



88TH 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 88th Academy Awards consideration, a documentary short subject must complete a seven-day commercial run in a theater in **either** Los Angeles County **or** the Borough of Manhattan, 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 2015 Student Academy Awards competition in the Documentary category.
4. The eligibility period for documentary short subjects begins on **September 1, 2014**, and ends on **August 31, 2015**. **The completed submission and all entry materials, including 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 Tuesday, September 1, 2015.**
5. The qualifying run or film festival 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 88th 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 typical Digital Cinema Package (DCP) is typically 5.1 or 7.1 channels of discrete audio and these are the preferred audio configurations. 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.

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. 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:
 - 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 Award 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 50 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 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 an averaged score system to produce a ten-picture shortlist. Five nominees will then be chosen by a second round of balloting, 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

1. In addition to the 50 DVDs required for the first round of balloting, filmmakers whose entries are voted onto the shortlist must submit another 100 DVDs, without trailers or other extraneous material, capable of playing on Region 0/NTSC DVD players, by 5 p.m. PT five business days after the shortlist is announced.
2. The filmmakers of the shortlisted documentaries must submit either two 35mm or 70mm film prints or two DCP versions of the documentary. 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 or rules.