

**RULE EIGHT  
SPECIAL RULES FOR  
THE ANIMATED SHORT FILM AWARD**

**I. DEFINITION**

- A. A short film is defined as an original motion picture that has a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits.
- B. This excludes from consideration such works as:
  - 1. previews and advertising films
  - 2. sequences from feature-length films, such as credit sequences
  - 3. unaired episodes of established TV series
  - 4. unsold TV series pilots
- C. An animated film is defined as a motion picture in which movement and characters' performances are created using a frame-by-frame technique, and usually falls into one of the two general fields of animation: narrative or abstract. Some of the techniques of animating films include but are not limited to hand-drawn animation, computer animation, stop-motion, clay animation, pixilation, cutout animation, pinscreen, camera multiple pass imagery, kaleidoscopic effects created frame-by-frame, and drawing on the film frame itself. Motion capture and real-time puppetry are not by themselves animation techniques. An animated short film has a running time of 40 minutes or less. An animated feature film has a running time of more than 40 minutes. In an animated film, animation must figure in no less than 75 percent of the picture's running time. In addition, a narrative animated film must have a significant number of the major characters animated. If the picture is created in a cinematic style that could be mistaken for live action, the filmmaker(s) must also submit information supporting how and why the picture is substantially a work of animation rather than live action. Documentary short films that are animated may be submitted in either the Animated Short Film category or the Documentary Short Film category, but not both.

**II. ELIGIBILITY**

- A. To be eligible for award consideration for the 96th Awards year, a short film must fulfill one of the following qualifying criteria. The eligibility period begins on October 1, 2022, and ends on September 30, 2023. This qualification must take place within two years of the film's completion date.
  - 1. The picture must have been publicly exhibited for **paid admission** in a commercial motion picture 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], for a run of at least seven consecutive days with at least one screening a day. The picture also must appear in the theater listings along with the appropriate dates and screening time(s). Drive-in theaters are included as a qualifying commercial venue in the above metro areas (films must run for seven consecutive days with at least one screening daily).

All eligible motion pictures must be publicly exhibited by means of 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 429-2:2020 D-Cinema Packaging – DCP Operational Constraints 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 discrete audio data shall be formatted in conformance with SMPTE ST 429-3:2007 D-Cinema Packaging – Sound and Picture Track File, SMPTE ST 428-2:2006 D-Cinema Distribution Master – Audio Characteristics and SMPTE 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 and SMPTE 429-18:2019 D-Cinema Packaging – Immersive Audio Track File and packaged in conformance with SMPTE 429-19:2019 D-Cinema Packaging – DCP Operational Constraints for Immersive Audio.

**Student films cannot qualify with a theatrical release.**

**OR**

2. The film must have won a qualifying award at a competitive film festival, as specified in the Short Film 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 Short Film 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 won a Gold, Silver or Bronze Medal award in the Academy's 2023 Student Academy Awards competition in the Animation or Alternative/Experimental categories.

All films must be submitted in a standard theatrical exhibition aspect ratio, in formats currently accepted by the Academy (see Paragraph II.A.1 above), no matter which other formats may have been used during their theatrical run or festival screening. Producers may provide screenings of films in specialized formats for Academy members, but attendance at such screenings is not required for voting purposes.

- B. A short film qualifying under Paragraph II.A.1 above may not be exhibited publicly or distributed anywhere in any nontheatrical form until **after** its qualifying theatrical release. 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 fifteen percent of the running time of a film is allowed to be shown in a nontheatrical medium prior to the film's theatrical release.

**Films qualifying under Paragraph II.A.2 or II.A.3 above are exempted from this rule.**

### **III. SUBMISSION**

- A. 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, as well as all submission materials. Formats requiring special technical presentation that meet the technical specifications above will be given consideration if made available for Academy voting screenings in Los Angeles County.
- B. The short film submitted for Academy Awards consideration must be identical in content and length to the print or DCP that qualified.

- C. Dialogue or narration must be substantially in English or the film must have English-language subtitles.
- D. For films qualifying between October 1, 2022, and May 31, 2023, entrants must submit all submission materials, including the digital upload of the film for streaming purposes, by 5 p.m. PT on **Tuesday, August 15, 2023**. For films qualifying between June 1, 2023, and September 30, 2023, entrants must submit all submission materials, including the digital upload of the film for streaming purposes, by 5 p.m. PT on **Monday, October 16, 2023**.
- E. If a short film advances to the second round of voting, additional materials including a film print or DCP of the film will be required after the shortlist is announced. Shortlisted films must have the necessary clearances for commercial theatrical exhibition. Festival clearances are not sufficient.
- F. The Academy will retain for its archives one film print or DCP of every short film receiving a nomination for final balloting. The Academy will have the right, but not the obligation, to create a preservation copy of the picture at its own expense. By submitting a film, the filmmaker agrees that the Academy has the right to make copies and distribute them for voting purposes only.
- G. 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 be in a key creative position. If a producer is named, that individual must have performed a major portion of the producing functions, in accordance with Academy producer criteria. Companies or organized groups shall not receive nominations or awards.
- H. All individuals with a “producer” or “produced by” credit on films that reach the semifinal round will automatically be vetted. The Short Films and Feature Animation 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.
- I. No short film may be submitted more than once for Academy Awards consideration. A short film must be submitted in the same Awards year in which it qualifies.

#### **IV. VOTING**

- A. Excellence of the entries shall be judged on the basis of originality, entertainment and production quality without regard to cost of production or subject matter.
- B. All active and life members of the Short Films and Feature Animation Branch will be invited to view the eligible submissions in the Animated Short Film category. Those who opt in will be required to see a minimum percentage of submitted eligible films as defined by the current procedures. Members will vote by secret ballot in the order of their preference for not more than fifteen motion pictures. The fifteen motion pictures receiving the highest number of votes shall advance to next round of voting.
- C. To determine nominations, all active and life members of the Short Films and Feature Animation Branch will be invited to view the fifteen shortlisted Animated Short Films. A member must see all shortlisted films for the ballot to be counted. Those members who participated in the reviewing process and who viewed all of the selected pictures will receive ballots. Members shall vote in the order of their preference for not more than five motion pictures. The five motion pictures receiving the highest number of votes shall become the nominations for final voting for the Animated Short Film award.

- D. Final voting for the Animated Short Film award shall be restricted to active and life members of the Academy who have viewed all of the nominated films.