

ANIMATED & LIVE ACTION SHORT FILM FAQs

1. My film had a planned theatrical release in 2020 that was canceled due to the theater closures. What steps do I need to take for my film to be considered?
Please proceed to the Academy's submission site and enter the information of the intended theatrical release. You will need to provide proof of a planned theatrical release such as a theater letter/contract.
2. I had an intended theatrical release but did not yet confirm the theaters or dates. What are my options?
Please submit as much information as possible for your intended release, along with any documentation showing your intention for a theatrical release. Films that are unable to provide this documentation may appeal for consideration to the Short Films and Feature Animation Branch Executive Committee.
3. My film has been invited to take part in an online version of a cancelled film festival. Will I jeopardize my film's eligibility if I participate?
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.
4. Do I still need to qualify my short film by the end of September for the 93rd Oscars?
With the Oscars moving two months to April 25, we have now moved the Short Films submission deadline from October 1 to December 1. This means that Short Films now have until November 30, 2020 to qualify for consideration.
5. Will my 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.
6. How much of my film can be shown publicly online before its qualifying run?
Trailers and clips are fine as long as the footage totals no more than 10 minutes or 10 percent of the film's running time, whichever is less.
7. The entry form only allows for two possible nominees but another person who worked on the film definitely deserves an award.
A maximum of two individuals may be named as possible nominees for a short film. Everyone with a director or producer credit must sign off in agreement on the designated nominees when submitting.
8. 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.
9. Does an HD-Cam or Blu-Ray meet the digital requirements?
Only a Digital Cinema Package (DCP) meets our digital requirements.
10. 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.

11. I submitted my film last year, but since then I've added new material or re-edited. 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.
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. What advertisements are required?
We ask for a digital copy (scanned image, screenshot or PDF) of the advertising or theater listing for the qualifying run, but no longer require specific publications.
14. My film was broadcast on television outside the U.S. before it opened theatrically in the U.S. Is it still eligible?
If the film received a theatrical release outside the U.S. before it was broadcast on television, and if the television broadcast was only outside the U.S., the film could still be eligible. Please contact the Awards Office with details.
15. Are student films allowed to enter?
Student films are only eligible by winning an Oscar qualifying festival or Student Academy Award. Student films cannot qualify with a theatrical release.
16. How long do I have to qualify my movie?
You have two years from completing your film to qualify.

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

DCP 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 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 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."

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 minimum 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.

There are several companies that 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.

The image size for a "Flat" 1.85 aspect ratio should be 1998 x 1080 or 3996 x 2160.

For a 2.39 "Scope" aspect ratio, image size should be 2048 x 858 or 4096 x 1716.

For 1.90 full container 4096 x 2160

Please fully specify your DCP aspect ratio in submission documents.

Please specify the Target Color Gamut Data (TCGD). We prefer 'XYZ'

*** 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 that can convert your submission to that of a legal DCP package playable on standard theater payout 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-plug-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 goings-on visit: www.dcinematoday.com