



94th ACADEMY AWARDS SPECIAL RULES FOR THE DOCUMENTARY AWARDS

Due to the global pandemic caused by coronavirus/COVID-19, all matters of rules and eligibility for the 94th 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 94th Academy Awards consideration, a documentary short subject must complete a commercial run for seven consecutive days in a theater in one of the six qualifying U.S. metro areas: 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], 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 2021 Student Academy Awards competition in the Documentary category.
4. The eligibility period for documentary short subjects begins on **October 1, 2020**, and ends on **September 30, 2021**. 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 of Friday, October 15, 2021.

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 94th 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 the “SMPTE DCP” format. SMPTE DCP refers to SMPTE ST 429-2 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. Drive-in theaters are included as a qualifying commercial venue in the above metro areas (must run for seven consecutive days with at least one screening daily). For films that were unable to complete a planned theatrical release, due to the theater closures, filmmakers may appeal for an exemption. Appeals may be required to provide proof or documentation of the intended theatrical release.
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 Submission 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 Friday, October 15, 2021**.

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 fifteen films. 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 a nomination. 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.