



SKILLS MAPPING FOR SCREEN SECTOR BUSINESSES

Identifying and Developing the Right Talent for Sustainable Growth

Skills mapping is the process of identifying, assessing, and documenting the skills required for specific roles within your business. This approach enables you to:

- **Understand Current Capabilities:** Gain a clear picture of existing skills within the team.
- **Identify Skill Gaps:** Recognise areas where additional training or hiring is needed.
- **Plan for Future Needs:** Align workforce development with strategic objectives.

In the screen sector, where roles often blend technical and artistic skills, a structured skills mapping process is essential for effective workforce planning and growth.

Implementing skills mapping offers several benefits:

- **Enhanced Recruitment:** Clearly defined skill requirements streamline the hiring process for both permanent roles and project-based workers.
- **Targeted Training:** Opportunities can be focused not only on employees but also on interns starting out, or freelancers who may need onboarding into a studio's specific tools and workflows.
- **Career Development:** Everyone, from employees to early-career entrants, gains transparency on what competencies are valued and how they can progress within (or across) projects.
- **Project Efficiency:** Crews and dev teams can be assembled with the right blend of staff and freelance specialists, ensuring projects run smoothly and knowledge gaps are covered.

THE SKILLS MAPPING PROCESS

An 8-Step Guide for Screen Sector Businesses

1. Define Organisational Goals

Start by clarifying your strategic direction. Are you scaling up a production company, developing a new game genre, or exploring emerging platforms like virtual production, AR/VR, or streaming?

- A film studio moving into high-end drama might need skills in script editing, cinematography, and production design.
- A game studio planning a mobile-first launch may need Unity expertise, UX design, mobile monetisation strategies, and QA testing across iOS/Android.
- A VFX house working on international co-productions may need pipeline TDs and knowledge of global delivery standards.

Your organisational goals determine the skills you'll need across the whole workforce - permanent staff, freelancers, and short-term crew alike.

2. Identify Key Roles

List the roles that are critical to delivering those goals. Be specific about the contribution each makes to outcomes. For example, for games it could be programmers, narrative designers, UI/UX artists, community managers, technical directors. For TV & Film it may be producers, assistant directors, editors, cinematographers, art directors, sound designers, runners. And for cross-sector it could be animators, VFX specialists, production coordinators, post supervisors. Remember to include freelance roles, interns, and placements if they regularly form part of your delivery model - they're often essential to keeping productions moving.

3. Determine Required Skills:

Break down each key role into hard (technical) and soft (interpersonal/cognitive) skills. For example:



- **Creative Producer (TV/Film)**
 - *Hard:* Budgeting, scheduling, managing creative briefs, compliance with broadcasters/platforms.
 - *Soft:* Stakeholder communication, leadership, diplomacy under pressure.
- **Editor**
 - *Hard:* Avid/Premiere/Resolve, storytelling through cuts, sound sync.
 - *Soft:* Attention to detail, creative collaboration with directors/producers.
- **Game Developer**
 - *Hard:* C++, Unity/Unreal, optimisation, AI programming.
 - *Soft:* Problem-solving, agile team collaboration.

Use job frameworks or national occupational standards where available to support this.

4. Assess Current Skills

Gather a realistic picture of the skills already in your team (permanent staff, freelancers, and interns). Use a mix of methods:

- **Self-assessment surveys** - individuals rate their own proficiency in specific tools or skills.
- **Line manager reviews** - managers assess observed performance.
- **Skills audits or 1:1 interviews** - structured conversations to surface hidden or transferable skills (e.g. a runner with editing experience, an assistant editor with colour grading skills, or a production coordinator who can also manage budgets.).
- **Performance data or project retrospectives** - review recent productions or launches to identify where strengths shone and where bottlenecks occurred.

Encouraging open dialogue helps uncover under-used skills that could reduce bottlenecks and strengthen project delivery.

5. Create a Skills Matrix

Use a spreadsheet or software to build a skills matrix:

- Rows = individuals or job roles (including freelancers and interns if they're part of the workflow)
- Columns = required skills
- Fill in based on the level of proficiency (e.g., beginner, intermediate, advanced)

This matrix gives you a visual overview of strengths and gaps across the team.

6. Analyse Skill Gaps

Compare the required skills for each role with your current team's capabilities. Ask:

- Are there critical gaps (e.g. colourists for HDR delivery, or rigging artists for animation)?
- Are you overly reliant on one person (e.g. only one editor fluent in DaVinci Resolve)?
- Do freelancers cover gaps, or should you build in-house capacity?
- Which gaps are *urgent* (needed this quarter), *medium-term* (needed within a year), and *long-term* (needed for strategic growth)?

This analysis helps prioritise investment and recruitment.

7. Develop Action Plans

Once gaps are identified, define clear steps to address and close them. This might include:

- **Internal training or mentorship programmes** - e.g. pairing junior camera assistants with experienced DOPs, or juniors shadowing narrative leads.



- **Hiring** - bringing in permanent or freelance specialists to cover skills you don't have in-house.
- **Upskilling through external courses** - ScreenSkills, management & leadership programmes, or game dev bootcamps.
- **Restructuring roles to better distribute skill demands** - e.g. shifting tasks between producers to balance workloads, or redistributing technical support across teams.

Be explicit: document responsibilities, timeframes, and success metrics.

8. Implement and Monitor

Roll out your action plans and integrate skill development into regular team reviews.

- Update the skills matrix quarterly or at the end of each major production or project.
- Regularly revisit freelancer networks and intern programmes to capture new skills.
- Integrate skills conversations into performance reviews, crew wrap-ups, or sprint retros.

Your workforce (both staff and project-based workers) will evolve, as will the sector. Staying proactive ensures you're always ready for the next brief, commission, or game launch.

BEST PRACTICES

Engage Stakeholders

Involve people at every level - from runners and QA testers to producers and directors - in the mapping process. This ensures accuracy and creates buy-in, because the people doing the work often know best where skills are strong (or stretched). For freelancers, make the process simple and lightweight so it doesn't become a barrier to working with you.

Regular Updates

The screen sector shifts quickly - new tech, new formats, new platforms. Revisit and refresh your skills matrix regularly: after each major production wrap, game release, or quarterly review. This keeps it relevant and avoids a static snapshot that's out of date within months.

Leverage Technology

Use tools that make tracking and analysis easier - from simple spreadsheets to HR platforms, production databases, or project management software. For smaller outfits, even a shared Google Sheet can do the job.

Promote a Learning Culture

Encourage employees, interns, and other staff to see skills development as part of their role, not an optional extra. For freelancers, make opportunities visible and accessible - for example, signposting industry events or offering optional training or mentoring during projects. This helps keep everyone aligned with industry advancements and positions your organisation as a place people want to return to.

WHY IT MATTERS

Skills mapping is a strategic approach to workforce planning. In the screen sector, where projects are time-sensitive and skills are both technical and creative, it helps you:

- Identify and address gaps early
- Build agile teams that can flex with project needs
- And ensure you're ready for the next commission, game launch, or production challenge.



By embedding it into everyday practice, organisations can stay competitive and individuals can see clear pathways for growth, whether they're permanent staff, freelancers, or just starting out.