

Production Assistant interview questions

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What to expect

Production Assistant interviews are practical and people-focused. Employers want to see that you understand the rhythm of a shoot, can stay organised under pressure, and communicate clearly with cast and crew. Expect a mix of process questions, scenario-based problems, and behavioural questions about juggling deadlines.

- **Process:** How you prepare call sheets, schedules, and production paperwork.
- **Behavioural:** Times you managed competing priorities, handled mistakes, or worked with difficult stakeholders.
- **Scenario:** What you would do if a cast member is late, equipment fails, or the schedule changes at the last minute.
- **Technical:** Your experience with Movie Magic Scheduling, Excel, Google Workspace, Slack, and Airtable.
- **Safety:** How you identify hazards and follow WHS requirements on set or in a studio.

Interviews usually start with a short conversation about your experience and availability, then move to scenario and process questions. You may be asked to walk through a call sheet you have prepared or talk about a production you worked on from start to wrap. Some employers include a paid trial day or a shadow shift on set before making an offer.

1. Walk me through how you prepare a daily call sheet from start to finish.

Why they ask

This is a core task. The interviewer wants to see that you know the sequence, the details that matter, and how you avoid mistakes.

How to structure your answer

Walk-through: start with the information you gather, then the steps you take to build and check the call sheet, and finish with how you distribute it and handle changes.

Example answer

"I start by pulling together the shooting schedule, the location details, and the contact list for cast and crew. I check with the first assistant director about any changes to call times or scenes. Then I open Movie Magic Scheduling or an Excel template and enter the day's scenes, locations, call times, and special requirements like equipment or catering. I double-check travel times and weather if it's an exterior shoot. Once it's approved, I send it out by email and Slack, and I keep a printed copy on set. If anything changes overnight, I send an updated version first thing in the morning and make sure everyone acknowledges it."

2. Tell me about a time you had to manage a last-minute change to the production schedule. How did you handle it?

Why they ask

Productions change constantly. They want to see you stay calm, communicate, and keep the crew informed.

How to structure your answer

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Focus on the action you took and how you kept people informed.

Example answer

"On a short film shoot, we lost our main location due to a double booking the day before. I was the production assistant handling logistics. I quickly rang the location manager and the director to confirm the problem, then worked with the first AD to find an alternative nearby park that could stand in for the scene. I updated the call sheet, sent new maps and parking details to the crew, and arranged for equipment to be redirected. We started only 40 minutes later than planned and finished the day on schedule. The producer thanked me for keeping everyone calm and informed."

3. A cast member is running late and the crew is waiting. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests your judgement under pressure and your ability to prioritise without causing panic.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: assess the situation, communicate with key people, make a short-term plan, act, then follow up.

Example answer

"First I check how late they are and whether they have called ahead. I let the first AD know immediately so they can decide whether to shoot another scene or set up for a later one. I ring the cast member or their agent to get an updated ETA and offer help with transport if needed. Meanwhile I keep the crew informed with a simple update so they can prep or take a break. Once the cast member arrives, I make sure they are signed in and taken to hair and makeup quickly. After the shoot, I note the delay in the daily report so the producer has a clear record."

4. What experience do you have with Movie Magic Scheduling and Excel for production tracking?

Why they ask

These are the tools you will use daily. They want to know you can use them without extensive training.

How to structure your answer

Technical: name the tools, describe specific tasks you have used them for, and give a result.

Example answer

"I have used Movie Magic Scheduling to build stripboards and day-out-of-days reports for short films and an advertising shoot. I set up scene numbers, locations, and cast IDs so the schedule could be sorted by location and shoot day. In Excel, I have created call sheet templates, budget trackers, and petty cash sheets with formulas that flag when spending goes over a category. I also use Google Workspace for shared documents and Airtable to track crew availability. These tools help me keep paperwork accurate and easy for the rest of the team to use."

5. How do you ensure safety and compliance on a set or studio floor?

Why they ask

WHS is everyone's responsibility, but production assistants often spot hazards first. They want to see you take it seriously.

How to structure your answer

Safety: identify hazards, follow procedures, communicate, and report.

Example answer

"Before each shoot day, I walk the set or studio floor to check for obvious hazards like loose cables, wet floors, or blocked exits. I make sure the first aid kit is stocked and that everyone knows where it is. If I see something unsafe, I fix it if I can, or I report it to the location manager or safety officer straight away. I also remind crew about safe lifting and keeping walkways clear. During the shoot, I keep an eye on crowd control if we are in a public space. After the day, I note any incidents or near misses in the production report so they can be reviewed."

6. Describe a time you had to deal with a difficult stakeholder, such as a producer or client, while keeping the production on track.

Why they ask

Production assistants work with many personalities. They want to see you can stay professional and solve problems.

How to structure your answer

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

Example answer

“On a corporate video shoot, a client kept changing the shot list during the day, which was pushing us behind schedule. I was coordinating between the client and the director. I listened to the client's concerns, then asked the director if we could group the new requests into one block after the planned scenes. I explained to the client that we could fit in two of their priority shots if we stuck to the schedule for the next hour. They agreed, and we wrapped only 15 minutes late. The client later emailed to say they appreciated how smoothly the day ran.”