90th 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

See Feature Rules

IV. DOCUMENTARY SHORT SUBJECT

A. Eligibility

1. To be eligible for 90th Academy Awards consideration, a documentary short subject must complete a seven-day commercial run in a theater in either Los Angeles County or the City of New York, during the eligibility period and prior to public exhibition or distribution by any nontheatrical means.

   OR

2. The film must have won a qualifying award at a competitive film festival, as specified in the Documentary Short Subject 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 Documentary Short Subject Qualifying Festival List is available at 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 2017 Student Academy Awards competition in the Documentary category.

4. The eligibility period for documentary short subjects begins on September 1, 2016, and ends on August 31, 2017. The completed online submission form and all other entry materials, including the digital content delivery and DVDs, must be received by the Academy no later than 30 days after the end of the qualifying run or the festival award win. No submissions will be accepted after 5 p.m. PT on Friday, September 1, 2017.

5. The qualifying run or festival award win must take place within two years of the motion picture’s completion date. The picture must be submitted in the same Awards year in which it first qualifies. Documentaries submitted for the 90th Academy Awards in any category will not be eligible for consideration in subsequent Awards years in any category.
6. 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).


7. Screenings in the qualifying run must occur at least once daily and begin between noon and 10 p.m. The motion picture must be exhibited for paid admission, and must be advertised during its run in a major newspaper: The New York Times, Time Out New York or The Village Voice (New York); Los Angeles Times or LA Weekly (Los Angeles). 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 exhibition. A listing in the theater grid will not meet this requirement. Advertising must begin on the first day of the qualifying run.

8. Works that are essentially promotional or instructional are not eligible, nor are works that are essentially unfiltered records of performances.

9. Only individual documentary works are eligible. This excludes from consideration such works as:

   - multi-part or limited series
   - episodes extracted from a larger series,
   - segments taken from a single "composite" program,
   - alternate versions of ineligible works, and
   - documentary short subjects created from materials substantially taken from or cut down from completed, publicly exhibited feature-length documentaries.

10. The significant dialogue or narration must be in English, or the entry must have English-language subtitles.

11. **Films that, in any version, receive a nontheatrical public exhibition or distribution before their qualifying run as defined in Paragraph IV.A.1 above 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

   Up to ten percent of the running time of a film is allowed to be shown in a nontheatrical medium prior to the film’s commercial qualifying run.

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

B. Submission

1. The producer or distributor of the film must register online at the Academy’s Awards Submissions site, submissions.oscars.org, and inform the Academy of the details of the film’s qualifying run before the run begins.
2. Entrants (including non-U.S. entrants) must complete the online submission form and submit to
the Academy the digital content delivery of the film, and 100 DVDs of the entry, without trailers or
other extraneous material, capable of playing on Region 0/NTSC standard definition DVD
players, and all other required materials and required signatures by 5 p.m. PT on the dates listed
in Paragraph IV.A.4 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, who will use a
preferential voting system to produce a shortlist of 10 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 Academy members 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
producer, if any, is eligible to receive an Oscar. In the unlikely event of a dispute, filmmakers may
appeal the Committee’s decision.

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

The Documentary Branch Executive Committee shall resolve all questions of eligibility and rules.