



## 89th ACADEMY AWARDS SPECIAL RULES FOR THE DOCUMENTARY AWARDS

### I. DEFINITION

An eligible documentary film is defined as a theatrically released nonfiction motion picture dealing creatively with cultural, artistic, historical, social, scientific, economic or other subjects. It may be photographed in actual occurrence, or may employ partial reenactment, stock footage, stills, animation, stop-motion or other techniques, as long as the emphasis is on fact and not on fiction.

### II. CATEGORIES

The Documentary awards are divided into two categories:

- A. Documentary Feature – motion pictures with a running time of more than 40 minutes, and
- B. Documentary Short Subject – motion pictures with a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits.

### III. DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

#### A. Eligibility

1. To be eligible for 89th Academy Awards consideration, a documentary feature must complete **both** a seven-day theatrical release in Los Angeles County **and** a seven-day theatrical release in the City of New York during the eligibility period.
2. The eligibility period for documentary features begins on January 1, 2016, and ends on December 31, 2016. **For films being released between January 1 and August 20, the completed online submission form and all other entry materials, including DVDs and digital content delivery, must be received by the Academy no later than 30 days after the end of the qualifying theatrical releases. For films being released between August 21 and December 31, the completed online submission form, letters from the theaters confirming that the film will be satisfying the release requirements, and all other entry materials, including DVDs and digital content delivery, must be received by the Academy by 5 p.m. PT on Tuesday, September 20, 2016.** Those entrants submitting entry materials by September 20 with a planned theatrical release before the end of the calendar year, but which will not have a locked picture by the September 20 deadline, may request by September 13 an extension for the DVD submission and digital content delivery only. Extensions will be granted only to October 20, and only if the picture is not locked. There will be **no** exceptions.
3. The theatrical releases in both cities must take place in the same eligibility period and within two years of the motion picture's completion date. **A theatrical release in only one of the qualifying cities disqualifies a picture from Academy Awards contention in the Documentary Feature category in any year.** Documentaries submitted for consideration for the 89th Academy Awards in any category will not be eligible for consideration in subsequent Awards years in any category. The picture must be submitted in the same Awards year in which it first qualifies.
4. The picture must be exhibited using 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 file formats suitable for exhibition in commercial Digital Cinema sites.

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).

The audio data shall be formatted in conformance with ST 428-2:2006 D-Cinema Distribution Master – Audio Characteristics and ST 428-3:2006 D-Cinema Distribution Master – Audio Channel Mapping and Channel Labeling.

5. Screenings during the theatrical release must occur at least four times daily and must begin between noon and 10 p.m., with at least one screening beginning daily between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. The motion picture must be exhibited for paid admission, and must be advertised during each of its qualifying theatrical releases in at least one of these major newspapers in each city: *The New York Times*, *Time Out New York* or *The Village Voice* (New York); *Los Angeles Times* or *LA Weekly* (Los Angeles). The film must have a movie critic review in either *The New York Times* and/or *Los Angeles Times*. A television critic review will not be accepted. Filmmakers who are unable to obtain a review may appeal for an exemption. Advertisements must have minimum dimensions of one inch by two inches and must include the theater, film title, and the dates and screening times of the qualifying exhibitions. A listing in the theater grid will not meet this requirement. Advertising must begin on the first day of the theatrical release.
6. Works that are essentially promotional or instructional are not eligible, nor are works that are essentially unfiltered records of performances.
7. Only individual documentary works are eligible. This excludes from consideration:
  - episodes extracted from a larger series,
  - segments taken from a single “composite” program, and
  - alternate versions of ineligible works.
8. The significant dialogue or narration must be in English, or the entry must have English-language subtitles.
9. **Films that, in any version, receive a nontheatrical public exhibition or distribution before their first qualifying theatrical release, will not be eligible for Academy Awards consideration.** Nontheatrical public exhibition or distribution includes but is not limited to:
  - Broadcast and cable television
  - PPV/VOD
  - DVD distribution
  - Internet transmission

Ten minutes or ten percent of the running time of a film, whichever is shorter, is allowed to be shown in a nontheatrical medium prior to the film’s theatrical release.

## **B. Submission**

1. The producer or distributor of the film must register online at the Academy’s Awards Submissions site, [submissions.oscars.org](http://submissions.oscars.org), and inform the Academy of the details of the film’s theatrical release **before** the release begins.
2. Entrants (including non-U.S. entrants) must complete the online submission form and submit to the Academy 300 DVDs of the entry, without trailers or other extraneous material, capable of playing on Region 0/NTSC standard definition DVD players, the digital content delivery of the film, and all other required materials by 5 p.m. PT on the dates listed in Paragraph III.A.2 above. DVDs must be in individual paper sleeves and must include the title, running time and director name only. No artwork, contact information, company name or film logo is acceptable on the DVD labels or sleeves.

### C. Voting

1. Documentaries will be viewed by members of the Documentary Branch, which will use a preferential voting system to produce a shortlist of 15 films. Five nominees will then be chosen by a second round of balloting, again using a preferential voting system.
2. Final voting shall be restricted to active and life members of the Academy who have viewed all of the nominated documentaries.

### D. Copies Required

The filmmakers of the shortlisted documentaries must submit either two 35mm or 70mm film prints or two DCP versions of the documentary after the shortlist is announced. Following the nominations screenings, one copy of the work shall become the property of the Academy Film Archive. By submitting a film, the filmmaker agrees that the Academy has the right to make copies and distribute them for voting purposes only.

### E. Nominees and Award Recipients

1. The nominee(s) should be the individual(s) most involved in the key creative aspects of the filmmaking process. **A maximum of two persons may be designated as nominees, one of whom must be the credited director who exercised directorial control, and the other of whom must have a producer or director credit.** If a producer is named, that individual must have performed a major portion of the producing functions, in accordance with Academy producer criteria. Production companies or persons with the screen credit of executive producer, co-producer or any credit other than director or producer shall not be eligible as nominees for the motion picture.
2. All individuals with a “producer” or “produced by” credit on films that reach the semifinal round will automatically be vetted. The Documentary Branch Executive Committee will determine which producers, if any, are eligible to receive an Oscar. In the unlikely event of a dispute, filmmakers may appeal the committee’s decision.
3. No more than two statuettes will normally be given in the Documentary Feature category. On occasion, a third statuette may be awarded when there are three primary and essential contributors.

### F. Advertising and Publicity Restrictions

Only documentaries that receive nominations or Academy Awards may refer to their Academy endorsements in advertising and publicity materials. A film that is selected for the shortlist may not identify itself as an “Academy Award finalist,” “Academy Award shortlist film” or the like except when it appears in a program consisting entirely of such films.

### G. Other Rules

1. Documentaries submitted in this category may also qualify for awards in other categories if they meet the specified requirements.
2. The Documentary Branch Executive Committee shall resolve all questions of eligibility and rules.