



## DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILM FAQs

Contact: [Documentaries@oscars.org](mailto:Documentaries@oscars.org)

### 1. When is the deadline to submit?

Short films that qualify between October 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026, must submit all required materials by Thursday, August 13, 2026, no later than 5pm PT.

Short films that qualify between July 1, 2026 – September 30, 2026, must submit all required materials by Thursday, October 8, 2026, no later than 5pm PT.

### 2. Will my short film be ineligible if it screens at schools and/or film festivals?

Public screenings at schools and film festivals do not affect the film's eligibility. Film festivals that utilize online screenings should have either a transactional pay wall or a password-protected entry.

### 3. I planning to qualify my film with a theatrical run in a qualifying metro area. How do I know the theater is a qualifying theater?

A commercial motion picture theater is defined as a brick-and-mortar establishment that operates year-round and regularly screens first-run films for paid admission.

A theater must meet the following criteria:

- Regularly show new releases
- Charge admission
- Have regular non-specialized programming open to the general public
- Exploit and market films through regular listings and advertising
- Generally, run films for seven consecutive days, with multiple showings daily

### 4. How long do I have to qualify my short film?

You have two years from completion to qualify the film.

### 5. What is the maximum running time to enter a short film competition?

The maximum runtime is 40 minutes.

**6. The entry form only allows for two possible nominees, but another person who contributed to the film deserves recognition.**

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 be an individual with a director or producer credit. Everyone with a director or producer credit must sign off in agreement on the designated nominees when submitting. Production companies are not eligible to be designated nominees. If a producer is named, all individuals with a "producer" or "produced by" credit will automatically be vetted if the film reaches the nominations round. The Documentary Branch Executive Committee will determine which producer, if any, is eligible to receive a nomination. The Documentary Branch Executive Committee makes all final determinations of eligibility .

**7. Can I list an executive producer on the film as one of the designated nominees on the entry form?**

No, individuals with executive producer credits are not eligible for awards. Similarly, persons with screen credits of co-producer, associate producer, line producer, produced in association with or any credit other than director or producer shall not receive nominations or statuettes.

**8. Can short films enter other Oscar® categories?**

Shorts are not eligible to compete in additional Oscar categories outside of their specific short film competition.

**9. I'm not sure if my film should be entered as a documentary. Which category should I choose?**

An eligible documentary film is defined as a 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. All final determinations of eligibility are made by the Documentary Branch Executive Committee.

**10. I submitted my film last year, but since, then I've added new material or re-edited it. Can I submit it again?**

No. We do not accept works in progress; the version submitted to the Academy must be the final and definitive version of your film. Entries must have the necessary clearances for commercial theatrical exhibition.

**11. Can my movie be entered if it is part of a series?**

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 films created from materials substantially taken from or cut down from completed, publicly exhibited feature-length documentaries.

**12. I submitted my film last year, but since then, I've won an additional festival award. Can I submit it again?**

No. The category rules only allow for a film to be submitted once for awards consideration.

**13. Can I withdraw the movie from consideration?**

Yes. Tuesday, December 1, 2026, is the last day to withdraw a film from Academy Awards® consideration. Withdrawing and/or failing to complete the qualifying standards may risk future awards disqualification.

**14. My film was broadcast on television outside the United States before it opened theatrically in the United States. Is it still eligible?**

If the film received a theatrical release outside the United States before it was broadcast on television, and if the television broadcast was only outside the United States, the film could still be eligible. Please contact [documentaries@oscars.org](mailto:documentaries@oscars.org) for further information.

**15. Are student films allowed to enter?**

Student films are only eligible by winning an Oscar-qualifying festival or a Student Academy Award. Student films are typically films made for school credit or as part of assignments. Student films cannot qualify with a theatrical release.

**16. How much does it cost to upload a short to the Academy Screening Room?**

There is no cost to upload short films. Short films are required to be uploaded to the Academy Screening Room for voting purposes. Once uploaded, please allow time for the file to be quality-checked. Our team will reach out if issues are found with the file.

**17. If any changes are made to my film after it is uploaded to the Academy Screening Room, can I replace the film with an updated version?**

No. The version of the film uploaded to the Academy Screening Room must be the final and definitive version of the film and must be identical to the version that qualified, including the film's credits.

**18. Are closed captions required to be uploaded?**

Yes. An English closed caption file must be uploaded. Please see the [technical specification](#) page for more information.

**19. Do I need to provide a DCP?**

For the initial entry, documentary shorts are not required to provide a DCP. If shortlisted, a DCP may be required. Encrypted DCPs will not be accepted.