

SPECIAL RULES FOR THE SHORT FILM AWARDS

THEATRICAL REQUIREMENTS

Digital Qualifications and Submission Rules

Most of the Academy's Award categories allow for eligibility for award consideration by means of digital presentation, as outlined in "Rule Two—Eligibility" in the Academy's "**Rules for Distinguished Achievements.**"

Here is the language (in bold type) in Rule Two that applies to digital presentation:

"All eligible motion pictures must be publicly 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.

What does this mean for filmmakers?

The first thing that you will need is what is now called a Digital Cinema Package, commonly abbreviated as DCP. The SMPTE and ISO/IEC documents mentioned in the general rule are international standards that define the technical characteristics of the DCP. As a practical matter, you can rely on specialized digital cinema mastering facilities to provide you with a DCP that will comply with these standards. Your original image capture can be whatever you want (film, digital video, CGI, and so on), but ultimately you will need individual, "one per frame" digital image files for the compression step of the mastering process.

Once you choose a mastering facility, you may discuss with them the most efficient and cost-effective method of conversion for your project. Your finished DCP will be provided to you on a computer Linux-formatted HDD (hard disk drive)—typically a USB drive or *preferably* a universal 7200 rpm SATA drive in a CRU drive carrier.

OK. I have a DCP. What next?

For your qualification screenings, as defined in Rule Two and the special rules for the various categories, you will need to find a commercial theater equipped with a digital cinema projector that meets the requirements outlined in Rule Two, as well as a digital cinema server that will play the SMPTE DCP you have received from your mastering facility.

In practice, there are only two types of DCI-compliant digital cinema projectors that are acceptable for your qualification screenings. The first type uses DLP Digital Cinema technology licensed by Texas Instruments to projector manufacturers. Be sure your cinema has a true DLP Digital Cinema projector, one that has a pixel count of **2048 x 1080**, and not one of the industrial grade DLP projectors that typically have pixel counts of 1920 x 1024 with reduced color and other image performance characteristics. The second type of projector is the **Sony SXR Ultra HiRes Cinema "4K"** series intended for digital cinema applications.

There are several companies who manufacture digital cinema servers that meet the applicable SMPTE specifications, and will play DCPs that are mastered according to these specifications.

These companies include:

- Dolby Laboratories
- Doremi Labs
- GDC
- DVS

Be sure the server system in your cinema can play a SMPTE DCP as defined in Rule Two above. If you are not sure, you may confirm with the manufacturer that the server you plan to use is "compliant" with the applicable SMPTE digital cinema specifications.

I've heard about encrypted DCPs and KDMs. What do these terms mean for me?

ENCRYPTED DCPS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. NO KDM KEYS.

I've completed my qualification screenings. What do I need to submit to the Academy?

You will need to submit a copy of your DCP, as supplied to you by your mastering facility. As noted above, this will be a computer hard drive—***typically a native SATA drive or a much-slower-to-load USB drive.***

The encoding format of your DCP should be JPEG2K/Interop.

The image size for a "Flat" 1.85 aspect ratio should be 1998 x 1080.

For a 2.39 "Scope" aspect ratio, image size should be 2048 x 858.

Please specify the Target Color Gamut Data (TCGD). We prefer X'Y'Z'

**** Your DCP should be pre-tested and must be able to be played on a Dolby Showplayer DSP 100.**

**** Please include only one version of one film per hard drive.**

Where can I find a mastering facility to make my DCP?

There are DCP mastering facilities worldwide. Please contact us for facilities in the Los Angeles area who can convert your submission to that of a legal DCP package playable on standard theater layout equipment.

**** Please note that the Academy is not responsible for fixing badly transferred data.**

Note: Facilities owning a DVS "Clipster" or "Fuze" product can create/author legal DCPs without encryption if enhanced with the DCP package option.

Note: There is also a non-encrypted DCP creation program that runs on Final Cut Pro 7 from Doremi Labs.
<http://www.doremilabs.com/products/cinema-products/final-cut-pro-plugin-in/>

Remember, Digital content on a hard drive is fragile. Please ship carefully.

For more info on DCI specifications and the state of the Digital Cinema progress please go to:

http://www.dcinemovies.com/DCIDigitalCinemaSystemSpecv1_2.pdf

http://www.dcinemovies.com/DCI_Stereoscopic_DC_Addendum.pdf

And for up to date Digital Cinema going on go to: www.dcinematoday.com

DEFINITION OF A COMMERCIAL VENUE

To be considered a commercial motion picture venue for Academy Awards purposes, a theater must meet the following criteria:

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

FAQ

1. Can my film have nontheatrical distribution (broadcast and cable television, PPV/VOD, DVD distribution, Internet transmission) and still be eligible for Academy Award consideration?
A short film cannot qualify through a 7-day theatrical release if it has previously received nontheatrical distribution. The film would only be able to qualify through winning a qualifying festival award on the Academy's Short Films Qualifying Festival List or a Student Academy Award.
2. Can I show part of my film on the Internet to raise money?
You may show excerpts of the film totaling up to ten percent of the film's total running time.
3. My film was broadcast on television in a foreign country for one night before it opened theatrically in the U.S. Is it still eligible?
Even if the film received only a very limited amount of nontheatrical distribution, it still cannot qualify through a theatrical release. It could only qualify through winning a qualifying festival award on the Academy's Short Films Qualifying Festival List or a Student Academy Award.
4. I want to submit a 3-D short. Will the Academy play it in 3-D?
Yes. However, it must be Dolby 3-D.
5. My assistant filled out the form and made some mistakes. Will you make the changes?
It is your responsibility as the filmmaker to make sure that all information on the entry form is accurate. When you sign the entry form, you are agreeing that the information on the form is correct.
6. My film was shot on HD-Cam and it looks great. Can I submit it that way?
No. Only a Digital Cinema Package (DCP) meets our digital requirements.
7. My film is a combination of live action and animation. Which category should I choose?
Please review the Short Film Awards rules for the category definitions. We leave the decision up to the filmmakers as to which category is the best fit for their film. However, all final determinations of eligibility are made by the Short Films and Feature Animation Branch Executive Committee.
8. I am screening my film in a theater for seven days in order to qualify it for Awards consideration. Will my film be eligible if I screen it for seven days in a museum? How about a theater that exclusively presents revivals and special events?
In order to be eligible for Awards consideration, a film must play in a commercial motion picture theater. Please see the definition of a commercial venue posted on this website. Museums, universities and special events venues are not considered commercial venues for Awards qualification purposes.