Proposal to develop an apprenticeship standard
L3: Grips technician

Title of occupation
Grips technician

UOS reference number
ST1318_V0.0

Core and options
No

Level of occupation
Level 3

Route
Creative and design

Typical duration of apprenticeship
24 months

Target date for approval
No target date

Resubmission
No

Occupational profile

This occupation is found in...
This occupation is found in the film and TV sectors and work can be carried out either on set or on location. Depending on the production requirements, conditions on location can be demanding and include extreme terrain, climates and/or weather conditions.

Employers can be large or small equipment rental houses (that rent out equipment to the film and TV industry) film or TV production companies or film or TV studios but the vast majority of the sector is freelance – employed for the duration of specific productions.

The broad purpose of the occupation is...
The broad purpose of the occupation is to build, maintain and move grip equipment, such as track, dollies, cranes and jib arms, during productions so that the position and movement required by cameras are achievable.

This involves selecting and obtaining suitable equipment, materials and consumables, laying track and rigging mounts, dollies, platforms, cranes, jib arms and remote-controlled heads before filming commences. During filming it involves tracking cameras, dollies, cranes and jib arms so that desired shots are obtained. After filming it involves dismantling, cleaning and returning equipment. All work is carried out as part of a team.

As grips need to set things up before filming can commence, it can involve working long and irregular hours. It involves working at height and working outdoors. It may also involve working away from home for periods of time.

Driving is typically required as part of this role.

There are no statutory licensing requirements for this role.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with...

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with other grips and other members of the camera department. They report to the Key Grip, who is in charge of their work. In addition, they need to interact with members of stunt, lighting and art departments on productions, as well as cast members and equipment hire ordering companies and delivery staff.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for...

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for the health and safety of every aspect of their work. This is particularly important given the high-risk nature of the role as grip equipment and operation has the potential to be very dangerous. A high level of professionalism is expected and they are responsible for the quality of their work and completing their work to production timescales.

Problem-solving is a key part of the role as is engineering knowledge as they may be required to lay track in complex and extreme situations. Communication and team-working is essential to the role.

Grips will typically report to the key grip for each job. They work in teams and may refer to team members who have more experience than them or give support to those with less experience. Teams are supervised by the key grip.

They will be responsible for the grip or crane equipment and the tools they use for assembly and dismantling it. They will be responsible for keeping the kit in good order, cleaning it and returning it in good condition to the equipment hire company, reporting any loss or damage when it is finished with.

There are no statutory or regulatory entry requirements for these occupations but insurance typically dictates that entrants are likely to be at least 18.

Typical entry point to the apprenticeship

There are no set entry requirements for this apprenticeship standard. Employers will set their own entry requirements, but these may typically include demonstrable hands-on practical skills and an understanding of mechanics and engineering principles.

Transferability

The Institute expects that being competent in the duties you have listed in this proposal will mean that an individual will be able to undertake the occupation in all relevant types of employer. Please outline the steps you have taken to ensure that this will be the case.

A shortage of grips is currently being experienced across the film and TV industries.

In order to ensure that they are representative of the whole sector, the trailblazer group has ensured that they are made up of those organisations who employ or hire grips including rental houses, production companies and studios. Between them they are involved with Film,
TV, Music Promos, Commercials and other productions. It is expected that grips will gain experience in all types of production.

The duties cover the entire breadth of the role. As they develop the duties, the group has double-checked that all duties will apply to all types of grip activity regardless of the type of production they are working on or the type of organisation they are doing it for.

As the majority of the sector is freelance, it is expected that apprentices will be employed by one overarching organisation with a system to place apprentices with different types of employers and on different types of production on a planned rotational basis.

**Stand-alone occupation**

*Please confirm that the proposed apprenticeship relates to a stand-alone occupation and explain how it will fit in with any associated apprenticeship standards.*

This is a recognised occupation with the job titles commonly listed in the credits at the end of film and TV productions. This appears in the Media, Broadcast and Production Pathway of the Creative and Design Occupational Map under the heading Technical Occupations. There is no professional body or statutory regulator for this occupation. There is a certified Bectu union branch for this occupation. Bectu is the union for creative ambition and represents over 40,000 staff, contract and freelance workers in the media and entertainment industries.

This apprenticeship relates to a stand-alone occupation. This occupation is very distinct from other apprenticeships and full competence could not be achieved using any other standard.

There is an apprenticeship for Live Event Rigger which relates to installing the static infrastructure to support scenic, lighting, sound and the audio-visual elements of a live event. This is very different from the grips occupation which is about creating the elements required to move cameras while they are filming. This can be done by laying track for camera dollies to move along. Track must always be stable even in complex and extreme situations such as up the sides of mountains. They are also required to rig camera dollies, cars, trailers, swing cranes, jib arms and remote heads and systems before filming commences. A main part of the role is to track them during filming which can also involve tracking and swinging crane arms and elevating and tracking cameras. Another area that is different is the whole knowledge about cameras types and also that associated with making film and TV productions including the departments and their interrelationships and set etiquette.

Although there is some crossover with the Live Event Rigger Standard in generic areas such as Health & Safety, Teamwork and Communication and Working at Height; in its current format the standard doesn’t cover the required technical areas of a Grip role which would form the majority of the off-the-job and on-the-job training.

**Progression routes**

No progression routes specified

**Progression routes comments**

Following successful completion of the apprenticeship, individuals will continue to work as part of a team of grips on varying productions, gaining experience and expertise on each one. An increase in their experience and expertise will see an increase in the types of grip roles that they are able to fulfil. A grip would progress on to being a key grip. A key grip designs and builds rigging structures, dollies, trolleys and cranes (which are worth millions of pounds) unique to each set. Arriving at this point takes a lot of dedication and experience in many contexts.

**Typical job titles**

['Grip'
'Crane Grip'
'Dolly Grip'
'Crane Operator'
'Best Boy'
'Floor Grip']

**Does professional recognition exist for the occupation...**

No
Duty

Work effectively with the key grip, colleagues from own and other departments and suppliers, following established set etiquette.

Be aware of and follow current risk assessments for productions, anticipating, minimising and responding to the hazards associated with the handling, movement and fixing of heavy and moving equipment.

Identify any aspects of planned grip activity that could cause a hazard to own or other departments, documenting this and bringing it to the attention of the key grip.

Work as part of a team to select and obtain suitable equipment, materials and consumables, checking it on delivery, ensuring suitable safety certificates and dealing with any problems.

Work as part of a team to lay track for camera dollies or camera cranes, assessing the suitability of the surface on which the track will be used, and the type of track relative to the sizes and weights of the equipment to be carried.

Work as part of a team to rig static mounts, camera dollies and tracking platforms selecting the correct camera mounts for the weight and balance of cameras and for the production needs of shots.

Work as part of a team to rig camera cranes and jib arms that are suitable for use in prevailing environmental conditions, anticipating the public’s, the performers and the crew’s special safety requirements regarding the equipment.

Work with the head tech to rig remotely controlled heads and systems on mountings (including cranes), within the weight parameters of mountings to be used.

Work as part of a team to mount internal or external camera mounts on or in vehicles, without damage to vehicles.

Work as part of a team to rig tracking cars and trailers (travelling platform), selecting the right type of camera mounting, crane, or jib arm, and fixing the whole mount without causing any damage or endangering others.

Work as part of a team to track cameras along tracks or other suitable surfaces to meet shot requirements.

Work as part of a team to track and swing cranes and jib arms to meet shot requirements, taking account of the limitations of rigs within their operating environment.

Work as part of a team to elevate and track camera dollies to meet shot requirements, taking account of the operation and limitations of the equipment.

Work as part of a team to dismantle, clean and arrange for the return of equipment to suppliers in good condition, reporting any loss or damage when it is finished with.

Manage work as a freelancer, in line with legal requirements and sector recognised practice, to ensure continued employment in the industry.