

**RULE THIRTEEN
SPECIAL RULES FOR THE
DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILM AWARD**

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.

A short film is defined as an original motion picture that has a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits.

II. ELIGIBILITY

- A. To be eligible for awards consideration for the 96th Awards year, a documentary 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 be advertised during its run in a manner normal and customary to theatrical distribution practices. Drive-in theaters are included as a qualifying commercial venue in the above metro areas.

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 Documentary 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 Documentary Short Film 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 2023 Student Academy Awards competition in the Documentary category.
- B. Works that are essentially promotional or instructional are not eligible, nor are works that are essentially unfiltered records of performances.
- C. 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 films created from materials substantially taken from or cut down from completed, publicly exhibited feature-length documentaries.
- D. **Films that, in any version, receive a nontheatrical public exhibition or distribution before their qualifying theatrical release as defined in Paragraph II.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 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. 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**.
- B. The picture must be submitted in the same Awards year in which it first qualifies. Documentaries submitted for the 96th Academy Awards in any category will not be eligible for consideration in subsequent Awards years in any category.
- C. 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. The digital

upload of the film submitted for Academy Awards consideration must be identical in content and length to the print or DCP that qualified.

- D. The significant dialogue or narration must be substantially in English, or the film must have English- language subtitles.
- E. Filmmakers whose entries advance to the shortlist must submit either one 35mm or 70mm film print or one DCP of the film after the shortlist is announced. The Academy will retain for its archives one film print or DCP of every film receiving a nomination. By submitting a film, the filmmaker agrees that the Academy has the right to make copies and distribute them for voting purposes only.

IV. NOMINEES AND AWARD RECIPIENTS

- A. 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.
- B. 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.

V. VOTING

- A. All active and life members of the Documentary Branch will be invited to view the eligible submissions in the category and will be required to see a minimum number 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.
- B. To determine nominations, all active and life members of the Documentary Branch will be invited to view the fifteen shortlisted Documentary Short Films. A member must see all shortlisted films for the ballot to be counted. 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 Documentary Short Film award.
- C. Final voting shall be restricted to active and life Academy members who have viewed all of the nominated documentaries.

VI. OTHER RULES

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