FAQ – film submissions

When can be submitted? When is the best time to submit?

The Call for Entry for the 39th FILMFEST DRESDEN 2027 is open from September 1 to December 1, 2026. Later submissions cannot be considered. At the deadline we usually receive the most submissions. To ensure the greatest possible fairness, we want to avoid having to watch a large number of films within a short period of time. Therefore, we ask that you submit your film as early as possible. Also, to avoid overloading the submission platform, especially in the last weeks before the deadline, we recommend finalizing the submission in September and October.

How does the film submission work?

Film submission is done via SHORTFILMDEPOT. The following steps are necessary:
1. log in: If you do not have a personal account on SHORTFILMDEPOT yet, please register and carefully fill out the form (Film Card). Upload the film and test playback.
2. submit: Search FILMFEST DRESDEN in Shortfilmdepot and - according to the desired submission category - submit the film.

Are there any content requirements for the submission?

In general, there are no content or thematic requirements for the competition. Due to the awarding of the LUCA GenderDiversity Film Award and the Short Film Award "Fully Political", we are happy to receive submissions that deal with topics of gender diversity and equality as well as other socially relevant and political topics.

What does the submission cost?

The following fees apply per submission: International Competition (IW) €10 / National Competition (NW), documentary and experimental films €8, plus the service fee charged by Shortfilmdepot. In addition, there are stamps, the proceeds of which will be used by Shortfilmdepot to run the platform. One stamps is required per submission, stamps are available separately as well as in sets of 5, 20 or 50 and must be purchased **in addition to the submission fee.**

What payment options do I have?

You can pay the submission fee and stamps by credit card, bank transfer, Apple Pay, Google Pay or PayPal. If there are restrictions on these payment methods in your country, please contact us. (entry@filmfest-dresden.de).

In which categories can I submit? What are the requirements for the categories?

There are 4 categories in which a film can be submitted: a film can be submitted for the National Competition or International Competition. Pure documentary or experimental films must be submitted in the Documentary or Experimental Film category.

Only films completed after December 31, 2024 may be submitted.

International Competition

- Short fiction or animated films (incl. hybrid forms such as AnimaDoc, experimental or documentary fiction)

- all production countries except Germany, German co-productions are accepted
- Length: 30 minutes maximum (including credits)

National Competition

- Short fiction or animated films (incl. hybrid forms such as AnimaDoc, experimental or documentary fiction)
- country of production Germany, German co-productions are accepted
- Length: 30 minutes maximum including credits (exceptions if suitable for the Central German Competition)

Experimental film:

- pure experimental films, please note the definition of the festival (see below)
- Attention: please submit hybrid forms for the International or National Competition!
- maximum length: 30 min incl. credits

Documentary Film:

- pure documentary films
- Attention: please submit hybrid forms for the International or National Competition!
- maximum length: 30 min incl. credits

Which definition of experimental film is used at FILMFEST DRESDEN?

Experimental films are free and non-narrative artistic forms and expressions of the moving image. They often experiment with the form itself. In contrast to narratively structured films such as documentary and fictional films, in which the cinematic apparatus is to be made "invisible," experimental filmmakers often expose the cinematic apparatus. Experimental films combine film theory and film practice in inventive ways and often show proximity to the visual arts. Montage art films, such as found footage films, are one of the most popular forms of experimental film. If you are unsure, for example due to the hybridity of your film, in which category to submit, then the International or National Competition should be preferred.

My film is a co-production with production country Germany - should I submit for the International or National Competition?

Since all co-productions with Germany are seen by both the International and National Competition selection committee, it is irrelevant for the viewing process in which competition category the submission is made. In general, the decisive factor is where the main part of the production funding comes from (if available). If the film is a school production, the country of the film school counts.

Which films can be submitted for the Central German Competition and how can I submit?

Submissions for the National Competition are simultaneously in the selection process for the Central German Competition, if the formal requirements are met. Animation, short fiction, experimental and documentary films with a connection to the federal states of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and/or Thuringia with a maximum running length (including credits) of 40 minutes are eligible for the Central German Competition.

A connection to the mentioned federal states exists if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Director/producer lives and works in Central Germany
- Director was born in Central Germany
- Production is located in Central Germany (seat of production and/or funding from the region)

Note: The submission platform Shortfilmdepot allows films up to 30 minutes. If your film is longer (max. 40 min), adjust the information to 30 min when submitting your film. If you have problems with the submission because of the length, please contact us.

How can I submit for the Kids and Youth section?

The film must first be submitted for the International Competition, National Competition, as a documentary or experimental film. If the question about the film's target audience is answered with an age range (5-8 years, 8-10 years, 10-13 years, 13-16 years, 16-18 years), the film will automatically be considered for the Kids and Youth program. Please indicate suitability for children and youth only if the film has been produced specifically for this target group. For example, a film with a young leading actress does not automatically count as a suitable film for a young audience (e.g. in the case the film is told from the point of view of parents, the film contains explicit scenes that are unsuitable for the target group or the overall theme of the film is not suitable for the target group).

For which programs will my film be screened?

There are several factors that determine eligibility for each festival program. These factors are primarily derived from the information you provide when submitting your film. First of all, the competition films (International / National) are selected. The information about the production in connection with Saxony, Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt is decisive for the selection of the Central German Competition.

Your film also has the chance to be included in the Open Air Program, in the Kids and Youth Program or in theme-specific Special Programs. The indication of suitability for young people is decisive for the selection of the Kids and Youth Program. Pure documentary and experimental films are mainly assigned for the Official Selection of the Open Air Program and the program Experiments.

Should I submit my film in different categories if it is suitable for more than one?

No, you do not have to submit your film twice, your film will be assigned by the festival to the different curators and commissions for the respective programs and sections. If you are unsure, for example due to the hybridity of your film, in which category to submit, then the International or National Competition should be preferred.

Can I submit more than one film?

Yes, multiple films may be submitted.

Are repeated submissions accepted?

If the film has already been submitted for FILMFEST DRESDEN, it may not be submitted again.

At Shortfilmdepot the following status is displayed: Submission not accepted. What is the reason for this?

This can be due to several reasons, please check if your film

- has already been submitted to FILMFEST DRESDEN in previous years
- has already been submitted by someone else
- has already been submitted in another category

If this is not the case, please contact us (entry@filmfest-dresden.de).

Can I send a link for the selection screening?

No, the submission works exclusively via Shortfilmdepot.

In which format should the screening file be submitted?

Please upload a digital file with burned-in English subtitles (unless English is the original language), a DCP will only be requested after the film has been selected.

Are films accepted which are not finished yet?

Submission of a work-in-progress file by the deadline is allowed, as long as Picture Lock is completed. The submission must be marked as "work-in-progress" and any outstanding changes (sound, effects, etc) must be identified (for example, in the opening credits or synopsis). If you upload the finished version of your film at a later date, please let us know by email so that the selection committee can watch the current version.

Does my film submission need subtitles?

Yes! Please ensure that all submissions have English subtitles unless English is the original language. This also applies to German language productions. Please upload a subtitle file in English and if available in German (format: SRT, STL or XML / with timecodes) already with the submission. For English language films we appreciate the upload of a dialogue list or subtitle file. We also please to submit a film file with burned-in English subtitles.

What does "country of origin"/ "country of production" mean?

Country of production means the country of the production company and/or the country from which funding was obtained for the film.

Does my film need a premiere status?

FILMFEST DRESDEN is not a premiere festival, therefore a film premiere is not necessary.

What does production year mean?

The production year is the year in which the film was completed (not the year in which it was shot). It should be the year in which the film was first screened or will be screened to the public, i.e. the year of the world premiere.

I would like to correct information about my submitted film. How can I do that?

You can always adjust your Film Card on Shortfilmdepot. If the film has been re-uploaded, please send a short note to entry@filmfest-dresden.de so that the selection committee can review the latest version of the film. In general, the Picture Lock must be completed for a submitted film.

Do I get a confirmation about the submission of my film?

Yes, there will be a confirmation e-mail from Shortfilmdepot when the submission is successful and has reached us. This e-mail may also arrive in your spam folder.

When and how will I know if my film is selected?

The films selected for the competition will be finalised in February 2027, following which an initial notification regarding selection for the competition will be sent out at the end of January. Submitters will be notified by email of the selection of films for the entire festival (including special programmes) by mid-March 2027 at the latest. As the messages are sent via shortfilmdepot, please check your spam folder.

Is there a screening fee?

Competition films do not receive a screening fee, for films in the special program a screening fee will be payed.

What screening format does my film need if it is selected?

Only films in 35mm and DCP are accepted as screening formats for the festival presentation. If selected, we will send you a Technical Rider with detailled information about technical requirements and shipping options.

Contact

If you have any problems or further questions, please contact us by phone at 0351.82947.24 or by e-mail at entry(at)filmfest-dresden.de.