

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

JANUARY 23–FEBRUARY 2, 2020

Submitting to the 2020 Sundance Film Festival

1) When are the submission deadlines and what are the fees?

The following deadlines are the dates by which we must receive a completed submission for your project, including a digital upload or link. All submissions are handled identically, regardless of which deadline you choose. Late deadline submissions are processed and screened in exactly the same manner as early and official deadline submissions. The only difference is the fee. We encourage you to submit your film as early as possible to take advantage of lower submission fees.

Early Submission Deadline:

U.S. and International Short Films, Episodic Content, New Frontier Exhibition Projects:
Friday, July 26, 2019 - \$40 entry fee

U.S. and International Feature Films:
Monday, August 5, 2019 - \$65 entry fee

Official Submission Deadline:

U.S. and International Short Films, Episodic Content, New Frontier Exhibition Projects:
Friday, August 16, 2019 - \$60 entry fee

U.S. and International Feature Films:
Monday, August 26, 2019 - \$85 entry fee

Late Submission Deadline:

U.S. and International Short Films, Episodic Content, New Frontier Exhibition Projects:
Friday, September 6, 2019 - \$80 entry fee

U.S. and International Feature Films:
Monday, September 16, 2019 - \$110 entry fee

New this year: Submissions for all feature films, short films, and episodic content have been transitioned to FilmFreeway. If you wish to submit a VR/AR/MR/XR project or a proposal for a New Frontier media installation or cinematic piece that incorporates a live performance or other interactive elements beyond traditional filmed media, please go [here](#) to complete the New Frontier application. If your project is an experimental film that does **not** include interactive or live performance elements, it should be submitted to one of our short or feature film categories on FilmFreeway. If you believe that your experimental film qualifies for the New Frontier Films program at the Festival, you may indicate this within the cover letter of your FilmFreeway submission.

Please ensure that your project's submission status on your FilmFreeway account is listed as "In Consideration" no later than 11:59pm on the final day of the current deadline window. All submissions that are not 100% complete at that time will be disqualified and you will need to submit again for another deadline window. **We recommend that you wait until your video file is ready to upload before you fill out the application.** For example, if you know you will be submitting your film for the late deadline, do not fill out the application until the first two deadlines have passed. If you submit a project with a non-working video file or link in order to meet the "In Consideration" status requirement before the deadline, your submission will be disqualified.

2) What are the submission categories and how do I choose the right one for my project?

Each year, we select 115-125 feature films, 60-80 short films, 10-15 episodic projects, and 20-30 New Frontier performance and exhibition projects to play within our Festival programs. Before you begin your submission, please select the category that best suits your project from the list below:

U.S. Narrative Feature Films:

Any narrative or non-scripted work of fiction originating from within the United States 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 screened at up to two other festivals anywhere in the world are still eligible for our out-of-competition programs. U.S. Narrative Feature Films that have been or will be exhibited publicly at one or more non-festival screenings, broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, or released via any home video or other public distribution platform (Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.) before February 3, 2020 are not eligible for any Sundance Film Festival program.

U.S. Documentary Feature Films:

Any nonfiction film originating from within the United States with a running time of 50 minutes or more, not including entirely scripted or improvised fictionalizations of actual events. If your documentary contains some dramatization of actual events, you may submit it to 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 screened at up to two other festivals anywhere in the world are still eligible for our out-of-competition programs. U.S. Documentary Feature Films that have been or will be exhibited publicly at one or more non-festival screenings, broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, or released via any home video or other public distribution platform (Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.) before February 3, 2020 are not eligible for any Sundance Film Festival program.

International Narrative Feature Films:

Any narrative or non-scripted work of fiction originating from outside of the United States 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 previously screened at any festival outside of the film's country or countries of origin are not eligible for open submission to the Institute for Festival consideration. International Narrative Feature Films that have been or will be exhibited publicly at one or more non-festival screenings, broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, or released via any home video or other public distribution platform (Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.) before February 3, 2020 are not eligible for any Sundance Film Festival program.

International Documentary Feature Films:

Any nonfiction film originating from outside of the United States with a running time of 50 minutes or more, not including entirely scripted or improvised fictionalizations of actual events. If your documentary contains some dramatization of actual events, you may submit it to 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 previously screened at any festival outside of the film's country or countries of origin are not eligible for open submission to the Sundance Film Festival. International Documentary Feature Films that have been or will be exhibited publicly at one or more non-festival screenings, broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, or released via any home video or other public distribution platform (Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.) before February 3, 2020 are not eligible for any Sundance Film Festival program.

U.S. Short Films:

Any narrative or non-scripted work of fiction or nonfiction/documentary film of any genre originating from within the United States with a running time of less than 50 minutes, including credits. 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. U.S. Short Films have no premiere requirements or prior screening restrictions that would impact Festival eligibility. U.S. Short Films may have been screened at any number of festivals or other public theatrical exhibitions anywhere in the world, broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, and/or released via any home video or other public distribution platform and still remain eligible for Festival consideration.

International Short Films:

Any narrative or non-scripted work of fiction or nonfiction/documentary film of any genre originating from outside of the United States with a running time of less than 50 minutes, including credits. In order to qualify as an International Short Film, at least half of the submitted project's financing must originate from outside of the United States. International Short Films have no premiere requirements or prior screening restrictions that would impact Festival eligibility. International Short Films may have been screened at any number of festivals or other public theatrical exhibitions anywhere in the world, broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, and/or released via any home video or other public distribution platform and still remain eligible for Festival consideration.

Episodic Content:

Any narrative or non-scripted work of fiction or nonfiction/documentary series of any genre, originating from anywhere in the world, presented in or intended to be presented in a multi-episode format. Applicants may submit single or multiple episodes of a single project, as long as all episodes play continuously in one single video file for digital upload and do not exceed the 10GB file size limit. We accept both short-form and long-form content. Projects originating from within the United States are not eligible for the Festival if all of the submitted content has been made available in its entirety to the general public via any platform (broadcast television, Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.) prior to February 3, 2020. Projects originating from outside of the United States remain eligible if all of the submitted content has been released only within their country of origin or not released at all. You may submit episodes that have previously been screened at other festivals or broadcast and/or streamed via another platform, but you must also submit subsequent episodes that have not been screened by or released to the general public. For example, if your pilot episode has screened at another festival or is available online, you may only submit it if you currently have additional episodes that have not been screened anywhere or otherwise made available to the public.

New Frontier Exhibitions and Performances

A wide range of innovative works engaging with cinematic storytelling will be considered for the Festival's New Frontier program. These works may include VR/AR/MR/XR projects created for a variety of platforms, media installations, live cinematic performances, custom digital platforms, or any combination of those elements. If you wish to submit a VR/AR/MR/XR project or a proposal for a New Frontier media installation or cinematic piece that incorporates a live performance or other interactive elements beyond traditional filmed media, please go [here](#) to access the application. **Please note that these projects may not be submitted through FilmFreeway!** We request that you provide documentation that outlines any specific logistical, spatial, or equipment needs for your project. Specific instructions for submitting different file types are contained within the application. We encourage the diverse creative community of storytellers and technologists to submit inventive works of fiction, documentary, and interactive projects for consideration. Projects may have previously been performed or exhibited at other festivals, industry trade shows, and/or conventions and still retain their eligibility for open submission to the Sundance Film Festival. However, we do take premiere status into consideration for all submitted projects. Questions regarding this program should be directed to newfrontier@sundance.org.

If your experimental film does not include any interactive or live performance elements, please select one of the previous feature or short film categories on [FilmFreeway](#) and use your cover letter to explain why you believe it could be right for New Frontier.

3) What are the Festival programs and eligibility requirements for each?

The Sundance Film Festival is comprised of six competition programs, nine out-of-competition programs, and the New Frontier Exhibition, all of which are listed below. You may not submit your project directly to any specific Festival program. If your project is accepted into the Festival, our Programming team will ultimately decide which of the 15 Festival programs it will be slotted into. All feature-length films accepted into any of these programs are eligible to compete for the *Festival Favorite Award*, determined by audience balloting at screenings throughout the Festival. These programs may vary from year to year, and the information below is subject to change at any time.

At the core of our Festival program are our competition programs. Films that are selected to be in one of these six programs are eligible for jury and/or audience awards in their respective sections:

U.S. Dramatic Competition (16 U.S. Narrative Feature Films):

Presenting the world premieres of 16 feature films from the United States, the Dramatic Competition offers festivalgoers a first look at groundbreaking new voices in American independent film, guaranteed to leave a lasting impact on the next generation of cinema.

Submitted films must be WORLD PREMIERES in order to be considered for this program. If your film has been screened or released in any country prior to February 3, 2020, whether at a film festival, a ticketed public theatrical exhibition, broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, or released via any home video or other public distribution platform (Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.), it is not eligible for this program. To qualify, the submitted project must be either scripted or improvisational fiction, 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):

16 world premiere American documentaries that illuminate the ideas, people, and events that shape the present day. From human rights to popular culture, these films provide a window into the subjects that define our time.

Films must be WORLD PREMIERES in order to be considered for this program. If your film has been screened or released in any country prior to February 3, 2020, whether at a film festival, a ticketed public theatrical exhibition, broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, or released via any home video or other public distribution platform (Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.), it is not eligible for this program. To qualify, the submitted project must be a nonfiction documentary subject ("mockumentaries" do not qualify), 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 International Narrative Feature Films):

These 12 films from emerging filmmaking talents around the world offer fresh perspectives and innovative styles. We present these exceptional works as a way to honor the independent spirit in filmmakers everywhere.

Films must be INTERNATIONAL PREMIERES in order to be considered for this program. If your film has screened or will screen theatrically outside of its country or countries of origin prior to February 3, 2020, whether at a film festival or other ticketed public theatrical exhibition, it is not eligible for this program. Films that have been or will be broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet or released via any home video or other public distribution platform (Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.) in any country prior to February 3, 2020 are not eligible. To qualify, the submitted project must be either scripted or improvisational fiction, 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 program will compete against one another for jury prizes and an audience award.

World Cinema Documentary Competition (12 International Documentary Feature Films):

Made by some of the most courageous and extraordinary filmmakers working today, these 12 films from around the world poignantly examine issues that range from the personal to the universal.

Films must be INTERNATIONAL PREMIERES in order to be considered for this program. If your film has screened or will screen theatrically outside of its country or countries of origin prior to February 3, 2020, whether at a film festival or other ticketed public theatrical exhibition, it is not eligible for this program. Films that have been or will be broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet or released via any home video or other public distribution platform (Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.) in any country prior to February 3, 2020 are also ineligible. To qualify, the submitted project must be a nonfiction documentary subject ("mockumentaries" do not qualify), 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 program will compete against one another for jury prizes and an audience award.

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

Pure, bold works distinguished by an innovative approach to storytelling populate this program that shapes the next wave of cinema. 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 been screened or released in any country prior to February 3, 2020, whether at a film festival, a ticketed public theatrical exhibition, broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, or released via any home video or other public distribution platform (Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.), it is not eligible for this program. To qualify, the submitted project may be scripted or improvisational fiction, documentary nonfiction, or a hybrid of both, and it must have a total running time of 50 minutes or more. Films selected to play in this program will compete against one another for the NEXT Audience Award.

Short Film Competition (60-80 U.S. & International Short Films):

Driven by innovation and experimentation, the Short Film programs showcase filmmaking's most unique and original voices with cutting-edge animation and the best in short form dramatic and documentary cinema.

All short films are selected to play before features or in one of eight shorts programs, and all accepted short films are eligible for awards in our Short Film Competition. To qualify, 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 publicly exhibited, broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, or released via any home video platform in any country and remain eligible for our Short Film Competition. All short films screened at the Festival are eligible for the Short Film Grand Jury Prize. Short films also compete for jury prizes within their respective categories and genres (U.S. Fiction, International Fiction, Nonfiction, and Animation).

Films selected for the following Festival programs will screen out-of-competition, so the eligibility requirements are generally not as strict. With the exception of the Premieres and Documentary Premieres sections, out-of-competition films do not need to retain any sort of premiere status, and are allowed to have screened at up to two other film festivals before February 3, 2020:

Premieres (16-20 U.S. & International Narrative Feature Films):

Showcasing some of the most highly anticipated dramatic films of the coming year, this program allows audiences to catch the latest work from established directors at the Sundance Film Festival before they create a splash at theaters around the globe.

Acceptance into this out-of-competition program is by invitation only and may include films originating from both within the United States and around the world. Films that are selected must maintain WORLD PREMIERE status until February 3, 2020 and have a total running time of at least 50 minutes.

Documentary Premieres (8-12 U.S. & International Documentary Feature Films):

Comprised of films about far-reaching subjects made by renowned documentarians, this program highlights our ongoing commitment to this important form of nonfiction storytelling.

Acceptance into this out-of-competition program is by invitation only and may include films originating from both within the United States and around the world. Films that are selected must maintain WORLD PREMIERE status until February 3, 2020 and have a total running time of at least 50 minutes.

Spotlight (6-10 U.S. & International Feature Films):

Regardless of where these impressive films have played throughout the world, Spotlight is a tribute to the cinema we love. We are confident you'll love them too.

Acceptance into this out-of-competition program is by invitation only. Films considered for this program are not required to retain any sort of theatrical premiere status, and may have screened at any number other film festivals or ticketed public theatrical exhibitions in any country. Films that have been or will be broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, or released via any home video or other public distribution platform (Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.) prior to February 3, 2020 are not eligible for this program.

Midnight (8-10 U.S. & International Feature films):

An eclectic mix of horror, sci-fi, over-the-top comedy, explicit animation, and bizarre stories that defy categorization. These unruly films will keep you edge-seated and wide awake.

Films considered for this out-of-competition program may originate from anywhere in the world, are not required to retain any sort of festival premiere status, and may have screened at up to two other film festivals or ticketed public theatrical exhibitions in any country. Films that have been or will be broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, or released via any home video or other public distribution platform (Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.) prior to February 3, 2020 are not eligible for this program. To qualify, submitted projects must have a total running time of at least 50 minutes.

New Frontier Films & Performances (3-5 U.S. & International Feature Films and live performances):

Celebrating experimentation and subverting the boundaries of traditional cinema, the New Frontier program highlights work that challenges the structures and aesthetics of filmmaking.

Projects considered for this out-of-competition program may originate from anywhere in the world, are not required to retain any sort of festival premiere status, and may have been screened or performed at up to two other festivals or ticketed public theatrical exhibitions in any country. Films that have been or will be broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, or released via any home video or other public distribution platform (Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.) prior to February 3, 2020 are not eligible for this program. Cinematic experiences that include a live performance or other interactive elements will also be considered. To qualify, submitted projects must have a total running time of at least 50 minutes.

New Frontier Exhibition (20-30 Projects):

This program offers festivalgoers a wide range of innovative and multi-faceted works that engage with cinematic storytelling within the realms of VR/AR/MR/XR, multi-media installations, custom digital platforms, or any combination of these elements.

We encourage the diverse creative community of storytellers and technologists to submit inventive works of fiction, documentary, and interactive projects for consideration. Projects submitted to this out-of-competition program may have been previously exhibited at other festivals, industry trade shows, and/or conventions and still retain their eligibility for open submission to the Sundance Film Festival. However, we do take premiere status into consideration for all submitted projects. Questions regarding this program should be directed to newfrontier@sundance.org.

Kids (2-3 U.S. & International Feature Films):

Created to reach the youngest generation of independent film fans, Sundance's Kids program showcases films that will appeal to young and old alike. Programmed in collaboration with Utah Film Center's Tumbleweeds, Utah's premier film festival for children and youth.

Films considered for this out-of-competition program are not required to retain any sort of theatrical premiere status, and may have screened at other film festivals or ticketed public theatrical exhibitions in any country. Films that have been or will be broadcast or streamed on television or the Internet, or released via any home video or other public distribution platform (Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.) outside of their country of origin prior to February 3, 2020 are not eligible for this program. To qualify, submitted projects must have a total running time of at least 50 minutes.

Indie Episodic (8-10 U.S. & International Episodic Projects):

This program highlights stories meant to be told in multiple installments, with an emphasis on independent perspectives and productions. Past episodic works screened by the Festival include *O.J.: Made in America*, *Top of the Lake*, *Animals*, *Mr. Inbetween*, *Quarter Life Poetry*, *Work In Progress*, and *State of the Union*.

Open submissions considered for this out-of-competition program must include content that retains WORLD PREMIERE status to be eligible for this program. Projects originating from within the United States are not eligible for the Festival if all of the submitted content has been made available to the general public via any platform (broadcast television, Blu-ray, DVD, streaming, VOD, etc.) prior to February 3, 2020. Projects originating from outside of the United States are still eligible provided that some or all of the submitted content has only been released within their country of origin or not released at all. You may submit Episodic Content that has previously been screened at other festivals or broadcast and/or streamed via another platform, but only if subsequent episodes that have not been screened by or otherwise released to the general public are also included within your submission.

From the Collection (1-2 U.S. & International Feature Films):

Rediscover classic works of independent cinema as the 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 as they were intended to be seen: on the big screen. Formed in partnership with the UCLA Film & Television Archive and growing through the support of donor companies and individual filmmakers, the Collection now contains more than 2,200 films.

Acceptance into this out-of-competition program is by invitation only. Open submissions will not be considered for this program. Only films that are a part of the Sundance Collection at UCLA qualify for Festival inclusion.

4) How do you distinguish short films from feature films?

Films with a total running time of less than 50 minutes (including credits) are classified as shorts. Films with a total running time of 50 minutes or longer are classified as features. You should select your submission category based on what the final projected running time of the film will be, including credits. We have no minimum length requirement for short films or maximum running time restrictions for feature-length films.

5) How long (or short) should my film be?

As stated above, we consider feature-length films to be 50 minutes or longer and short films to be less than 50 minutes, but we must examine running time when putting our Festival program together. To that end, it is often difficult to program short films that are longer than 25 minutes and feature films that are less than 70 minutes in length. All accepted short films are slotted to play before feature films or placed in one of eight shorts programs. For that reason, it is challenging to find space for short films with longer running times. As a general rule of thumb, the short films we accept into our program average roughly 8-15 minutes in length. That doesn't mean that we don't play shorts that are longer (or shorter) than that, it only means that longer films take up more room in a shorts program and are difficult to pair with feature-length films. **Ultimately, you should utilize as much time as it takes to tell the story that you want to tell**, but the longer your short film is, the more difficult it becomes for us to find the appropriate slot for it.

6) How do you determine whether a film is considered U.S. or International?

Applicants should select their category of submission based on the primary source of the film's financing. If 50% or more of the film's financing came from sources within the United States, it should be submitted as a U.S. Film. If more than 50% of the film's financing came from sources outside of the United States, it should be submitted as an International Film. However, we reserve the right to determine which Festival program your film will ultimately reside in, if selected. We will consider a number of factors to make this decision, including film content, production location, and nationality of the cast and filmmakers.

7) May I submit my project as a rough cut?

A large percentage of the projects we receive each year are unfinished versions with incomplete or temporary sound, missing scenes, no credits or titles, unfinished VFX, etc. However, the project does need to be complete enough for us to make a decision. If you expect that your final version will be 90 minutes long, it's probably not a good idea to send us a 45-minute rough cut. Where applicable, please provide an on-screen description of missing scenes or elements as placeholders within the continuity of the film. You should also list other general elements that are missing or incomplete on a title card before the project begins. Should you choose to submit a rough cut, you can replace it at any time with an updated version, but we can only guarantee that the first version we receive will be viewed! Please wait until you are comfortable with your cut before submitting your application.

8) How old can my project be and still qualify for submission?

All projects submitted for 2020 Festival consideration must have been completed in either 2018 or 2019. If your project was completed prior to January 1st, 2018, it is no longer eligible for submission. If your project's production took place prior to 2018 but was not completed until 2018 or 2019, it is still eligible for submission.

9) What is the definition of the term "public theatrical exhibition"?

As outlined in Item 3 above, your feature-length film is ineligible for many of our Festival Program Categories if a prior "public theatrical exhibition" has occurred or will occur before February 3, 2020. This does not mean that you may not submit your film, but it does limit the number of Festival programs for which it is eligible. A "public theatrical exhibition" is defined as any screening of your completed film for which tickets were available for purchase or given freely to members of the general public, whether at a film festival or any other public screening. If you hold a "work-in-progress" screening of your film in order to raise completion funds, this does not count as a public theatrical exhibition. However, the version of the film you submit to us must be significantly different than the one that was screened as a work-in-progress. Test screenings held for the purpose of obtaining feedback are also considered to be work-in-progress screenings. Additionally, private, invite-only screenings of your completed film are not considered to be "public theatrical exhibitions," and thus will not affect your eligibility, even if the invited guests are required to purchase tickets in order to attend.

Although feature-length films that have previously screened elsewhere are still eligible for submission to many of our out-of-competition categories, we reserve the right to use premiere status in our decision-making process. We prefer to play U.S. Feature Films that are world premieres and International Feature Films that have not yet screened outside of their country of origin. We have no such requirements for Short Films, which may have had any number of prior screenings, public or otherwise, and still retain Festival eligibility.

10) If my project includes non-English dialogue, do you require English subtitles?

All projects that contain significant non-English dialogue **MUST** include on-screen English subtitles at the time of submission. A translated list of dialogue submitted digitally or on paper will not suffice. Please do not send us an un-subtitled foreign-language project with the intention of providing a subtitled version later. If your project is mostly in English and you wish to intentionally leave out subtitles for any non-English dialogue included as an artistic choice, you do not need to provide subtitles for those sections. **Please ensure that all subtitles are hardcoded to your video file** as opposed to including discreet subtitles that need to be turned on in order to display on the screen, such as utilizing the "CC" option on your Vimeo/YouTube upload.

11) Is my project eligible if it has aired on television or streaming services?

If your project is a short film (less than 50 minutes in length), it is **still eligible** even though it has been broadcast on television, streaming, or anywhere else. If your feature-length film (50 minutes or longer) is from the U.S. and has had one or more local or nationwide television airings anywhere in the world, that version is **not eligible** for submission. However, it may be submitted if the version that was broadcast and/or streamed is significantly different from the one you wish to submit. For example, a documentary that aired in an hour-long TV slot may still be submitted if a longer cut was created for the purposes of theatrical distribution. If your

feature-length film originates from outside of the U.S., it may have been broadcast on television or via a streaming service within its country of origin and still maintain eligibility. If you are submitting a project to the Episodic Content category, it is only eligible if your submission includes episodes that have not previously been seen anywhere else. For example, if your pilot episode is available online, you may only submit it along with subsequent episodes that have not yet premiered.

12) Which video formats are accepted for Feature Films, Short Films, and Episodic Content?

We are no longer accepting submissions on Blu-ray, DVD, or any other physical media. All projects must be delivered as Online Screeners on FilmFreeway, which offers direct digital upload or the entry of Vimeo or YouTube links. After you create a Project Page on FilmFreeway, you will be prompted to add a "Project File." This will take you to the page below:

Add an Online Screener

Link or upload your video. Only festivals you submit to can view your video.

The screenshot shows a form with two main sections. The left section is titled 'Upload' and contains the text 'Upload a high-quality video file, up to 10 GB.' Below this is a blue button labeled 'Choose File'. At the bottom of this section is the text 'Your file will begin uploading immediately.' The right section is titled 'Link' and contains the text 'If your video is on Vimeo or YouTube, simply paste the URL and password below.' Below this is a text input field for the URL with the example 'vimeo.com/48425421' and a text input field for the password labeled 'Password (optional)'. At the bottom of the right section is a blue button labeled 'Save'.

From there you may upload your digital video file directly by clicking on "Choose File," or you may enter a URL for an existing Vimeo or YouTube link. If you choose to submit a link, we recommend using password protection to ensure the highest level of security for your project. If you choose to upload a video file, FilmFreeway accepts all major video formats in full quality HD with a 10GB file size limit. All videos uploaded using this method will be transcoded for playback compatibility and performance, so your final submission video will be encoded using the following settings:

Maximum video bitrate: 2200 Kbps, H.264, mp4

Audio: 128 Kbps, AAC, 2 channel stereo

Aspect ratio preserved; maximum video height of 720 pixels

Important: If you use a Vimeo link, be sure to update the privacy settings for to allow for embedding! This does not allow us to do anything with your password protected video that we couldn't do before, it simply allows the Vimeo player to be displayed within the FilmFreeway interface. To allow embedding, go to your video while logged into your Vimeo account, then click 'Settings' > 'Privacy' > 'Where Can This Video be Embedded?' > 'Anywhere'.

We do not accept links via e-mail, nor do we accept links for platforms other than Vimeo and YouTube! Digital uploads and links for multi-episode projects in the Episodic Content category must be submitted as one continuous video— we cannot accept multiple uploads or separate links to different episodes. If you wish to update your project's online screener with a new one, you may go to the "Project File" tab on your FilmFreeway Project Page to replace your uploaded video or link.

13) How can I tell whether or not my submission is complete?

If your application is complete, the current submission fee was paid, and your video was uploaded by 11:59pm Pacific Standard Time on the final day of the current deadline window, your project's submission status will be listed as "In Consideration" on your FilmFreeway Project Page. You may check this status by logging into your FilmFreeway account and navigating to the "Submissions" tab at the top of the page. From there, please ensure that the submission status column next to "Sundance Film Festival" displays a circular green icon next to the words "In Consideration." If your submission status is listed as "Incomplete," please review your submission to ensure that all requirements and qualifications have been met and ensure that your video

upload or video link is in place. If your submission status is “Disqualified,” this means that your submission was not completed by the final day of the deadline window you selected. Projects that are not received within the selected deadline window will be **disqualified** by the Festival. If this happens, the main application contact will receive a notification from FilmFreeway and a refund of any submission fees paid. This does not mean that you are no longer allowed to submit your project! You may re-submit any disqualified project during another deadline window. For this reason, **it is highly recommended that you wait until the version of the project you intend to submit is ready to upload at the time you begin your submission.** If you believe that your project was disqualified in error, please contact programming@sundance.org. If your project is not eligible for any of our Festival programs for any reason, we will contact you directly. Your project will only be disqualified in the event that your submission was not completed by the deadline you selected. If you upload a non-working or incorrect video file or you provide a non-working link in order to qualify your film prior to any of the three deadlines, your submission will be disqualified.

14) Can I submit my project with a temporary music track?

Temp tracks, scratch music, and temp scores are perfectly fine for submission purposes, but please include a list of missing or temporary elements **directly on-screen** before the film begins. If your score is not done or you have not yet secured licensing for any or all music included in your film, we want to know that information.

15) Am I required to obtain rights clearance for trademarked or copyrighted material?

From a legal standpoint, you must license or obtain permission from the appropriate legal rightsholder for any and all trademarked and/or copyrighted materials included in your project before you can exhibit it publicly. If your submitted project contains unlicensed or uncleared materials, it is the responsibility of the owner or owners of the project to license, clear, or otherwise replace these materials in the event that Sundance or any other entity chooses to accept the project for festival exhibition. While you are not required to license or clear this material until that time, Sundance Institute will not be held responsible for ensuring that you have obtained licensing rights or other clearance for these materials at any point during the application process, nor will we be held responsible for the inclusion of unlicensed or uncleared trademarked or copyrighted materials held within the final version your project. **It is the sole responsibility of the entity or entities claiming ownership of the submitted project to secure licensing and/or permission from the trademark or copyright holders of the material in question.** This includes music, stock images/footage, or any other elements that could violate an existing legal trademark or copyright. Projects that are accepted into the Festival will be required to sign a waiver stating that all materials contained within the project do not violate any existing trademark or copyright. Quite often, rights holders offer reduced rates for independently-produced projects, so we encourage you to contact them directly to avoid any potential rights infringements.

16) Can I post trailers, clips, and/or scenes of my project online?

Yes. Posting minimal footage or scenes from your project does not affect its eligibility for any submission category. It is also acceptable for cast and crew to use scenes from your project for the purposes of a public or private exhibition reel.

17) Is there a screenplay competition at the festival?

We do not currently have a screenplay competition, nor do we accept screenplay or other written submissions. Completed feature films that are accepted into our narrative competition programs are eligible for screenwriting prizes within their respective Festival programs, but the Festival does not have a specific competition for unproduced scripts, outlines, or story ideas. Please visit www.sundance.org for more information about other Sundance Institute programs that do accept written materials.

18) Do I need to meet a minimum age requirement in order to submit a project?

No, we encourage artists of all ages to submit their work. However, we do not have any separate submission categories or Festival programs that specifically showcase the work of student filmmakers. All officially-submitted projects compete against each other for available slots in each of our Festival programs. If you are under the age of 18 and your project is accepted, we will require signed, written permission from your parent or legal guardian before we are able to exhibit your project at the Festival.

19) Can I submit multiple projects in the same year?

You may submit as many projects as you wish using the same FilmFreeway account. Simply create individual project pages for each one and submit them individually. We do not offer reduced rates for multiple submissions. If you submit more than one project, you must pay the submission fee that corresponds to the selected deadline window for each of them.

20) May I submit multiple versions of the same project to different submission categories?

The short answer is yes— if you believe your project is suited for multiple categories of submission, you may submit it to more than one, but only if you will be submitting **significantly different** versions of the same project to each individual category. For example, if you have a documentary project with a feature-length cut and another version that was edited into a multi-episode documentary format, you may submit it to both Documentary Feature (U.S. or International) and Episodic Content submission categories, but you will need to create two distinct project pages for it on your FilmFreeway account.

However, you should refrain from submitting an identical or slightly-modified version of one project to multiple categories. An example of this would be a short film that you believe could also work as an episodic pilot in its current form (or vice-versa). In cases such as this, we would encourage you to choose the submission category that best suits the project instead of submitting to both. As a programming team, we communicate with one another about projects we love. If a shorts programmer sees a film and feels like it could work as a pilot for the Indie Episodic program, they will ensure that the episodic programmers consider it as well.

21) What if my contact information or anything else about my submission changes?

You may log into your account at www.filmfreeway.com at any time to update or revise the information included on your project page. You may also upload a new version of your film or change your video link by navigating to the “Project File” tab. We will use the contact information from the “Submitter Information” section of your project page to contact you regarding the status of your submission, including whether or not you were accepted into the Festival. **Please ensure that this information is always kept up-to-date!** Sundance Institute will not be held responsible for incorrect or outdated contact information included on with your submission. We recommend that you add the sundance.org domain to the “safe senders” list within your email client.

22) When will I find out whether or not my project was selected?

We will contact all officially-submitted projects via e-mail no later than the first week of December. We take the notification process very seriously— with over 14,000 notification emails going out in a very short period of time, it is not uncommon for there to be hundreds of them caught in spam folders or bounced back to us. If you don't hear from us, please know that we have made every effort to contact each individual applicant no later than December 6th. If you have not heard from us by then, please contact us at programming@sundance.org for an official notification.

23) If my project is selected for the Festival, what exhibition formats do you accept?

We accept DCP and 35mm film prints for exhibition at the Festival. Feature films delivered on DCP must include two copies on CRU drives and a non-DCP backup. All DCPs must be DCI compliant with drives formatted with EXT 2 or 3 file systems (single partition, master boot record). All encrypted DCPs must supply DKDM keys that remain open for the duration of the festival. Blu-ray or ProRes file backup copies must be provided for all theatrically exhibited projects. For 35mm film prints, we screen 24fps in aspect ratios of 1.37, 1.66, 1.85, or 2.39, and we accept sound formats of mono, Dolby SR and Dolby SRD (Dolby Digital). If your Virtual Reality Project is accepted, it will be exhibited on the platform it was created for, subject to availability. If your Virtual Reality Project is available for multiple platforms, we reserve the right to choose the platform best suited for exhibition. Please note that these specifications are subject to change at any time.

24) What kind of projects are you looking for? What stands out?

We celebrate the independent spirit of interesting, diverse, and original storytelling. Projects that push the limits of style and narrative excite us, but there is no single aesthetic or genre that we look for over any other. You should create the project that you want to create, not one that you believe will be a good fit for Sundance or anyone else.

25) You don't actually watch all of these submissions, right?

We depend on new talent to uphold our mission as a Festival of discovery. If we didn't view all of the projects submitted to us, we would absolutely miss out on many fresh and exciting new offerings from the independent creative community. To that end, it is in our best interest to treat all officially-submitted projects in an equal manner. If your account is paid in full, your project's status is listed as “In Consideration” by the selected deadline date, and there aren't any technical issues with your digital upload or link, your project will be treated in the same manner as all other projects submitted to us for Festival consideration.

26) If you watch all of the submissions, why doesn't my Vimeo link have any views?

As stated above, we **absolutely** view every project submitted to us with an account in good standing, but accurate statistics are not

always recorded using Vimeo's methods of tracking loads and views. Vimeo videos viewed via a third-party player do not always record statistics in the same way that videos viewed via their direct link in a web browser are counted. FilmFreeway utilizes a third-party that enables us to screen submissions from within their platform. If we view your project using the Vimeo app on another streaming device (such as Apple TV or Roku), it is also being viewed via a third-party player. The vast majority of the films submitted to us are viewed in this manner, and therefore the statistics are not counted in the same way that they would be watched via a direct link. This is outlined directly in Vimeo's own online documentation [here](#), the text of which is included below:

What stats does Vimeo record if my video is displayed using a third-party player?

Unfortunately, there isn't very much data we can gather from views that don't occur within the Vimeo player. For PRO, Business, Premium users using third-party player links, we can only approximate the number of times the file is being played. Multiple impressions / plays by the same viewer in the same browser session will not be counted (like they are when our own player is used). We also cannot count finishes or any engagement / duration stats for these plays. In many cases, we will still be able to detect the website where the view is happening, the location of the view, and the device, however, this is less reliable than it would be with our own player.

27) If my film is not chosen, can you give me notes or feedback?

Unfortunately, no. While we would love to speak with each individual filmmaker about their films, it simply isn't viable for us to correspond with up to 15,000 applicants each year. We view far more worthy projects than we are able to include in the Festival, so please don't be discouraged if yours is not accepted.

28) Do you offer fee waivers?

In the interest of keeping our submissions process as thorough and unbiased as possible, we do not offer fee waivers to potential applicants. While we would love to eliminate submission fees altogether, the process of viewing the volume of submissions that we receive in a fair and thorough manner is very costly, and it is not fair to our applicants to offer fee waivers to some but not to others. We strive to keep our fees as reasonable as possible, and encourage all applicants to take advantage of our early and official deadlines to save on submission fees. **Please do not contact us requesting waivers or reduced submission fees.** All projects are required to pay the fee for the current deadline window at the time their project is submitted.

29) Where does my submission fee go?

Sundance Institute is a non-profit organization that provides a wide variety of programs and initiatives for film and theatre writers, directors, actors, producers, and composers, as well as other artists. Fees from Festival submissions help fund our Institute programs and enable us to keep the submissions process thorough and democratic. We strive to process every submission promptly and view all submitted projects with an attentive and unbiased eye. For more information about Sundance Institute's other programs, please visit us at www.sundance.org.