

---

Screen Composers Guild of Ireland

---

# Screen Composer Role Description



Screen Composers  
Guild of Ireland

---

# Screen Composer

## Role Overview:

---

The Screen Composer composes original music for integration into a screen media production (Film, TV, Animation, Video Games, Advertisement, multimedia).

The Screen Composer uses their musical and technical skills to create an original score that follows the creative vision of the screen production's Director and supports the narrative of the story. The Screen Composer actively listens to the needs of the director and production and translates them into a musical language.

Depending on the size and scope of the project the Screen Composer may also be head of the Music Department and will oversee all aspects involved in the creation and production of the musical score whilst working closely with other creative and production departments across AV production.

The Screen Composer may be brought on at any stage of a project from pre to post production. They will read the script and meet with key creatives to understand the vision of the AV production and the role music will play in it.

The Screen Composer will attend spotting sessions to determine the placement, tone, narrative level and style of music cues, in addition to their frequency and duration.

The Screen Composer may agree upon overarching themes, instrumentation, style of music with key creatives before writing musical score, creating music demos and synchronising them to video cuts to submit to the Director for review.

The Screen Composer will respond to feedback communicated to them on the demo and revise and re-interpret as required until finalised.

Once the score is finalised, the Screen Composer will create a work plan and budget to complete composition and the production of the score.

---

The Screen Composer will identify and plan all elements required from the acquisition of sample libraries through to any live performance recording needs.

The Screen Composer will populate a Music Department project/production according to score needs and budget capacity. They will communicate with, lead, and manage the project/production, including defining tasks, setting deadlines, agreeing payment, coordinating with music department contacts, contracting and clearing copyright and ensuring all delivery expectations of production are met.

The Screen Composer will attend performance rehearsals, recording sessions, and mixing sessions to oversee all score elements and ensure the desired sound result is achieved.

## Key Tasks:

---

- 1.** Plans the overall direction and tone of the musical score in collaboration with the Director
- 2.** Composes an original score that captures the Director's creative vision, assists in the narrative storytelling and integrates well with the visuals and
- 3.** Assembles a music project/production which meets the requirements of the score and the scale of the production according to available budget
- 4.** Oversees all aspects of composing, performing and recording of the score to tight deadlines.
- 5.** Oversees all aspects of the score's post production; mixing, mastering of music and score delivery
- 6.** Manages all stages of the score's creation, directing Music Department personnel, and liaises with other production departments to ensure the needs of the score are met
- 7.** Negotiates and handles issues concerning employment, contracts, fees, rights, and copyright
- 8.** Delivers the completed score and all required paperwork in accordance with the production's timeline and industry requirements. Certifies chain of title for copyright ensuring all rights needed for the exploitation of the music are acquired or licenced correctly.

---

## Task Statements

### Task Statement 1:

**Plans the overall direction and tone of the musical score in collaboration with the Director.**

#### Associated activities

- ✓ Determines the overall musical direction and tone with the Director
- ✓ Participates in spotting sessions with the Director and other interested parties to identify and ascertain the number, style, and placement of cues
- ✓ Consider the production's genre, style, audience, and how to use the music to communicate and convey the intended audiovisual storytelling elements

### Task Statement 2:

**Composes an original score that captures the Director's creative vision, assists in the narrative storytelling and integrates well with the visuals and other sound components of the screen production.**

#### Associated activities

- ✓ Plans musical ideas in line with the music's intended role at different stages of the screen production (e.g. background music, main theme song, audiovisual synchronisation methods)
- ✓ Breaks down the technical and musical requirements needed for music cues  
Determines suitable instrumentation for the score, liaising with the Orchestrator when required
- ✓ Sketches initial musical ideas and creates music demos and/or rough cuts of music synchronised to on-screen media to submit to the Director for review
- ✓ Revises and edits music demos using feedback from the Director and other production parties involved (Showrunner, Producer, Music Supervisor)
- ✓ Submits the final score to the Orchestrator/Arranger (when not orchestrating the music themselves) for transcription into sheet music, graphic scores, or other notation types agreed between the Composer and Musicians/Performers

---

## Task Statements

### Task Statement 3:

**Assembles a music project/production which meets the requirements of the score and the scale of the production according to available budget.**

#### Associated activities

- ✓ Employs and contracts performers and other music creation and production support workers (Music Editor, Mixer, Music Producer, Orchestrator/Arranger, Assistant)
- ✓ Collaborates with the Music Producer and Music Supervisor to locate and source suitable Musicians/Performers which meet the requirements of the musical score
- ✓ Processes paperwork and determines pricing associated with the procurement of the instrumentation and equipment needed for the score's production and within score budget
- ✓ Inducts and briefs the assembled project/production Run monthly story meetings to develop and agree on upcoming script schedules in line with production
- ✓ Develop detailed monthly story documents and communicate these to the editors and writers so they are clear on the requirements and timelines for scripts
- ✓ Work with the script department to resolve story issues that may arise post-commissioning
- ✓ Ensure compliance with the show's editorial guidelines, legal, contractual agreements, and regulations as they apply to programme making, broadcasting and digital media

### Task Statement 4:

**Oversees all aspects of composing, performing and recording of the score.**

#### Associated activities

- ✓ Attends performance rehearsals to advise on score elements and performance techniques in advance of recording
- ✓ Communicates detailed instructions to Musicians, Performers, Conductor, Music Technologist, and other personnel needed for the recording of the score
- ✓ Attends recording sessions to oversee the score's performance and may conduct live recording
- ✓ Collaborates with the Audio Engineer to ensure the recording techniques used capture the desired sound
- ✓ Engages in critical listening to review the final recordings

---

## Task Statements

### Task Statement 5:

**Oversees all aspects of the score's post production; mixing, mastering and score delivery.**

#### Associated activities

- ✓ Oversees all mixing and mastering of music to ensure the desired sound and balance is achieved
- ✓ Collaborates with the Audio Engineer, Music Producer, and mixing artists to discuss editing, FX filters, and other creative production techniques
- ✓ Oversees the delivery of the master tracks to the Sound Department's post-production project/production in line with production timelines

### Task Statement 6:

**Manages all stages of the score's creation, directing Music Department personnel, and liaises with other production departments to ensure the needs of the score are met.**

#### Associated activities

- ✓ Acts as HOD (Head of Department)
- ✓ Plans steps for the production of music
- ✓ Takes responsibility for the music budget and its distribution according to project needs and budget capacity
- ✓ Project manages the work flow from the initial discussions with the Director through to the score's completion
- ✓ Advises Music Department personnel on different stages of the score's production and is present to oversee all stages
- ✓ Collaborates with the Sound Department to discuss the interaction and coexistence of music and sound FX in the screen production
- ✓ Collaborates with the Visual Production project/production team to discuss elements including cinematography, choreography, and character action relative to the musical score
- ✓ Collaborates with the Director to ensure the score remains in alignment with their overall creative vision for the screen production

---

## Task Statements

### Task Statement 7:

**Negotiates and handles issues concerning employment, contracts, fees, rights, and copyright.**

#### Associated activities

- ✓ Collaborates with the Music Supervisor to establish the contracts, rights, and fees of all personnel involved in the score's creation
- ✓ Negotiates contracting, rights, and fees for their own services as Screen Composer
- ✓ Indemnifying copyright of all work
- ✓ Securing all performer or third party rights for exploitation by production

### Task Statement 8:

**Delivers the completed score and all required paperwork in accordance with the production's timeline and industry requirements. Certifies chain of title for copyright ensuring all rights needed for the exploitation of the music are acquired or licenced correctly.**

#### Associated activities

- ✓ Completes and delivers cue sheets to industry specifications and production requirements
- ✓ Collaborates on additional paperwork required for successful project delivery.
- ✓ Collaborates on sign off of the production to third parties

## Competency Requirements

| Core                                | Technical  | Leadership                           | Personal Development                  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Score Production Workflow           | Music Theory & Composition                         | Employment Rights & Responsibilities | Resilience                            |
| Adaptability                        | Music Software & Technology                        | Managing People                      | Working under Pressure                |
| Working Collaboratively             | Audio Engineering, Recording & Recording Equipment | Managing Stakeholders                | Self Promotion & Marketing            |
| Working Independently               | Audiovisual Editing                                | Working Inclusively                  | Working as a Freelancer/Self-Employed |
| Planning, Organising & Prioritising | Studio Equipment & its Operation                   | Managing Budgets                     | Self Awareness                        |
| Critical Listening & Analysis       | Music Performance                                  | Negotiation (Contracts & Pricing)    |                                       |
| Understanding a Director's Vision   | Music Conducting & Ensemble Leadership             | Music Rights & Publishing            |                                       |
| Communication                       | Understanding Classical Music                      |                                      |                                       |
| Managing Deadlines                  | Music Post-Production Process                      |                                      |                                       |
| Problem Solving                     | Music Notation, Orchestration & Arrangement        |                                      |                                       |
| Industry Knowledge                  | Intellectual Property (IP) Rights & Issues         |                                      |                                       |
| Music's Role in Screen Production   | Screen Industry Production Processes               |                                      |                                       |





Screen Composers  
Guild of Ireland