-up meeting is a closing session held after the production has finished, where the team reviews the schedule performance, discusses lessons learned, and documents best practices for future projects. This meeting often produces a “lessons-learned” report that highlights both successes and challenges, such as how a particular location lock-out was handled or how the contingency days were utilized.

A budget contingency is the portion of the budget reserved for unexpected costs. In scheduling terms, the contingency can also be expressed as “contingency days” that are added to the master schedule. These days provide flexibility for weather delays, equipment failures, or other unforeseen events. The size of the contingency is determined during pre-production planning and is continuously monitored throughout the shoot.

The term resource leveling describes the process of adjusting the schedule to avoid over-allocating resources. For example, if two scenes require the same crane on the same day, resource leveling may shift one scene to a later date or bring in a second crane if the budget allows. Resource leveling helps prevent bottlenecks and ensures a smoother workflow.

A production risk register is a living document that lists potential risks to the schedule, such as weather, labor strikes, or equipment failures, along with mitigation strategies and responsible parties. The production manager reviews the risk register regularly and updates the schedule to reflect any new threats. Effective risk management can significantly reduce schedule variance.

The term time-and-material (T&M) contract in the context of scheduling refers to agreements where the client pays for the actual time spent and materials used, rather than a fixed price. T&M contracts require careful tracking of labor hours and material usage, which is reflected in the schedule through detailed time logs. Production managers must monitor T&M contracts closely to avoid budget overruns.

A fixed-price contract sets a predetermined amount for a specific portion of the production, regardless of the actual time or resources consumed. Fixed-price contracts place greater pressure on the schedule to stay within the allocated budget, as any overruns must be absorbed by the contractor. Scheduling under a fixed-price model often includes tighter buffers and more rigorous variance tracking.

The term shooting window defines a period during which a location is available for filming, often

constrained by factors such as daylight, weather, or local regulations. For example, a historic building may only permit filming on weekends, creating a narrow shooting window. The schedule must be built around these windows, sometimes requiring the use of “night shoots” to maximize the available time.

A location availability matrix is a table that shows the dates each location is free, alongside any restrictions such as time of day or required permits. This matrix is used during the planning phase to align location availability with the shooting order. If a location’s availability changes, the matrix is updated, and the master schedule is revised accordingly.

The term crew call time variance measures the difference between the planned call time for a crew member and the actual arrival time. Persistent call time variance can indicate scheduling issues, inadequate communication, or logistical challenges such as traffic. Production managers track this metric to improve punctuality and overall efficiency.

A production turnover schedule outlines the hand-off points between departments, such as from art to lighting, or from set construction to camera. Turnover schedules include checklists for safety, equipment, and documentation, ensuring that each department knows when it is responsible for a location or set. Effective turnover reduces downtime and prevents miscommunication.

The term script revision refers to any change made to the screenplay after the initial breakdown, such as adding or removing scenes, altering dialogue, or changing character arcs. Script revisions trigger updates to the breakdown sheets, stripboard, and shooting schedule. Each revision is tracked with a version number (e.G., “Script v.3”) To maintain a clear audit trail.

A shooting day extension occurs when a scheduled shooting day must be lengthened due to unforeseen circumstances, such as a weather delay or equipment malfunction. Extensions often require overtime pay, additional catering, and possibly new permits. The production manager must assess the impact on the critical path and adjust downstream tasks accordingly.

The term pre-visualization (pre-vis) schedule is a plan for creating digital storyboards or animatics that visualize complex sequences before they are shot. Pre-vis helps the director, DP, and VFX team agree on camera moves, lighting, and effects. The pre-vis schedule typically runs during pre-production but may be revisited during shooting if changes arise.

A lock-out period is a timeframe during which a location is restricted from any filming activity, often due to cleaning, restoration, or legal constraints. The lock-out period must be respected in the schedule to avoid penalties. If a scene originally planned for that location falls within the lock-out, it must be rescheduled or moved to an alternate site.

The term post-shoot data management schedule outlines the workflow for transferring, backing up, and cataloguing footage after each shooting day. Proper data management ensures that the editor receives organized files promptly, reducing the risk of lost or corrupted media. The schedule may allocate several hours each evening for data wrangling, and it must be coordinated with the crew’s wrap time.

A production design schedule coordinates the activities of set designers, prop masters, and costume

designers. It maps out when each design element is needed, when it will be built or sourced, and when it will be installed on set. The production design schedule must align with the shooting schedule to avoid delays caused by missing props or incomplete sets.

The term crew scheduling software refers to digital tools that automate the creation, distribution, and updating of schedules. Popular platforms include Movie Magic Scheduling, Gorilla Scheduling, and StudioBinder.