

British Independent Film Awards Rules and Guidelines 2018

Timeline – all categories except shorts

13 June	Entries open Deadline for registration for voting in order to be in the draw for 2017 (Registration for Best British Independent Film voting continues after this date)
3 September	Entry deadline
14 September	Screener / screening deadline for entrants
18 Sept to 4 October	Round 1 voting (Entries > Long List)
w/c 15 October	Long Lists announced in newcomer categories
19 to 26 October	Round 2 voting (Long List > Nominations)
31 October	Nominations announced
2 December	BIFA Ceremony

Adjudication Process

BIFA's Nomination Committee and Screening Group (voters), divided into subgroups, decide the long list and nominations in most categories. After a rigorous discussion-based selection process the long list and nominations are decided by confidential vote.

The Nomination Committee meets with the chairs of each of the subgroups and oversee the voting process, making final decisions on eligibility and confirming the long lists.

BIFA also presents honorary awards, which are bestowed either by BIFA's Board and Nomination Committee or by its independent jury/ies, appointed annually. These honorary awards include The Richard Harris Award for Outstanding Contribution to British Film by an Actor, which is decided with the input of the Harris family.

Voting

To reach the long list, the Nomination Committee and Screening Group, divided into several sub-groups, meet three times to discuss the eligible films.

Ten sub-groups will be convened as follows:

- Debut Director
- Breakthrough Producer
- Debut Screenwriter
- Shorts
- Documentary
- Discovery Award
- International Films
- Screenplay / Director
- Performance (including Most Promising Newcomer)
- Craft

All entered films are seen by a minimum number of voters and discussed. Votes are then cast privately and the results tabulated. In calculating the results, BIFA takes into account the number of people who have seen a film.

After the announcement of the long lists, the voters watch as many of the long listed films as possible before voting for the nominations. Again, the number of people who have seen a film is taken into account.

The winners in most categories (apart from the honorary awards, Best British Independent Film, Best British Short Film and the nine Craft categories) are decided by independent jury/ies, newly appointed each year. Juries discuss all nominations before voting confidentially for the winner using a preferential voting system.

The winners of the Best British Independent Film award, the Best British Short Film award and the nine Craft categories are decided by a final vote open to all BIFA voters.

Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest are declared to BIFA and voters sit out any discussions of films which they have an interest in. Conflicted voters may still vote, but they may not vote for films which they have an interest in.

Eligibility

The British Independent Film Awards are for theatrical feature films and short films. The majority of categories are only open to British independent films. There are separate eligibility criteria for international independent films.

In all cases, final decisions about a film's eligibility rest with BIFA's Nomination Committee: under exceptional circumstances, inclusion and consideration of films which do not strictly comply with the below criteria will be subject to the discretion of the Committee.

Eligibility: independent

Where there is any major studio substantially funding a film, the total budget must not exceed \$20million. Films are not defined as 'independent' strictly on the terms of financing.

Eligibility: British

It has been produced or majority co-produced by a British company **or** is in receipt of at least 51% of its budget from a British source or sources **and** includes sufficient creative elements from the UK.

This applies to all categories except for Best International Independent Film.

Where an individual must be British to qualify for an award, or for the purposes of identifying the nationality of a film, we will ask whether you hold a UK passport or have the right to hold one. If you are unsure, please use this test: <https://www.gov.uk/check-british-citizen> and follow the process through to see if you are a British citizen, have indefinite leave to remain or permanent residence.

Release requirements: Theatrical / General Release

To be eligible, films must be intended for theatrical release.

Feature films with formal UK distribution must have a theatrical run to paying audiences in UK cinemas consisting of a minimum of 7 (seven) screenings in aggregate.

Where formal distribution is confirmed after a qualifying festival screening, the festival screening will be the eligibility criterion, not the theatrical distribution.

Films which have a qualifying festival screening but which are scheduled for theatrical release (i.e. have confirmed distribution) after 10 February 2019 may choose whether to enter in the current year or to wait until next year. Please contact BIFA to discuss this.

Release requirements: British features

Films must be intended for theatrical release, over 70 minutes in length and have public screenings to paying audiences

either

on general release in the UK between 1 December 2017 and 30 November 2018

or

by screening at a British-based film festival or at one of BIFA's list of recognised international festivals between 1 December 2017 and 30 November 2018 (see appendix 1).

Films that are between 40 and 70 minutes in length may be eligible if they have a theatrical release in the UK between 1 December 2017 and 30 November 2018.

No re-releases can be entered. Once entered, a film can be withdrawn up a week before the first round of voting opens. Films that are withdrawn at this point can be entered in subsequent years, if eligible. Otherwise, previously entered films are not eligible.

Release requirements: shorts

For British short films that have been accepted as part of the Official Selection at one of BIFA's recognised film festivals (see appendix 3)

or

have won an award during the eligibility period

British short films that have not fulfilled the above criteria may still be entered if they have been screened on one of BIFA's recognised online channels (see appendix 4). In this case, however, the entry must come from the online channel in question, not a filmmaker. Each of BIFA's recognised online channels may enter up to three short films that have not been accepted to BIFA's recognised festivals or won an award.

To be eligible, short films must have been completed on or after 1 May 2017.

Release requirements: international features

Films must have a theatrical release in the UK between 1 December 2017 and 30 November 2018.

Films may also be entered if they have been selected to play at one of BIFA's recognised festivals during the eligibility period (see appendix 2), have confirmed UK distribution and are available for voters to see

or

have won an award at one of BIFA's recognised festivals and are available for voters to see.

Category Rules and Additional Eligibility Criteria

Films do not have to be submitted in all categories, however the Nomination Committee may choose to consider a film in additional categories to those submitted. It is the responsibility of the entrant to ensure that a film is entered correctly and no additional category entries will be accepted after 7 September.

Entrants must provide BIFA with DVD or online screeners, or access to screenings of their entered film(s), by 14 September. If access to screeners or screenings is unavailable after that date, the Nomination Committee may dismiss the entry.

Credits and eligibility decisions are based on the credits featured on exhibited prints of the film.

Only one award trophy will be issued to the winner of each category. Where multiple named nominees have been accepted by BIFA, additional trophies can be purchased in the event of an award win. Named nominees will each receive an invitation to the Awards, up to a

maximum of three invitations. Invitations are per nominee not per nomination (i.e. someone nominated twice will only receive one ticket, not two). Priority will be given to nominees to purchase additional Awards tickets.

Best British Independent Film, Best International Independent Film

Fully-credited writers, producers and directors may be listed as nominees.

Executive producer, associate producer, co-producer or other producer credits are not eligible for nominations or awards. Co-directors and co-writers are only eligible for nomination where there are no lead directors / writers credited.

Films entered to the Best British Independent Film category must also be assessed against the [BFI Diversity Standards](#). As a pilot in 2018, there is no requirement that films meet the Standards this year, though it is our aim that from 2019 all films longlisted in the Best British Independent Film category meet at least two of the four BFI Diversity Standards.

Best Director

Awarded to the director. Co-directors are only eligible for nomination where there is not also a director credited.

Best Screenplay

Additional material by or similar credits are not eligible for nomination.

The Douglas Hickox Award (Best Debut Director)

For a British director for their debut fiction feature film. Previous television or documentary director credits do not exclude an individual from consideration.

This award is presented for promise and potential as well as achievement.

The estate of Douglas Hickox shall present a cheque for £500 to the winner.

Debut Screenwriter

For a British screenwriter for their debut fiction feature film. Previous television writer credits do not exclude an individual from consideration.

This award is presented for promise and potential as well as achievement.

Additional material by or similar credits are not eligible for nomination.

Breakthrough Producer

For a British producer for their first or second documentary or fiction feature film.

All fully credited producers may be listed for nomination. Executive producer, associate producer, co-producer or other producer credits are not eligible for nominations or awards.

Entrants must complete and submit a statement outlining the achievements of the producer in support of their entry. Where other, non-eligible, producers are credited on the film, additional information should be provided to clearly delineate their role vs the role of the eligible producer/s.

Best Actress, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Supporting Actress

Entrants may select which category a performer should be considered for, but BIFA's Nomination Committee will make final decisions about category placement.

Most Promising Newcomer

This award recognises promise and potential as well as achievement by a new British actor. Performers are eligible if they are taking their first significant role in a theatrical feature film. Eligibility of performers who have significant television/theatre credits will be determined by the Nomination Committee.

Best British Short

For films with a maximum running time of 40 minutes, including credits.

Fully-credited writers, producers and directors may be listed as nominees.

Best Documentary

Eligible films must be non-fiction. They should be photographed in actual occurrence, or employ partial re-enactment, stock footage, stills, animation, stop-motion or other techniques, as long as the emphasis is on fact and not on fiction.

The director will be listed as the nominee.

The Discovery Award

This award highlights innovation, uniqueness of vision, maverick filmmaking and risk-taking, generally in fiction films with a budget under £500k.

Nominees will be at the discretion of the sub-group responsible for the adjudication of this category, and are likely to be the writing/producing/directing team. Entrants may propose nominees for the sub-group to take into consideration.

Entrants should complete and submit a short supporting statement highlighting which aspects of the film should be considered for this award and why.

Craft categories

Entrants must complete and submit a short statement outlining which categories they believe their film is most suited to and why, as well as who the potential nominees would be. It is then the responsibility of BIFA's voters and Nomination Committee to decide in which Craft categories films may compete.

Best Cinematography - Awarded to the Director of Photography.

Best Costume Design - Awarded to the Costume Designer.

Best Casting - Awarded to the Casting Director.

Best Editing - Awarded to the Editor. Co- or Assistant Editors are not eligible for nomination.

Best Effects - This category is for Special Effects and Visual Effects. SFX and VFX Supervisors may be listed as nominees.

Best Make-Up & Hair Design - Awarded to the Make-Up & Hair Designer. Prosthetics Designers may also be eligible for nomination in this category.

Best Music - Awarded to the Composer or Music Supervisor.

Best Production Design - Awarded to the Production Designer.

Best Sound – Nominees for this category are currently TBC and will be confirmed before entries close on 3 September.

Entrants wishing to submit an entry for a discipline not listed above should please contact us at hello@bifa.film

All decisions made by BIFA are final and no correspondence will be entered into as to why particular entries were or were not nominated.

Appendix 1: Qualifying international festivals – British feature films

AFI Fest
Berlin
Cannes
New York
San Sebastian
Sundance
SxSW
Telluride
Toronto
Tribeca
Venice

Appendix 2: Qualifying festival awards – International feature films

AFI Fest
Berlin
Cannes
London Film Festival
New York
San Sebastian
Sundance
SxSW
Telluride
Tribeca
Toronto
Venice

Appendix 3: Qualifying festivals – Short films

Aesthetica Short Film Festival	Nov	www.asff.co.uk
AFI Docs Film Festival	June	www.afi.com/afidocs
AFI Fest	Nov	www.afi.com/afifest
Amsterdam Int'l Documentary Film Fest	Nov-Dec	www.idfa.nl
Aspen Shortsfest	April	www.aspenfilm.org
BAFTA – Film nominated	Feb	www.bafta.org
BAFTA Cymru – Film nominated	Oct	www.bafta.org/wales
BAFTA Scotland – Film nominated	Nov	www.bafta.org/scotland
Berlin International Film Festival	Feb	www.berlinale.de
BFI Flare	Mar	www.whatson.bfi.org.uk/flare/Online
Bilbao	Nov	www.zinebi.com
Brest European Short Film Festival	Nov	www.filmcourt.fr
British Urban Film Festival	June	www.britishurbanfilmfestival.co.uk
Cambridge Film Festival	Sept	www.cambridgefilmfestival.org.uk
Cannes International Film Festival	May	www.festival-cannes.org
Chicago International Film Festival	Oct	www.chicagofilmfestival.com
Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film	Feb	www.clermont-filmfest.com
Cork International Film Festival	Nov	www.corkfilmfest.org
Deaffest	May	www.deaffest.co.uk
Edinburgh International Film Festival	June	www.edfilmfest.org.uk
Encounters International Short Film Festival	Sept	www.encounters-festival.org.uk
Flanders International Film Festival	Oct	www.filmfestival.be
Foyle Film Festival	Nov	www.foylefilmfestival.org
Gothenburg International Film Festival	Feb	www.giff.se
Glasgow Short Film Festival	Mar	www.glasgowfilm.org/glasgow-short-film-festival
Hamburg International Short Film	June	http://festival.shortfilm.com

Hot Docs	Apr-May	www.hotdocs.ca
Leeds International Film Festival	Nov	www.leedsfilm.com
Locarno Film Festival	Aug	www.pardo.ch
BFI London Film Festival	Oct	www.lff.org.uk
London Int'l Documentary Festival	Nov & Jun	www.lidf.co.uk
London Short Film Festival	Jan	http://shortfilms.co.uk
Los Angeles Int'l Short Film Festival	Sept	www.lashortsfest.com
Melbourne International Film Festival	July-Aug	www.melbournefilmfestival.com.au
New York International Film Festival	Sept-Oct	www.filmlinc.org/nyff2015/
Norwich Film Festival	Nov	http://www.norwichfilmfestival.co.uk/
Oberhausen Int'l Short Film Festival	May	www.kurzfilmtage.de
Oska Bright	Nov	www.carousel.org.uk/oska-bright-film-festival/
Palm Springs International ShortFest	June	www.psfilmfest.org
Raindance Film Festival	Sep-Oct	www.raindance.co.uk
Rotterdam International Film Festival	Feb	www.filmfestivalrotterdam.com
Sheffield Doc/Fest	June	www.sheffdocfest.com
Slamdance	Jan	www.slamdance.com
The Shortest Nights	June	www.shortsightedcinema.com
The Smalls	Sept	www.thesmall.com
S.O.U.L. Film Festival	June	www.soulfilm.co.uk
Stockholm International Film Festival	Nov	www.stockholmfilmfestival.se
Sundance Film Festival	Jan	www.sundance.org/festival
SXSW Short Film Program	March	http://sxsw.com/film/film_awards
Tampere International Short Film	March	www.tamperefilmfestival.fi
Telluride	Sept	www.telluridefilmfestival.org
Toronto International Film Festival	Sept	www.tiff.net
Tribeca Film Festival	Apr	www.tribecafilm.com/festival
Uppsala Int'l Short Film Festival	Oct	www.shortfilmfestival.com
Underwire Film Festival	Nov	http://www.underwirefestival.com/
Venice Film Festival	Sept	www.labiennale.org/en/cinema

Appendix 4: Qualifying online channels – Short films

VICE	https://www.vice.com/en_uk
The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/documentaries
New York Times Op-Docs	https://www.nytimes.com/video/op-docs
Field of Vision	https://fieldofvision.org/
NOWNESS	https://www.nowness.com/
BBC Three	http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree
Short of the Week	https://www.shortoftheweek.com/
Shorts TV	https://shorts.tv/
Short of the Month	https://www.shortofthemonth.com/
Seed and Spark	https://www.seedandspark.com/
Aesthetica	http://www.aestheticamagazine.com/