



## 94th ACADEMY AWARDS SPECIAL RULES FOR THE SHORT FILM AWARDS

**Due to the global pandemic caused by coronavirus/COVID-19, all matters of rules and eligibility for the 94th Academy Awards are subject to change based on national guidelines, state-mandated government orders and Academy-determined best practices.**

### I. DEFINITIONS

- A. A short film is defined as an original motion picture that has a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits.
- B. This excludes from consideration such works as:
  - 1. previews and advertising films
  - 2. sequences from feature-length films, such as credit sequences
  - 3. unaired episodes of established TV series
  - 4. unsold TV series pilots

### II. CATEGORIES

An award shall be given for the best achievement in each of two categories.

#### A. Animated Short Film

An animated film is defined as a motion picture in which movement and characters' performances are created using a frame-by-frame technique, and usually falls into one of the two general fields of animation: narrative or abstract. Some of the techniques of animating films include but are not limited to hand-drawn animation, computer animation, stop-motion, clay animation, pixilation, cutout animation, pinscreen, camera multiple pass imagery, kaleidoscopic effects created frame-by-frame, and drawing on the film frame itself. Motion capture and real-time puppetry are not by themselves animation techniques. An animated short film has a running time of 40 minutes or less. An animated feature film has a running time of more than 40 minutes. In an animated film, animation must figure in no less than 75 percent of the picture's running time. In addition, a narrative animated film must have a significant number of the major characters animated. If the picture is created in a cinematic style that could be mistaken for live action, the filmmaker(s) must also submit information supporting how and why the picture is substantially a work of animation rather than live action. Documentary short subjects that are animated may be submitted in either the Animated Short Film category or the Documentary Short Subject category, but not both.

#### B. Live Action Short Film

A live action film uses imagery created primarily through practical photographic techniques used to capture physical actors, props, sets, and locations. **Documentary short subjects will not be accepted in the live action category.** If the picture is created in the cinematic style of a documentary, the filmmaker(s) must also submit information supporting how and why the picture is substantially a work of fiction rather than a documentary.

### III. ELIGIBILITY

- A. To be eligible for award consideration for the 94th Awards year, a short film must fulfill one of the following qualifying criteria between October 1, 2020, and September 30, 2021. This qualification must take place within two years of the film's completion date.

1. The picture must have been publicly exhibited for **paid admission** in a commercial motion picture theater in one of the six qualifying U.S. metro areas: Los Angeles County; City of New York [five boroughs]; the Bay Area [counties of San Francisco, Marin, Alameda, San Mateo and Contra Costa]; Chicago [Cook County, Illinois]; Miami [Miami-Dade County, Florida]; and Atlanta [Fulton County, Georgia], for a run of at least seven consecutive days with at least one screening a day prior to public exhibition or distribution by any nontheatrical means. The picture also must appear in the theater listings along with the appropriate dates and screening time(s). Drive-in theaters are included as a qualifying commercial venue in the above metro areas (must run for seven consecutive days with at least one screening daily). For films that were unable to complete a planned theatrical release, due to the theater closures, filmmakers may appeal for an exemption. Appeals may be required to provide proof or documentation of the intended theatrical release.

All eligible motion pictures must be publicly exhibited by means of 35mm or 70mm film, or in a 24- or 48-frame progressive scan Digital Cinema format with a minimum projector resolution of 2048 by 1080 pixels, source image format conforming to ST 428-1:2006 D-Cinema Distribution Master – Image Characteristics; image compression (if used) conforming to ISO/IEC 15444-1 (JPEG 2000); and image and sound files packaged as Digital Cinema Packages (DCPs) in the “SMPTE DCP” format. SMPTE DCP refers to SMPTE ST 429-2 and related specifications. (Blu-ray format does not meet Digital Cinema requirements.)

The audio in a Digital Cinema Package (DCP) is typically 5.1 or 7.1 channels of discrete audio. The minimum for a non-mono configuration of the audio shall be three channels as Left, Center, Right (a Left/Right configuration is not acceptable in a theatrical environment). In addition to channel-based audio, object-based audio may also be present as an immersive audio bitstream.

The audio data shall be formatted in conformance with ST 428-2:2006 D-Cinema Distribution Master – Audio Characteristics and ST 428-12:2013 D-Cinema Distribution Master Common Audio Channels and Soundfield Groups. Immersive audio, if present, shall be formatted in conformance with ST 2098-2:2019 Immersive Audio Bitstream Specification.

**Student films cannot qualify with a theatrical release.**

**OR**

2. The film must have won a qualifying award at a competitive film festival, as specified in the Short Film Qualifying Festival List, regardless of any prior public exhibition or distribution by nontheatrical means. Proof of the award must be submitted with the entry. The Short Film Qualifying Festival List is available at [www.oscars.org](http://www.oscars.org) or may be obtained from the Academy.

**OR**

3. The film must have won a Gold, Silver or Bronze Medal award in the Academy’s 2021 Student Academy Awards competition in the Animation, Narrative, Alternative or International categories.

All films must be submitted in a standard theatrical exhibition aspect ratio, in formats currently accepted by the Academy (see Paragraph III.A.1 above), no matter which other formats may have been used during their theatrical run or festival screening. Producers may provide screenings of films in specialized formats for Academy members, but attendance at such screenings is not required for voting purposes.

- B. A short film qualifying under Paragraph III.A.1 above may not be exhibited publicly or distributed anywhere in any nontheatrical form until **after** its qualifying theatrical release. Nontheatrical public exhibition or distribution includes but is not limited to:

- Broadcast and cable television

- PPV/VOD
- DVD distribution
- Inflight airline distribution
- Internet transmission

Excerpts of the film totaling no more than ten percent of its running time are exempted from this rule.

**Films qualifying under Paragraph III.A.2 or III.A.3 above are exempted from this rule.**

#### IV. SUBMISSION

- Short films must be submitted to the Academy on 35mm or 70mm film, or as a DCP formatted according to the digital qualification standards described in Paragraph III.A.1 above, along with the digital upload of the film, for streaming purposes. **Encrypted films will not be accepted.** Formats requiring special technical presentation that meet the technical specifications above will be given consideration if made available for Academy voting screenings in Los Angeles County.
- The print or DCP of the short film submitted for Academy Awards consideration must be identical in content and length to the print or DCP that qualified.
- Dialogue or narration must be substantially in English or the film must have English-language subtitles.
- All required entry materials, including the film print or DCP and the digital upload of the film for streaming purposes, must be received by **5 p.m. PT on Friday, October 15, 2021.**
- If a short film advances to the second round of voting, additional materials will be required within five business days after the shortlist is announced. Shortlisted films must have the necessary clearances for commercial theatrical exhibition. Festival clearances are not sufficient.
- The Academy will retain for its archives one film print or DCP and DVDs of every short film receiving a nomination for final balloting. The Academy will have the right, but not the obligation, to create a preservation copy of the picture at its own expense. All pictures that are not nominated will be returned at Academy expense. By submitting a film, the filmmaker agrees that the Academy has the right to make copies and distribute them for voting purposes only.
- The recipient of the Oscar will be the individual most directly responsible for the concept and the creative execution of the film. In the event that more than one individual has been directly and importantly involved in creative decisions, a second statuette may be awarded. However, **no more than two awards** will be given to a winning production. Companies or organized groups shall not receive nominations or awards.
- No short film may be submitted more than once for Academy Awards consideration. A short film must be submitted in the same Awards year in which it qualifies.

#### V. VOTING

- Excellence of the entries shall be judged on the basis of originality, entertainment and production quality without regard to cost of production or subject matter.
- A reviewing process will take place, in which volunteer active and life members of the Short Films and Feature Animation Branch will view all motion pictures entered and mark all entries 10, 9, 8, 7, or 6 with the guidelines of 10 (excellent), 8 (good), 7 (fair) or 6 (poor). In each category not more than fifteen pictures receiving the highest average numerical scores above 7.5 shall be considered further. In the event that fewer than six pictures receive average numerical scores above 7.5, those with the next highest average numerical scores shall be included until six pictures are selected. Active and

life members of the Directors, Producers and Writers Branches will also be invited to participate in the Live Action Short Film reviewing process.

- C. To determine nominations, all entries selected during the reviewing process shall be screened by the Branch Nominating Committee consisting of all active and life members of the Short Films and Feature Animation Branch. Active and life members of the Directors, Producers and Writers Branches will also be invited to participate in the Live Action Short Film voting. A member must see all shortlisted films for the ballot to be counted. Those members of the branch who participated in the reviewing process and who viewed all of the selected pictures, in either or both categories, will receive ballots. The running order of the films in each category shall be organized alphabetically by title. Members shall vote in the order of their preference for not more than five pictures in each category. The five pictures receiving the highest number of votes in each category shall become the nominations for final voting for the Short Film awards.
- D. Final voting for the Animated Short Film and Live Action Short Film awards shall be restricted to active and life members of the Academy who have viewed all of the nominated short films. Academy members may vote for only one film in each of the two categories.