



## 93rd ACADEMY AWARDS SPECIAL RULES FOR THE DOCUMENTARY AWARDS

With the gradual re-opening of theaters, there are two methods of qualification for awards consideration in the Documentary Feature category through the remainder of the 93rd Academy Awards year (February 28, 2021):

- 1) Films which are intended for theatrical release, but are initially made available through commercial streaming, VOD service or other broadcast may qualify under these provisions:
  - That the film be made available on the secure Academy Screening Room member site within 60 days of the film's streaming/VOD release or broadcast;
  - That it meets all other eligibility requirements

OR

- 2) Films that open in theaters in at least one of the six qualifying U.S. cities, depending on theater availability, may qualify under these provisions:
  - That the film completes a qualifying run of at least seven consecutive days in the same commercial venue, during which period screenings must occur at least three times daily, with at least one screening beginning between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. daily
  - That it meets all other eligibility requirements
  - Six qualifying U.S. cities include: Los Angeles County; City of New York [Five Boroughs]; the Bay Area [counties of San Francisco, Marin, Alameda, San Mateo and Contra Costa]; Chicago [Cook County, Illinois]; Miami [Miami-Dade County, Florida]; and Atlanta [Fulton County, Georgia].
  - Drive-in theaters are included as a qualifying commercial venue in the above cities (must run for seven consecutive days with at least one screening daily)

Film festivals that have been impacted by the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic may provide films online through either a transactional pay wall or password-protected entry, which will not affect the films' eligibility for future Academy qualification. The Academy will allow an exemption for those films that are released online through an impacted festival's online platform, provided the films submit proof of inclusion in the festival. With these provisions, films will be expected to comply with all other eligibility requirements for the 93rd Academy Awards.

**Due to the global pandemic caused by coronavirus/COVID-19, all dates for the 93rd Academy Awards are subject to change based on national guidelines, state-mandated government orders and Academy determined-best practices.**

### 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

#### A. Eligibility

1. To be eligible for 93rd Academy Awards consideration, a documentary feature must complete **both** a theatrical release for seven consecutive days in Los Angeles County **and** a theatrical release for seven consecutive days in the City of New York during the eligibility period.

**OR**

2. The film must have won a qualifying award at a competitive film festival, as specified in the Documentary Feature 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 Feature Qualifying Festival List is available at [www.oscars.org](http://www.oscars.org) or may be obtained from the Academy.

**OR**

3. The film must have been submitted in the International Feature Film category as its country's official selection for the 93rd Academy Awards.
4. The eligibility period for documentary features begins on January 1, 2020, and ends on February 28, 2021. For films being released between January 1 and October 31, the completed online submission form and all other entry materials, including the digital upload of the film, for streaming purposes, must be received by the Academy no later than 30 days after the end of the qualifying theatrical releases in both cities. For films being released between November 1 and February 28, the completed online submission form, letters from the theaters confirming that the film will be satisfying the release requirements, and all other entry materials, including the digital upload of the film for streaming purposes, must be received by December 1, 2020. Films with a planned theatrical release before the end of the eligibility period, but which will not have a locked picture by the submission deadline, may request a one month extension for the digital upload only.
5. The theatrical releases in both cities or festival award win must take place in the same eligibility period and within two years of the motion picture's completion date. **A theatrical release in only one of the qualifying cities disqualifies a picture from Academy Awards contention in the Documentary Feature category in any year.** Documentaries submitted for consideration for the 93rd Academy Awards in any category will not be eligible for consideration in subsequent Awards years in any category. The picture must be submitted in the same Awards year in which it first qualifies.
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 files packaged as Digital Cinema Packages (DCPs) in either “Interop” or “SMPTE DCP” formats. SMPTE DCP refers to SMPTE ST429-2 and related specifications. (Blu-ray format does not meet Digital Cinema requirements.)

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). In addition to channel-based audio, object-based audio may also be present as an immersive audio bitstream.

The audio data shall be formatted in conformance with ST 428-2:2006 D-Cinema Distribution Master – Audio Characteristics and ST 428-12:2013, D-Cinema Distribution Master Common Audio Channels and Soundfield Groups. Immersive audio, if present, shall be formatted in conformance with SMPTE ST 2098-2:2019, Immersive Audio Bitstream Specification.

7. Screenings during the theatrical release must occur at least three times daily, with at least one screening beginning between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. daily. The motion picture must be exhibited for paid admission, and must be advertised during each of its qualifying theatrical releases in a manner normal and customary to theatrical feature distribution practices. The film must have a movie critic review in either *The New York Times*, *Time Out New York*, *Los Angeles Times* or *LA Weekly*. A television critic review will not be accepted. Filmmakers who are unable to obtain a review may appeal for an exemption.
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:
  - multi-part or limited series,
  - episodes extracted from a larger series,
  - segments taken from a single “composite” program, and
  - alternate versions of ineligible works.
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 first qualifying theatrical release, 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
  - Inflight airline distribution
  - Internet transmission

Ten minutes or ten percent of the running time of a film, whichever is shorter, is allowed to be shown in a nontheatrical medium prior to the film’s theatrical release.

## **B. Submission**

1. Entrants (including non-U.S. entrants) must complete the online submission form located on the Academy’s Awards Submissions site, and submit to the Academy the digital upload of the film for streaming purposes and all other required material and required signatures by **5 p.m. PT on Tuesday, December 1, 2020.**

## **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 15 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 members of the Academy 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. **Normally two or three persons may be named as nominees, one of whom must be the credited director who exercised directorial control, and the other(s) of whom must have a director or producer 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. In determining the number of producers eligible for nomination, a bona fide team of not more than two people shall be considered to be a single “producer” if the two individuals have had an established producing partnership as determined by the PGA’s Producing Partnership Panel.
2. All individuals with a “producer” or “produced by” credit on films that reach the semifinal round will automatically be vetted. To qualify as a producer nominee for a nominated picture, the producer must have been determined eligible by the PGA for the picture, or have appealed the PGA’s refusal of such eligibility. Final determination of the qualifying producer nominees for each nominated picture will be made by the Documentary Branch Executive Committee, including the right to name any additional qualified producer as a nominee.

## F. Other Rules

1. Documentaries submitted in this category may also qualify for awards in other categories if they meet the specified requirements and submission deadlines.
2. The Documentary Branch Executive Committee shall resolve all questions of eligibility and rules.