

**REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE PROMOTION  
OF FILMS ELIGIBLE FOR THE 89th ACADEMY  
AWARDS®**

Issued by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and  
Sciences

June 2016

## OVERVIEW

In an effort to maintain a high degree of fairness and transparency in the process by which producers, distributors, marketers and others (collectively referred to as “film companies”) promote films eligible for Academy Awards® to Academy members, the Board of Governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has developed a set of regulations for the annual rite generally known as “campaigning.”

It is the Academy’s goal to ensure that the Awards competition is conducted in a fair and ethical manner. The Academy requires that voting members of the Academy make their choices based solely on the artistic and technical merits of the eligible films and achievements.

If any campaign activity is determined by the Board of Governors to work in opposition to that goal, whether or not anticipated by these regulations, the Board of Governors may take any corrective actions or assess any penalties, including disqualification, that in its discretion it deems necessary to protect the reputation and integrity of the awards process. Furthermore, any Academy member who has authorized, executed or otherwise enabled a campaign activity that is determined by the Board of Governors to have undermined the letter or spirit of these regulations may be subject to suspension of membership or expulsion from the Academy.

It should not be assumed that any tactics or activities not specifically addressed by these regulations are acceptable. The Academy is willing to review any materials or answer any questions that arise in advance. Marketers are also urged to familiarize themselves with the Academy’s regulations for using its intellectual properties ([www.oscars.org/legal/regulations.html](http://www.oscars.org/legal/regulations.html)).

For more information about the Awards Rules, including eligibility and submission procedures, go to [www.oscars.org/rules](http://www.oscars.org/rules).

## **1. Screenings**

The Academy encourages the screening of eligible films in a theatrical setting for its members.

- a. **Q&A screenings**: Members may be invited to screenings by film companies that are followed by a Q&A session or similar live participation by persons associated with making the film.
  - i. **After nominations**: After nomination are announced, and until the final polls close, Academy members may be invited to a maximum of four screenings of a nominated film (six for films in the Documentary and Foreign Language categories) preceded or followed by Q&A's. One additional such Q&A event will be permitted in a territory outside the U.S. All participants in such Q&A's other than the moderator must be nominated or have been eligible for nomination.
- b. **Members as hosts or moderators**: After nominations are announced, no Academy member may be listed as a "host" of a screening and no Academy member may serve as moderator for a Q&A, except for members directly associated with making the film.
- c. **Promotional items**: No promotional materials, or anything of value, may be given to members at screenings or otherwise.
- d. **Receptions and refreshments**: Reasonable food and drink maybe provided at the time and place of the screening.
  - i. **After nominations**: After nominations are announced, and until final polls close, screenings may not include any receptions, entertainment, complimentary food and beverage, or other hospitality.

## **3. Mail and email**

The Academy requires that film companies limit the volume of mail and email sent to members during Oscar season.

- a. **Number of weekly mailings**: Film companies may not send a member more than one email and one hardcopy mailing per Monday through Sunday seven-day period for each film the company represents. If a particular film is represented by more than one company, only one of the companies may send an e-mail or mailing regarding it during such period.
  - i. This rule does not affect or apply to the number of physical screeners, screenplays or music CD's that can be mailed, but it does apply to the number of mailings and emails containing (or instructing how to download) digital screeners, screenplays or music. Letters accompanying the delivery of screeners, CDs and scripts are permitted.

b. **Mailings may only include the following:**

- i. Basic “for your consideration” listing of the artists who worked on the film.
- ii. A brief, unembellished synopsis of the film.
- iii. Once Oscar nominations are announced, they may refer to any current Academy nominations received by a film.
- iv. Screening schedules or notices of upcoming screenings for members (not mere notices of a commercial release)
- v. The film’s basic title treatment.
- vi. Verification of a member’s address and to announce the shipment of a screener.

c. **Mailings may not include:**

- i. Personal signature, personal regards, or pleas to watch the film.
- ii. Extolling the merits of a film, an achievement or an individual.
- iii. Quotes from reviews of a film.
- iv. Honors or awards, past or present, received by either the film or those involved with the film.
- v. Photographs, key art, or graphics.
- vi. Envelopes with a stamp or other graphic or text element that makes reference to a film or achievement.
- vii. Except as permitted in Regulation 4, links to any websites that promote a film

d. **Format restrictions:**

- i. Letter format (8½" x 11" paper) or on postcards (maximum size 5" x 7")
- ii. Letters may not use card stock (card stock may only be used for postcards).

e. **Opt-out required:** Members must have the chance to opt out of receiving hardcopies of screening schedules, or of receiving mailings or e-mail of any kind.

#### **4. Websites**

References or links to a websites in mailings, email and other communications to members are permitted as follows:

- a. **Websites may contain:** The same screening information allowed in email or direct mailings under Rule 3.
- b. **Websites may not contain:** Images, audio, video, graphical and other multimedia elements, or anything prohibited under Rule 3.
- c. **Academy Q&A videos:** Links or embeds to the video on the Academy's membership website containing the film's question and answer session at the Academy are allowed
- d. **Tracking:** Companies may not install cookies, software agents or similar items on a member's computer for any purpose.

#### **5. Quote ads**

Any form of advertising in any medium including online and social media that includes quotes or comments by Academy members is prohibited.

#### **6. Screeners**

Distribution of screeners to Academy members is allowed. Screeners may be distributed to members in physical form (e.g. DVD or Blu-ray) and digitally via download or streaming.

- a. **Limit on number of screeners:** Companies may not send members duplicate screeners of the same motion picture. However, one screener of a film may be sent in physical form (e.g., DVD or Blu-ray) and an additional one may be sent in digital form.
- b. **Screeners may include:** Closed captioning and simple menus that allow viewers to select different starting points (chapter stops) and audio formats.
- c. **Screeners may not include:** Any additional audio or video material, such as information about the making of the movie.
- d. **Packaging of screeners:** Whether housing single or multiple screeners, elaborate or promotional packaging is not permitted.
  - i. The packaging of screeners should be limited to simple sleeves or boxes.
  - ii. Single DVD packaging should be the size and thickness of a standard DVD jewel box dimensions (approximately 1/2" thick).

- iii. Packaging may only include:
  - 1. A film's basic title treatment.
  - 2. List of "for your consideration" credits.
  - 3. A brief, unembellished synopsis.
- iv. Packaging may NOT include tag lines, advertising or promotional copy.

## **7. Music**

- a. **Before nominations:** Before nominations are announced, CDs of eligible scores may be sent to members of the Music Branch only.
  - i. The music on the CD must be representative of the score and may not differ from the music actually used in the finished film.
  - ii. Each music track on the CD must be titled and include the name of the composer(s). The titles must match the corresponding title and composer(s) listed on the cue sheet that is submitted as part of the Original Score entry process.
  - iii. Only the tracks written specifically for the film by the eligible composer(s) may be included on the CD. Music written by other composers, licensed music or music that is in any other way ineligible may not be included (even if written by the eligible composer).
  - iv. No CDs of songs may be sent to any Academy member before nominations are announced. (Song nomination procedures already provide Music Branch voters with access to the eligible songs in the context of the motion picture.)
  - v. As with other categories, Music Branch members may not contact other Music Branch members to promote the nomination of their own song in any way, including *via* mail, email, telephone or social media account.
  - vi. Music branch members may not be invited to, and such members may not attend, any screenings, non-screening events or concerts that include live performances of music eligible for nomination.
- b. **After nominations:** After nominations are announced, CDs of nominated scores and songs may be sent to any Academy member, although no member may be sent duplicate CDs.
  - i. CDs of nominated scores must adhere to the same

guidelines regarding content as described above.

- ii. CDs of songs must be the same version that was produced for the motion picture.
- c. **Digital distribution:** So long as it is done in accordance with the above guidelines, in addition to CDs, it is also permissible to distribute songs and scores digitally by providing members the ability to digitally access or download music.
  - i. The members may be sent a letter or e-mail informing them where and how to perform the download.
  - ii. The letter or e-mail must conform to Regulation 3, and the website at which members can access the music must conform to Regulation 4.
  - iii. Neither video excerpts nor sheet music may be sent at any time.
  - iv. All members should be given the chance to opt out of receiving CDs.
- d. **Packaging:** The packaging of CDs must adhere to the same restrictions as those described in Regulation 6 for screener packaging.

## **8. Screenplays**

- a. **Format:** Screenplays that are sent should be the final shooting screenplay presented in standard industry form, i.e., with plain paper or card stock covers displaying only title and writer information (no graphics), and containing no review excerpts or other promotional materials. The Academy recommends that screenplays be duplicated in a double-sided format. Screenplays reproduced in smaller formats (8½" x 5½", for example) are also permissible.
- b. **Before nominations:** Before nominations are announced, screenplays may be sent to members of the Writers Branch only.
- c. **After nominations:** After nominations are announced, screenplays nominated in either of the two Writing categories may be sent to all members.
- d. **Electronic versions:** It is also permissible to provide electronic versions of screenplays that Academy members can access or download at a company's website.
  - i. The electronic script itself must conform to the above requirements.

- ii. The company may send members a letter or e-mail informing them where and how to perform the download.
- iii. The letter or e-mail must conform to Regulation 3, the website at which members can access the screenplay must conform to Regulation 4.
- iv. It is also permissible to send out screenplays in electronic form on flash drives (aka memory sticks, thumb drives). Only a studio name and logo and film title(s) may appear on the exterior of the device.
- e. **Opt-out:** Members of the Writers Branch, as well as the full membership should have the opportunity to choose not to be sent screenplays.

### **9. Third-party distribution**

Film companies are prohibited from doing indirectly or through a third party anything that these regulations prohibit them from doing directly.

- a. They may not use subscriber-based publications to distribute prohibited promotional materials to an Academy member unless the member is a subscriber to those publications.
- b. The Academy defines “subscriber” as a member who has taken the intentional step of requesting that a publication be sent to him or her on a regular basis. The member does not necessarily have to pay for that subscription.
- c. Any Academy member who has not made such a request, however, will not be considered a subscriber, and any company that uses a publication to send the promotional materials anticipated by this regulation to such a member will be in violation of the regulation.
- d. This paragraph is not intended to grant film companies permission to use the services of a third-party publication to send otherwise prohibited promotional materials to member-subscribers where such materials are sent alone and not in connection with the distribution of the publication itself.

### **10. Telephone lobbying**

- a. Contacting Academy members by telephone to promote a film or achievement is expressly forbidden, even if such contact is in the guise of checking to make sure a screener or other mailing was received.
- b. Telephone calls to verify members’ addresses are permitted, as long as no eligible films are discussed.



## **11. Receptions, parties and other non-screening events**

- a. **After nominations:** After nomination are announced, and until the final polls close, film companies are not permitted to invite members to attend any parties, dinners, lunches, or other non-screening events that promote eligible or nominated films.
  - i. **Exception:** Members may be invited to pre-receptions or after-parties held by film companies at the time and locale of any guild awards or other recognized industry awards event.
- b. **Strictly prohibited activity:** During no period shall members be invited to or attend any non-screening event, party or dinner that in any manner is reasonably perceived to provide undue influence targeted at members in the form of excessive hospitality. In addition to reserving all available remedies with respect to a film as described in the Overview herein, Academy members that violate this regulation will be subject to a one-year suspension of membership for first-time violations, and expulsion for any subsequent violations.

## **12. References to other nominees**

- a. Ads, mailings, websites, social media (including Facebook and Twitter) or any other forms of public communication by anyone directly associated with an eligible film attempting to cast a negative or derogatory light on a competing film or achievement will not be tolerated.
- b. In particular, any tactic that singles out “the competition” by name or title is expressly forbidden.
- c. In addition to reserving all available remedies, Academy members that violate this regulation will be subject to a one-year suspension of membership for first-time violations, and expulsion for any subsequent violations.

## **13. The “Academy” Office**

Some film companies still refer to their campaign offices, in print and on the telephone, as “the Academy Office.” That’s misleading and incorrect. If a name is needed for those special tactical units created to campaign for awards presented by the various awards organizations in the first quarter of the year, the Academy suggests the more accurate “Awards Office.”

**For further information about these regulations, please call (310) 247-3000 or email [campaignregulations@oscars.org](mailto:campaignregulations@oscars.org)**