

# British Independent Film Awards Rules and Guidelines 2017



## Timeline – all categories except shorts

May / June	Entries open
16 June	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)
1 September	Entry deadline
15 September	Screeener/screening deadline
21 Sept to 4 Oct	Round 1 voting (Entries > Long List)
12 October	Long Lists announced in newcomer categories
18 to 25 Oct	Round 2 voting (Long List > Nominations)
1 November	Nominations announced
15 to 29 Nov	Best British Independent Film voting
10 December	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 all categories (apart from the honorary awards and Best British Independent Film) 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 winner of the Best British Independent Film award is 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: British features

Films must be intended for theatrical release, over 70 minutes in length

**and**

Have a public screening to a paying audience either on general release in the UK between 1 December 2016 and 30 November 2017

**or**

Screen at a British-based film festival or in one of BIFA's list of recognised international festivals between 1 December 2016 and 30 November 2017 (see appendix 1)

Films which have a qualifying festival screening but which are scheduled for theatrical release (i.e. have confirmed distribution) after 16 February 2017 may choose whether to enter in the current year or to wait until next year. Please contact BIFA to discuss this.

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 **or** have won an award during the eligibility period.

Please see appendix 3 for the list of recognised festivals.

To be eligible, short films must have been completed on or after 1 May 2016.

### Release requirements: international features

Films must have a theatrical release in the UK between 1 December 2016 and 30 November 2017. Films released from 1 December 2016 onwards may also be entered if the films have won an award at one of BIFA's recognised festivals and are available for voters to see (see appendix 2 for the list of festivals).

Films that have played in competition at one of the above festivals but which have not won an award may be entered at the invitation of BIFA's Nomination Committee. Such invitations are entirely at the discretion of the Nomination Committee.

### **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 8 September.

Entrants must provide BIFA with DVD or online screeners, or access to screenings of their entered film(s), by 15 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.

### 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. The Nomination Committee will determine whether three or five nominations will be presented.

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 should submit a 500 word 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.

Entrants should please highlight eligible performers when entering their film.

### Best Cinematography

Awarded to the Director of Photography.

### Best Editing

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

### Best Casting

Awarded to the Casting Director.

### Best Production Design

Awarded to the Production Designer.

### Best Make-Up & Hair Design

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

### Best Costume Design

Awarded to the Costume Designer.

### Best Sound

This category is for all stages of film sound production, from design to capture, mixing and post-production. Sound Designers and Supervising Sound Editors may be listed as nominees.

### Best Music

Awarded to the Composer or Music Supervisor.

### Best Effects

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

Entrants wishing to submit an entry for a discipline not listed above should please contact us at [hello@bifa.film](mailto:hello@bifa.film)

### 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 submit a 500 word supporting statement highlighting which aspects of the film should be considered for this award and why.

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  
New York  
San Sebastian  
Sundance  
SxSW  
Telluride  
Tribeca  
Toronto  
Venice

### Appendix 3: Qualifying festivals – short films

Aesthetica Short Film Festival	Nov	<a href="http://www.asff.co.uk">www.asff.co.uk</a>
AFI Docs Film Festival	June	<a href="http://www.afi.com/afidocs">www.afi.com/afidocs</a>
AFI Fest	Nov	<a href="http://www.afi.com/afifest">www.afi.com/afifest</a>
Amsterdam Int'l Documentary Film Fest	Nov-Dec	<a href="http://www.idfa.nl">www.idfa.nl</a>
Aspen Shortsfest	April	<a href="http://www.aspenfilm.org">www.aspenfilm.org</a>
BAFTA – Film nominated	Feb	<a href="http://www.bafta.org">www.bafta.org</a>
BAFTA Cymru – Film nominated	Oct	<a href="http://www.bafta.org/wales">www.bafta.org/wales</a>
BAFTA Scotland – Film nominated	Nov	<a href="http://www.bafta.org/scotland">www.bafta.org/scotland</a>
Berlin International Film Festival	Feb	<a href="http://www.berlinale.de">www.berlinale.de</a>
Bilbao	Nov	<a href="http://www.zinebi.com">www.zinebi.com</a>
Brest European Short Film Festival	Nov	<a href="http://www.filmcourt.fr">www.filmcourt.fr</a>
Cambridge Film Festival	Sept	<a href="http://www.cambridgefilmfestival.org.uk">www.cambridgefilmfestival.org.uk</a>
Cannes International Film Festival	May	<a href="http://www.festival-cannes.org">www.festival-cannes.org</a>
Chicago International Film Festival	Oct	<a href="http://www.chicagofilmfestival.com">www.chicagofilmfestival.com</a>
Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film	Feb	<a href="http://www.clermont-filmfest.com">www.clermont-filmfest.com</a>
Cork International Film Festival	Nov	<a href="http://www.corkfilmfest.org">www.corkfilmfest.org</a>
Edinburgh International Film Festival	June	<a href="http://www.edfilmfest.org.uk">www.edfilmfest.org.uk</a>
Encounters International Short Film Festival	Sept	<a href="http://www.encounters-festival.org.uk">www.encounters-festival.org.uk</a>
Flanders International Film Festival	Oct	<a href="http://www.filmfestival.be">www.filmfestival.be</a>
Foyle Film Festival	Nov	<a href="http://www.foylefilmfestival.org">www.foylefilmfestival.org</a>

Gothenburg International Film Festival	Feb	<a href="http://www.giff.se">www.giff.se</a>
Hamburg International Short Film	June	<a href="http://festival.shortfilm.com">http://festival.shortfilm.com</a>
Hot Docs	Apr-May	<a href="http://www.hotdocs.ca">www.hotdocs.ca</a>
Leeds International Film Festival	Nov	<a href="http://www.leedsfilm.com">www.leedsfilm.com</a>
Locarno Film Festival	Aug	<a href="http://www.pardo.ch">www.pardo.ch</a>
BFI London Film Festival	Oct	<a href="http://www.lff.org.uk">www.lff.org.uk</a>
London Int'l Documentary Festival	Nov & Jun	<a href="http://www.lidf.co.uk">www.lidf.co.uk</a>
London Short Film Festival	Jan	<a href="http://shortfilms.co.uk">http://shortfilms.co.uk</a>
Los Angeles Int'l Short Film Festival	Sept	<a href="http://www.lashortsfest.com">www.lashortsfest.com</a>
Melbourne International Film Festival	July-Aug	<a href="http://www.melbournefilmfestival.com.au">www.melbournefilmfestival.com.au</a>
New York International Film Festival	Sept-Oct	<a href="http://www.filmlinc.org/nyff2015/">www.filmlinc.org/nyff2015/</a>
Norwich Film Festival	Nov	<a href="http://www.norwichfilmfestival.co.uk/">http://www.norwichfilmfestival.co.uk/</a>
Oberhausen Int'l Short Film Festival	May	<a href="http://www.kurzfilmtage.de">www.kurzfilmtage.de</a>
Palm Springs International ShortFest	June	<a href="http://www.psfilmfest.org">www.psfilmfest.org</a>
Raindance Film Festival	Sep-Oct	<a href="http://www.raindance.co.uk">www.raindance.co.uk</a>
Rotterdam International Film Festival	Feb	<a href="http://www.filmfestivalrotterdam.com">www.filmfestivalrotterdam.com</a>
Sheffield Doc/Fest	June	<a href="http://www.sheffdocfest.com">www.sheffdocfest.com</a>
Slamdance	Jan	<a href="http://www.slamdance.com">www.slamdance.com</a>
Stockholm International Film Festival	Nov	<a href="http://www.stockholmfilmfestival.se">www.stockholmfilmfestival.se</a>
Sundance Film Festival	Jan	<a href="http://www.sundance.org/festival">www.sundance.org/festival</a>
SXSW Short Film Program	March	<a href="http://sxsw.com/film/film_awards">http://sxsw.com/film/film_awards</a>
Tampere International Short Film	March	<a href="http://www.tamperefilmfestival.fi">www.tamperefilmfestival.fi</a>
Telluride	Sept	<a href="http://www.telluridefilmfestival.org">www.telluridefilmfestival.org</a>
Toronto International Film Festival	Sept	<a href="http://www.tiff.net">www.tiff.net</a>
Tribeca Film Festival	Apr	<a href="http://www.tribecafilm.com/festival">www.tribecafilm.com/festival</a>
Uppsala Int'l Short Film Festival	Oct	<a href="http://www.shortfilmfestival.com">www.shortfilmfestival.com</a>
Venice Film Festival	Sept	<a href="http://www.labiennale.org/en/cinema">www.labiennale.org/en/cinema</a>