



sundance film festival

RULES & REGULATIONS FOR SUBMISSION

The following is an explanation of rules and regulations (“Rules and Regulations”) governing the submission of a film (hereafter called the “Film”) to Sundance Institute (hereafter called the “Institute”) for consideration for the 2015 Sundance Film Festival (hereafter called the “Festival”). All information contained in this document shall supersede the contents of the FAQ document located at http://www.sundance.org/pdf/submissions/2015_Submissions_FAQ.pdf.

By agreeing to the Terms And Conditions found on the Festival submission form located at https://www.withoutabox.com/03film/03t_fin/03t_fin_fest_01over.php?festival_id=1375, the person submitting the Film (hereafter called the “Applicant”) acknowledges that he or she has obtained consent from any and all owners, creators, writers, Producers and/or other authorized representatives of the Film (hereafter called the “Film’s Owners”) whose consent is required to submit the Film to the Institute, and has read and understood the submission rules and regulations set forth below:

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I. GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR SUBMISSION OF A FILM TO THE SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL:

NOTE: The submission categories and program categories that are referenced and identified as capitalized terms in this Section I of these Rules and Regulations, and the eligibility requirements for each, shall be understood as having the definitions and descriptions assigned to them in Sections II and III of these Rules and Regulations below.

- 1) If 50% or more of the Film’s financing originated from sources within the United States, the Film may only be submitted as either a U.S. Narrative or Documentary Feature Film, or as a U.S. Short Film.
- 2) If more than 50% of the Film’s financing originated from sources outside of the United States, the Film may only be submitted as either an International Narrative or Documentary Feature Film, or as an International Short Film.
- 3) If the Film’s final running time is projected to be less than 50 minutes, the Film may only be submitted as a U.S. or International Short Film.
- 4) If the Film’s final running time is projected to be 50 minutes or more, the Film may only be submitted as a U.S. or International Narrative or Documentary Feature Film.
- 5) U.S. Narrative and Documentary Feature Films that have been released theatrically or screened at more than two film festivals anywhere in the world are not eligible for submission to the Festival. In order to qualify for our U.S. Narrative or Documentary competition categories, the Film must retain world premiere status. This does not include “work-in-progress” screenings in which an incomplete version of the film was previously screened.

- 6) International Narrative and Documentary Feature Films that have been released theatrically, broadcast on television, or screened at any number of film festivals **within** their country of origin are eligible for submission to the Festival and all Festival program categories.
- 7) International Narrative and Documentary Feature Films that have been released theatrically, broadcast on television, or screened at film festivals **outside** of their country of origin are not eligible for open submissions. This does not include “work-in-progress” screenings in which an incomplete version of the film was previously screened.
- 8) U.S. and International Narrative and Documentary Feature Films that have previously been exhibited theatrically at one or more **private** screenings for which tickets were not available to the general public retain eligibility for submission to the Festival in all categories.
- 9) Short Films do not have any premiere requirements. U.S. and International Short Films do not forfeit their eligibility for submission to the Festival if they were previously released theatrically or via any home video platform, broadcast on television or the internet, or screened at any number of film festivals in the world.
- 10) U.S. and International Narrative and Documentary Feature Films that have previously been theatrically exhibited at a “work-in-progress” screening at which tickets were available to the public are only eligible for the Festival if the version submitted is significantly different from the version previously screened. The Institute reserves the right to determine a previously screened project’s eligibility, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from the Applicant, based on the content of the submitted version of the Film as compared with the previously screened version.
- 11) U.S. Narrative and Documentary Feature Films that have been previously released via any home video platform (including, but not limited to, DVD, Blu-ray, or video on demand) or broadcast on television or the internet in any country are not eligible for submission to the Festival unless the version submitted is significantly different from the version that was previously released or broadcast. The Institute shall have the sole authority and discretion to determine whether a Film that was previously released via any method described above has been changed significantly from the previously released or broadcast version. The Institute reserves the sole and exclusive right to determine a previously released or broadcast project’s eligibility, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from the Applicant, based on the content of the submitted version of the Film as compared with the previously released or broadcast version.
- 12) Films completed prior to January 1, 2013, are not eligible for consideration for the 2015 Festival.
- 13) Films that have been submitted for Festival consideration in previous years are eligible for re-submission for 2015 Festival consideration, but only if the Film has been changed significantly since the previous year in which it was submitted. The Institute shall have the sole authority and discretion to determine whether a Film that was previously submitted has been changed significantly from the previously submitted version. The Institute reserves the right to determine a previously submitted Film’s eligibility, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from the Applicant, based on the content of the newly submitted version of the film as compared with the previously submitted version.
- 14) It is the sole responsibility of the Applicant to secure authorization and permission from the copyright owner(s) of any and all copyrighted content or materials included within the submitted Film. The Institute expressly disavows any responsibility for, and will not be held responsible for, any unauthorized inclusion of any copyrighted content or materials within or relating to the submitted Film, including any content or materials that are or may become the basis for any third party claims for copyright infringement. The Institute reserves the right to disqualify, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from the Applicant, any Film with any unauthorized inclusion of copyrighted content or materials. In the event that any claim, dispute, action or proceeding shall be brought or asserted by any person or entity that alleges that the Film makes unauthorized or unlawful use of any copyrighted content or material, Applicant shall fully indemnify and defend the Institute, the Festival, and each of their representatives and affiliates from any liability in connection therewith and from any fees and expenses, including but not limited to attorneys’ fees, that any of them may incur in connection therewith.

- 15) It is the sole responsibility of the Applicant to secure authorization and permission from the owner(s) of any and all trademarked content or materials included within the submitted Film. The Institute expressly disavows any responsibility for, and will not be held responsible for, any unauthorized inclusion of any trademarked content or materials within or relating to the submitted Film, including any content or materials that are or may become the basis for any third party claims for trademark infringement, trademark dilution or unfair competition. The Institute reserves the right to disqualify, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from the Applicant, any Film with any unauthorized inclusion of trademarked content or materials. In the event that any claim, dispute, action or proceeding shall be brought or asserted by any person or entity that alleges that the Film makes unauthorized or unlawful use of any trademarked content or material, Applicant shall fully indemnify and defend the Institute, the Festival, and each of their representatives and affiliates from any liability in connection therewith and from any fees and expenses, including but not limited to attorneys' fees, that any of them may incur in connection therewith.
- 16) It is the sole responsibility of the Applicant to clear all content of the Film from any and all actual or potential legal claims and issues, including, without limitation, claims based upon theories of libel, defamation, invasion of privacy, violation of rights of publicity, theft of trade secrets, breach of confidence, breach of confidential relationship, and breach of express or implied contract ("Third Party Claim(s)"). The Institute expressly disavows any responsibility for, and will not be held responsible for, any unauthorized inclusion of any content or materials within or relating to the submitted Film that are or may be the basis for any Third Party Claims based upon any of the foregoing legal theories or others. The Institute reserves the right to disqualify, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from the Applicant, any Film that is or may become the subject of any Third Party Claims. In the event that any Third Party Claim(s) shall be asserted by any person or entity, Applicant shall fully indemnify and defend the Institute, the Festival, and each of their representatives and affiliates from any liability in connection therewith and from any and all fees and expenses, including but not limited to attorneys' fees, that each of any of them may incur in connection therewith.
- 17) Applicants submitting Films that contain significant non-English spoken dialogue must provide on-screen English subtitles. The Institute reserves the right to disqualify, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from the Applicant, any Film that contains significant non-English spoken dialogue that does not include accompanying on-screen English subtitles.
- 18) All Feature Films (50 minutes or longer) must be submitted to the Institute on a single disc (DVD-R, DVD+R, DVD-R DL, DVD+R DL, or Blu-ray) or uploaded via the Secure Online Screener function of Withoutabox. The Institute reserves the right to disqualify, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from Applicant, any feature-length Film that is not submitted using one of these formats. If the Film is submitted in multiple parts on multiple discs, the Institute reserves the right to judge the Film based on the first disc included, with no further obligation to view the contents of the remaining discs.
- 19) All Short Films (less than 50 minutes in length) must be submitted to the Institute on a single disc (DVD-R, DVD+R, DVD-R DL, DVD+R DL) or uploaded via the Secure Online Screener function of Withoutabox. The Institute reserves the right to disqualify, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from Applicant, any Short Film that is not submitted using one of these formats. Short Films may not be submitted on Blu-ray disc. If multiple short films are included on a single disc, the Institute reserves the right to judge only the first film included on the disc, with no further obligation to view the remaining contents of the disc.
- 20) It is the sole responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that any submitted disc plays in its entirety on an industry-standard DVD or Blu-ray player prior to submitting it to the Festival. In the event that a submitted disc does not play in an industry-standard DVD or Blu-ray player, the Institute will attempt, but is under no obligation, to contact the Applicant using the contact information provided on the submission form in an effort to obtain a replacement copy of the Film. The Institute reserves the right to disqualify, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from the Applicant, any Film for which the initially-submitted disc does not play on an industry-standard DVD or Blu-ray player.

- 21) It is the sole responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the submitted disc arrives at the shipping destination provided to the Applicant upon completion of the submission form. In the event that a submitted disc does not arrive at the designated shipping destination within the deadline window selected by the Applicant, the Institute will attempt, but is under no obligation, to contact the Applicant using the contact information provided on the submission form in an effort to obtain a submission copy of the Film. The Institute reserves the right to disqualify, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from the Applicant, any Film that does not arrive at the designated shipping destination within the deadline window selected by the Applicant.
- 22) In the event that the Applicant remits an updated version of the Film to the Institute after having submitted a previous version of the Film to the Institute during the same calendar year, the Institute is under no obligation to view any or all of the updated version.
- 23) In order to be considered for the Festival, the Applicant must fill out the Festival submission form located at <http://www.sundance.org/submissions> or <http://www.withoutabox.com>. The Institute reserves the right to disqualify, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from the Applicant, any Film that is not submitted through one of these platforms.
- 24) The Institute reserves the right to disqualify, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from the Applicant, any Film with a submission form that is considered to be delinquent due to the non-payment of any or all submission fees. The Institute may attempt, but is under no obligation, to contact the Applicant using the contact information provided on the submission form in an effort to bring the payment status of the account up-to-date. The Institute disavows any responsibility for, and will not be held responsible for, any failure to contact the Applicant and inform the Applicant of any payment delinquency or other deficiency of a submission form.
- 25) The Institute reserves the right to disqualify, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from the Applicant, any Feature Film (50 minutes or longer) received before May 1, 2014 or after September 29, 2014.
- 26) The Institute reserves the right to disqualify, without refund of any or all submission fees previously collected from the Applicant, any Short Film (less than 50 minutes in length) received before May 1, 2014 or after September 15, 2014.
- 27) Upon completion of the Festival selection process, the Institute will attempt to contact the Applicant using the contact information provided on the submission form to notify the Applicant of the Film's acceptance status. The Institute disavows any responsibility for, and will not be held responsible for, any failure to contact the Applicant using the contact information provided on the submission form. It is the sole responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the contact information provided on the submission form is correct throughout the entirety of the Festival selection period (May 1, 2014 – December 1, 2014).
- 28) The Institute is under no obligation to provide to the Applicant or any other representative of the Film any comments or feedback regarding the submitted Film, any information relating to the manner in which the Film is, will be, or was reviewed; any views that the Institute or any reviewers of the Film may hold concerning the Film; any reasons why the Film, should it not be accepted for exhibition at the Festival, was not accepted; or any other information relating to the Festival's review, consideration and/or selection process regarding the Film specifically or submissions generally beyond the information set forth in these Rules and Regulations. The Institute disavows any responsibility for, and will not be held responsible or liable for, the contents of any internal comments or feedback regarding any Film that are or may be obtained by the Applicant or any other representative of the Film; any communications by any representative of the Institute or the Festival relating to the Film or the Festival selection process; the manner in which the Film shall be, is or was considered and reviewed; the identity or identities of any specific reviewers of the Film; and/or any failure on the part of the Institute or the Festival to provide the Applicant or any other representative(s) of the Film with information concerning the Institute's consideration and/or review of the Film.

II. SUBMISSION CATEGORIES & ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

Films submitted to the Institute for consideration for the Festival may apply in one of six submission categories. The Institute reserves the right to determine eligibility of any film for any Festival program or submission category. The following is a description of each submission category, along with eligibility requirements for each:

U.S. NARRATIVE FEATURE FILMS

Any narrative work of fiction with a running time of 50 minutes or more, including films that are shot in a "mockumentary" style. In order to qualify as a U.S. Narrative Feature Film, the submitted project must be either scripted or improvisational fiction, and at least half of the project's financing must originate from within the United States. Only films that are World Premieres are eligible for our U.S. Dramatic Competition program, but U.S. Narrative Feature Films that have previously played at up to two other festivals anywhere in the world are still eligible for our out-of-competition programs. U.S. Narrative Films that have been otherwise exhibited theatrically, been broadcast on television or the Internet, or released via any home video or other distribution platform including, but not limited to, DVD, Blu-ray or video on demand, are not eligible for any of the Institute's Festival programs.

U.S. DOCUMENTARY FEATURE FILMS

Any non-fiction film with a running time of 50 minutes or more WITH THE EXCEPTION OF, and NOT INCLUDING, entirely scripted or improvised fictionalizations of actual events. If your documentary contains some dramatization of actual events, you may submit in this category, but we will ultimately decide which program is best suited for your project, if accepted. In order to qualify as a U.S. Documentary Feature Film, at least half of the submitted project's financing must originate from within the United States. Only films that are World Premieres are eligible for our U.S. Documentary Competition program, but U.S. Documentary Feature Films that have previously played at up to two other festivals anywhere in the world are still eligible for our out-of-competition programs. U.S. Documentary Films that have been otherwise exhibited theatrically, broadcast on television or the Internet, or released via any home video or other distribution platform including, but not limited to, DVD, Blu-ray or video on demand, are not eligible for any of the Institute's Festival programs.

INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE FEATURE FILMS

Any narrative work of fiction with a running time of 50 minutes or more, including films that are shot in a "mockumentary" style. In order to qualify as an International Narrative Feature Film, the submitted project must be either scripted or improvisational fiction, and more than half of the project's financing must originate from outside of the United States. International Narrative Feature Films that have been exhibited theatrically, broadcast on television, released via any home video or other distribution platform, or screened at any Film Festival outside of their country of origin are not eligible to submit to the Institute for Festival consideration, though we reserve the right to include in our Festival program International Narrative Feature Films that have previously been exhibited outside of their country of origin.

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FEATURE FILMS

Any non-fiction film with a running time of 50 minutes or more WITH THE EXCEPTION OF, and NOT INCLUDING, entirely scripted or improvised fictionalizations of actual events. If your documentary contains some dramatization of actual events, you may submit in this category, but we will ultimately decide which program is best suited for your project, if accepted. In order to qualify as an International Documentary Feature Film, more than half of the project's financing must originate from outside of the United States. International Documentary Feature Films that have been exhibited theatrically, broadcast on television, released via any home video or other distribution platform, or screened at any Film Festival outside of their country of origin are not eligible to submit to the Institute for Festival consideration, though we reserve the right to include in our Festival program International Documentary Feature Films that have previously been exhibited outside of their country of origin.

U.S. SHORT FILMS

Any narrative or documentary film of U.S. origin with a running time of less than 50 minutes. In order to qualify as a U.S. Short Film, at least half of the submitted project's financing must originate from within the United States. Short Films have no premiere requirements or prior screening restrictions-- they may have had any number of public theatrical exhibitions, been released via any home video or other distribution platform, and may have been broadcast on television or the internet and still retain eligibility.

INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILMS

Any narrative or documentary film of International origin with a running time of less than 50 minutes. In order to qualify as an International Short Film, more than half of the submitted project's financing must originate from outside of the United States. Short Films have no premiere requirements or prior screening restrictions-- they may have had any number of public theatrical exhibitions, been released via any home video or distribution platform, and may have been broadcast on television or the internet and still retain eligibility.

III. FESTIVAL PROGRAM CATEGORIES & ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

Please be advised that the information listed below is subject to change at any time, as our Festival program categories vary from year to year. Films accepted by the Institute into the Festival will be placed, at the sole and absolute discretion of the Festival Programming department, in one of twelve program categories. Applicants may not submit their Films directly to any specific category.

The following is a description of each program category, along with eligibility requirements for each:

U.S. DRAMATIC COMPETITION (16 U.S. Narrative Feature Films)

For over 30 years, Sundance's U.S. Dramatic Competition has offered a first look at groundbreaking new voices in American independent film. Fueled by fierce creativity and vision, these 16 films are guaranteed to leave a lasting impact on the next generation of cinema.

Films must be WORLD PREMIERES in order to be considered for this program. If your Film has screened at any other film festival, released via any home video or other distribution platform including, but not limited to, DVD, Blu-ray or video on demand, broadcast on television or the Internet, or had a public theatrical screening anywhere in the world, it is not eligible for this program. In order to qualify, the submitted project must be either scripted or improvisational fiction and must have a total running time of 50 minutes or more, and at least half of the project's financing must originate from within the United States. Films selected to play in this category will compete against one another for jury prizes and an audience award.

U.S. DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION (16 U.S. Documentary Feature Films)

From human rights to popular culture, these 16 films confront the subjects that define our time. Stylistic diversity and rigorous filmmaking distinguish these new American documentaries.

Films must be WORLD PREMIERES in order to be considered for this program. If your Film has screened at any other film festival, released via any home video or other distribution platform including, but not limited to, DVD, Blu-ray or video on demand, broadcast on television or the Internet, or had a public theatrical screening anywhere in the world, it is not eligible for this program. In order to qualify, the submitted project must be a non-fiction documentary subject ("mockumentaries" do not qualify) and must have a total running time of 50 minutes or more, and at least half of the project's financing must originate from within the United States. Films selected to play in this category will compete against one another for jury prizes and an audience award.

WORLD CINEMA DRAMATIC COMPETITION (12-14 International Narrative Feature Films)

From all corners of the globe, these emerging filmmaking talents offer fresh perspectives and inventive styles. We present these exceptional works as a way to honor the independent spirit in filmmakers everywhere.

Submissions must be INTERNATIONAL PREMIERES in order to be considered for this program. If your film has screened outside of its country of origin, whether at a film festival or other public theatrical exhibition, it is not eligible for this program. If it has been released via any home video or other distribution platform including, but not limited to, DVD, Blu-ray or video on demand, broadcast on television or the Internet, it is not eligible for this program. In order to qualify, the submitted project must be either scripted or improvisational fiction and must have a total running time of at least 50 minutes, and more than half of the project's financing must originate from outside of the United States. Films selected to play in this category will compete against one another for jury prizes and an audience award.

WORLD CINEMA DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION (12-14 International Documentary Feature Films)

Made by some of the most courageous and extraordinary filmmakers working today, these films from around the world poignantly examine issues that range from the personal to the universal.

Submissions must be INTERNATIONAL PREMIERES in order to be considered for this program. If your film has screened outside of its country of origin, whether at a film festival or other public theatrical exhibition, it is not eligible for this program. If it has been released via any home video or other distribution platform including, but not limited to, DVD, Blu-ray or video on demand, broadcast on television or the Internet, it is not eligible for this program. In order to qualify, the submitted project must be a non-fiction documentary subject ("mockumentaries" do not qualify) and must have a total running time of at least 50 minutes, and more than half of the project's financing must originate from outside of the United States. Films selected to play in this category will compete against one another for jury prizes and an audience award.

SHORTS COMPETITION (70-80 U.S. & International Short Films)

Limited only by runtime and driven by innovation and experimentation, short films transcend the rules of conventional storytelling. From cutting-edge animation to the best in Native and documentary cinema, these Shorts Programs call out filmmaking's most original imaginations.

All short films are selected to play before features or in one of eight Shorts Programs, and all accepted shorts are eligible for awards in our Shorts Competition. Short Films must have a total running time of less than 50 minutes, including credits. There are no premiere or prior screening restrictions for short films. Shorts may have been released via any distribution outlet, broadcast on television or the internet, and/or publicly screened anywhere in the world and still remain eligible for our Shorts Competition. All short films at the Festival are eligible for the Short Film Grand Jury Prize. Short films will also compete for jury prizes within their specific categories (U.S. Fiction, International Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Animation). Additionally, Special Jury Prizes may be awarded to short films at the discretion of the jury.

SPOTLIGHT (8-10 U.S. & International Feature Films)

The Spotlight category is a tribute to the cinema we love. Regardless of where these impressive films have played throughout the world, the Sundance Film Festival is thrilled to light a marquee for them. We are confident you'll love them, too.

In order to qualify for this out-of-competition category, films are not required to retain any sort of premiere status, and are allowed to have been screened at up to two other film festivals prior to Sundance. However, they may not have been released via any home video distribution platform including, but not limited to, DVD, Blu-ray or video on demand, or broadcast on television or the Internet in their entirety.

NEXT (8-10 U.S. Feature Films)

Films selected for this category stretch a low budget to create big art. $< = >$ (less than equals greater than) is our speak for the creativity that limited resources can inspire. Although these films share a Festival category, there is nothing categorical about them. By nature, they embody the spirit of indie filmmaking.

Films must be WORLD PREMIERES in order to be considered for this program. If your film has screened at any other film festival, been released via any home video or other distribution platform including, but not limited to, DVD, Blu-ray or video on demand, broadcast on television or the Internet, it is not eligible for this program. In order to qualify, the submitted project must be either scripted or improvisational fiction and must have a total running time of 50 minutes or more, and at least half of the project's financing must originate from within the United States. Films selected to play in this category will compete against one another for the "Best of NEXT Audience Award."

PREMIERES (14-18 U.S. & International Feature Films)

The Premieres program showcases some of the most highly anticipated dramatic films of the coming year. Catch world premieres and the latest work from established directors at the Sundance Film Festival before they create a splash at local theatres.

Acceptance into this out-of-competition category is by invitation only, but films that are selected must maintain a U.S. or World Premiere status.

DOCUMENTARY PREMIERES (8-10 U.S. & International Documentary Feature Films)

Reflecting the growing impact and popularity of documentaries in our world today, the Documentary Premieres section furthers our commitment to this important form of storytelling. Expect to see the debut of new docs about big subjects from established filmmakers.

Acceptance into this out-of-competition category is by invitation only, but films that are selected must maintain a U.S. or World Premiere status.

PARK CITY AT MIDNIGHT (8 U.S. & International Feature Films)

A treat for true cinephiles and casual filmgoers alike, this out-of-competition section presents an eclectic mix of horror, sci-fi, over-the-top comedies, surreal tales, explicit animation, and bizarre stories that defy categorization. Raucous, rowdy, and rebellious; softies need not enter!

Films selected for this section do not need to retain any sort of premiere status, and are allowed to have been screened at up to two other film festivals before Sundance. However, they may not have been broadcast on television or the Internet in their entirety, or released via any home video or other distribution platform including, but not limited to, DVD, Blu-ray or video on demand.

NEW FRONTIER FEATURES (5-6 U.S. & International Feature Films)

The New Frontier category celebrates experimentation and the convergence of film, art, and new media technology as an emerging hotbed for cinematic innovation, highlighting work that pushes the limits of traditional aesthetics and structures of filmmaking.

Films selected for this section do not need to retain any sort of premiere status, and are allowed to have been screened at up to two other film festivals before Sundance. However, they may not have been broadcast on television or the Internet in their entirety, or released via any home video or other distribution platform including, but not limited to, DVD, Blu-ray or video on demand.

FROM THE COLLECTION (1-2 U.S. & International Feature Films)

Rediscover classic works of independent cinema as the Sundance Film Festival presents films from the vaults of the Sundance Collection at UCLA. A unique archive devoted to preserving indie film, the Collection exists not only to save important works that would otherwise disappear, but also to make them accessible to new audiences and show them as they were intended to be seen: on the big screen. Formed in partnership with the UCLA Film and Television Archive, and growing through the support of donor companies and individual filmmakers, the Collection now contains more than 900 films.

Acceptance into this out-of-competition category is by invitation only. Open submissions will not be considered for this program