



93rd ACADEMY AWARDS SPECIAL RULES FOR THE DOCUMENTARY AWARDS

The unprecedented coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic mandated the closure of all Los Angeles County movie theaters as of Monday, March 16, 2020. Until further notice and for the 93rd Awards year only, films that had a previously planned theatrical release but are initially made available through commercial streaming, VOD service or other broadcast may qualify for awards consideration in the Documentary Short Subject category for the 93rd Academy Awards 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.

When theaters reopen in accordance with federal, state and local specified guidelines and criteria, and on a date to be determined by the Academy, this rules exemption will no longer apply and all films released thereafter will be expected to comply with the standard Academy theatrical qualifying requirements. In order for those films to more easily meet theatrical exhibition requirements, the Academy will expand the number of qualifying theaters to include commercial venues in additional U.S. cities: 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]. The Documentary Branch Executive Committee will evaluate all matters of rules and eligibility.

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

See Feature Rules

IV. DOCUMENTARY SHORT SUBJECT

A. Eligibility

1. To be eligible for 93rd Academy Awards consideration, a documentary short subject must complete a commercial run for seven consecutive days in a theater in **either** Los Angeles County **or** the City of New York, 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 2020 Student Academy Awards competition in the Documentary category.
4. The eligibility period for documentary short subjects begins on **October 1, 2019**, and ends on **November 30, 2020**. 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 run or the festival award win, with a final submission deadline published by the Academy.
5. The qualifying run or festival award 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 93rd 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 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 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 manner normal and customary to theatrical feature distribution practices.
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:

- multi-part or limited series,
- 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 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

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. 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 materials 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 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

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. **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 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.

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. Other Rules

The Documentary Branch Executive Committee shall resolve all questions of eligibility and rules.