



93rd ACADEMY AWARDS
RULE FIFTEEN SPECIAL RULES FOR THE
MUSIC AWARDS

I. CATEGORIES

A. Original Score:

An original score is a substantial body of music that serves as original dramatic underscoring and is written specifically for the motion picture by the submitting composer(s).

B. Original Song:

An original song consists of words and music, both of which are original and written specifically for the motion picture. There must be a clearly audible, intelligible, substantive rendition (not necessarily visually presented) of both lyric and melody, used in the body of the motion picture or as the first music cue in the end credits.

C. Original Musical:

An original musical consists of not fewer than five original songs (as defined in Paragraph I.B above) by the same writer or team of writers, either used as voiceovers or visually performed. Each of these songs must be substantively rendered, clearly audible, and intelligible, and must further the storyline of the motion picture. An arbitrary group of songs unessential to the storyline will not be considered eligible.

II. ELIGIBILITY

A. The work must be the result of a creative interaction between the filmmaker(s) and the composer(s) and/or songwriter(s) who have been engaged to work directly on the motion picture.

B. A score must be created specifically for the eligible feature-length motion picture and comprise a minimum of 60% of the total music in the film.

1. If a score does not meet the minimum 60%, the composer may submit a letter to the Branch Executive Committee, stating reasons for the score to be accepted for consideration. All letters must be received by the due dates published by the Academy for the current awards cycle.

2. The decision of the Music Branch Executive Committee shall be final.

- C. In cases such as sequels and franchises from any media, the score must consist of more than 80% newly composed music which does not contain any pre-existing themes borrowed from previous scores in the franchise.¹
- D. The work must be recorded for use in the motion picture prior to any other usage, including public performance or exploitation through any media whatsoever.
- E. Only the principal composer(s) or songwriter(s) responsible for the conception and execution of the work as a whole shall be eligible for an award. Expressly excluded from eligibility are all of the following:
 - 1. partial contributors (i.e., any writer not responsible for the overall design of the work)
 - 2. contributors working on speculation
 - 3. producers and/or arrangers not responsible for the creation of the original song or score
 - 4. music supervisors
- F. A score shall not be eligible if:
 - 1. it has been diluted by the use of pre-existing music, or
 - 2. it has been diminished in impact by the predominant use of songs or any music not composed specifically for the film by the submitting composer, or
 - 3. it has been assembled from the music of more than one composer.
- G. No more than one statuette will normally be given in the Original Score category. A second statuette may be awarded when two credited composers function as equal collaborators, each contributing fully to the original dramatic underscore for the film. In cases where three or more credited composers function as equal collaborators, a single statuette may be awarded to the group. Each composer must agree to the single "group statuette" option by signing and returning a Group Award form prior to the submission deadline. Final determination of the awardable composers in the group will be made by the Music Branch Executive Committee.
- H. No more than two statuettes will normally be given in the Original Song category. A third statuette may be awarded when there are three essentially equal writers of a song. The Music Branch Executive Committee has the right, in what it alone determines to be a very rare and extraordinary

¹ Amended June 15, 2020, Board approved.

circumstance, to award a fourth statuette. In cases where an established musical group has authored a song, a single statuette may be awarded under the group name in place of individual statuettes for each songwriter. Each of the credited songwriters must agree to the single "group statuette" option by signing and returning a Group Award form prior to the submission deadline. Requests for a group statuette are subject to final approval by the Music Branch Executive Committee.

- I. In the case of an original musical, the composer or adapter of the instrumental score may qualify for an award if his or her contribution is deemed relevant and substantial.
- J. The Music Branch Executive Committee shall resolve all rules interpretations and all questions of eligibility.
- K. It is within the sole and confidential discretion of the Board of Governors to determine what awards, if any, shall be given.

III. SUBMISSION

- A. For an achievement to be eligible for nomination in any of the Music categories, the submission must be initiated either personally by the songwriter or composer, or by their authorized representative, or by an authorized representative of the distributing studio of that film.²
- B. Submission forms must be signed by all submitting writers and must be accompanied by a complete final music cue sheet listing all music cues.
- C. Original Song submissions must further be accompanied by:
 - A vocal lead sheet
 - A digital video clip of no more than three minutes of each song, showing how the song is used in the motion picture
 - A completed "Original Song Contribution Sheet," obtainable from the Academy, summarizing each submitting writer's specific contribution to the song, as well as writing percentages. The Music Branch Executive Committee will review all submission materials when making the determination of award-eligible songwriters.
- D. Original Score submission forms must further be accompanied by:
 - a completed "Music Breakdown Form" (provided by the Academy) which categorizes the film's total minutes of the following:
 - Original score (music composed as underscore for this specific film)
 - Original songs (songs composed for this specific film)

² Amended June 15, 2020, Board approved.

- Source music (music used to emulate an on-screen or off-screen source, i.e., a radio or an on-screen performance)
 - Licensed and/or pre-existing music used as underscore (i.e., classical music or songs used as score)
 - Pre-existing music (music or theme used directly or in variation by submitting composer(s) from work(s) created prior to this film, including sequels or franchises)
 - The above categories must also be represented by their individual percentage of the film's total music.
- In cases where other non-submitting composers have contributed original music in the film – either by shared authorship of cues or by additional cues not shared with the submitting composer – a letter signed by ALL listed composers explaining the contribution of each must be submitted to the Music Branch Executive Committee by the submission deadline along with all other required materials.
- E. The composer's on-screen credit and submission form, as well as the actual cue sheet for the music as used in the film and supplied by the film company, shall be used by the Music Branch Executive Committee to help determine the eligibility of the score.
- F. Submissions may be made prior to the film's Los Angeles County qualifying run, but must be made no later than 60 days after such opening, or by the submission deadline published by the Academy, whichever comes first. New submissions will not be accepted beyond this date, however for existing submissions an extension to December 1 may be granted at the Academy's discretion only for the purposes of delivery of supplemental materials such as video clips or final cue sheets.
- G. The Music Branch Executive Committee has the right, but not the obligation, to submit any eligible works in all three categories, but must do so no later than 5 p.m. PT on Friday, January 15, 2021.

IV. VOTING

- A. Works shall be judged on their effectiveness, craftsmanship, creative substance and relevance to the dramatic whole, and only as presented within the motion picture. Extended, revised, enhanced or alternate versions outside of the film shall not be considered.
- B. Films eligible for Original Score and film clips of eligible Original Songs shall be viewed by all members of the Music Branch who will use a preferential voting system to produce a shortlist of 15 titles in each category. Five nominees for Original Song and five nominees for Original Score will then be chosen by a second round of balloting, again using a preferential voting system.³

³ Amended June 15, 2020, Board approved.

- C. In all three categories, the five achievements receiving the highest number of votes will become the nominations for final voting for the award.
- D. No more than two songs from any one film by the exact same writers may be shortlisted. If more than two songs from a film by the exact same writers are in contention, the two songs with the most votes will advance to the shortlist. However, no more than two songs from any one film, regardless of writers, may be nominated for the Original Song award.
- E. If there are 25 or fewer qualified works submitted in any category, the Music Branch Executive Committee may recommend to the Board of Governors that nominations be limited to three. If there are nine or fewer qualifying works submitted in any category, the Executive Committee may recommend to the Board of Governors that no award be given in that category for the current Awards year.
- F. The category of Original Musical may be activated only by special request of the Music Branch Executive Committee to the Board of Governors in a year when the field of eligible submissions is determined to be of sufficient quantity and quality to justify award competition.
- G. Final voting for each category shall be restricted to active and life Academy members.