

## Film Specifications Guide

What we're looking for:

Think big! We'll be showing 12 shortlisted films on the silver screen. So think about what will work well on the big screen. Be cinematic. Think about the story. What makes a great short film? Find your own voice. Try something new.

Add plenty of polish. We're looking for raw talent and brilliant ideas, but that shouldn't stop you making sure that all the elements in your film are as good as they can be. Understand the importance of good sound, camera work, acting and editing. All of these things work together to help create the world you're trying to portray. Try to have a critical eye on your own work – cutting things that don't hit the mark technically or just aren't needed to tell the story.

### Duration

Up to 2 minutes 20 seconds (140 seconds), including top and end credits.

### Language

Your film must be in English or subtitled in English.

### Re-entries

If you entered your film into Virgin Media Shorts last year, but weren't shortlisted in the final 12 films, you can re-enter it this year if you like. If your film was shortlisted last year but didn't win, you won't be able to enter the same film again, but we'll be more than happy to receive any of your other films.

### Format for film

This section lets you know which format we need you to supply your film in and the regulations around what kind of content is acceptable for the types of places we plan to show it.

The format we need is different for each stage.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Stage

Submit your film online

Simply upload your film online at [www.virginmediashorts.co.uk](http://www.virginmediashorts.co.uk)

The following format will be accepted:

AVI

MOV

MPEG (2 & 4)

The following file extensions will be accepted:

.avi

.mov

.mpeg

.mp4

The following video codes will be accepted:

H.264

H.263

MPEG (2 & 4)

Motion JPEG

Other things to know:

The frame rate should be above 21 frames per second

The bitrate should be above 512 Kbps

File size should be no larger than 100MB

The preferred aspect ratio is 16:9 but we can accept 4:3

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage

Submit your film by post

If you're lucky enough to be longlisted after the first stage, we'll ask you to provide your work in its highest quality as a master copy by post. You can send us your film on tape or digitally. Check which formats are acceptable below.

Acceptable tape formats

(not relevant for shorts filmed on mobiles)

The following tape formats can be accepted. They are listed in quality order, from lowest to highest. MiniDV is not usually of high enough quality to transfer to 35mm. Therefore we'll only accept this format in very special circumstances – where we really love your film and it works cinematically on the big screen.

Tape format	Quality level
MiniDV	Low
DigiBeta, DVCam, DVCPPro	Medium
D1, D2, D3, D4	High
HDCAM SR, HD-D5, HDCAM, HDV	Highest

Acceptable digital formats

All digital formats should have I-Frames and be of a high quality resolution of 25Mbps/second or above. The following standards can be accepted. These could be accepted on DVD.

File format	Quality level	File size per minute
DV25	Medium	200MB per minute
50i, DV50	High	400MB per minute
Uncompressed Quicktime	High	1.5GB per minute

### Film format specifications

The content will need to be as follows. The preference is to receive in the film format rather than the PAL format, but either can be received. The content cannot be received in NTSC format (the US format at 29.97 FPS)

	Film	PAL 625
Aspect ratio	1:185	16:9 (optionally 4:3)
Frame rate	24 FPS	25 FPS

### Audio format specification

Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound, stereo or mono.

### Content ([this is third section](#))

We think that your films deserve to be seen by everyone, so we ask that your film is U/PG rated, according to BBFC guidelines. You can see these at [bbfc.co.uk](http://bbfc.co.uk) Just click on the U or PG symbol. **The BBFC and CAA decision is final and no appeal will be taken into account.**

Your film must also comply with both of these:

#### Ofcom's Broadcasting Code

It's available online at [www.ofcom.org.uk/tv/ifi/codes/bcode](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv/ifi/codes/bcode)

In particular, your film must be suitable for transmission before 9pm

#### The CAP (non-broadcast) Code

We've included a snapshot of the guidelines below to give you an idea of what they might mean. But the best thing to do is check out the full guide at the sites above.

Use of illegal drugs, smoking, solvent abuse and misuse of alcohol must not be glamorised, encouraged or condoned and are not allowed in programmes directed at children unless editorially (morally) justified.

Violence – after effects and descriptions (verbal or physical) of violence must be appropriately limited for PG. There must be no violence or dangerous behaviour easily imitable by children unless very strong editorial justification.

Crime – nothing to encourage or incite the commission of crime or lead to disorder (includes descriptions of criminal techniques, or inclusion of anything which could prejudice an on-going case.)

Offensive language – no offensive language in PG material.

Sex – representations of sexual intercourse must not occur in PG material, unless for a serious educational purpose. A discussion or portrayal of sexual behaviour must be editorially justified and must be appropriately limited and inexplicit.

Nudity must be justified by context and must not be of a sexual nature for PG.

Exorcisms, occult practices and the paranormal as a serious investigation cannot be PG. Can feature if used for entertainment purposes e.g story of a ghost as opposed to a medium using or demonstrating occult practices.

Emulation – material must not be included which (taking into account the context) condones or glamorises violent, dangerous or seriously anti social behaviour and is likely to encourage others to copy such behaviour.

Offence – care must be taken to provide moral context for the following: offensive language, violence, sex, sexual violence, humiliation, distress, violation of human dignity, discriminatory treatment or language (eg on grounds of age, disability, race, gender, religion, beliefs and sexual orientation).

Methods of suicide or self harm should not be included unless where editorially justified.

Hypnotism – demonstrations should not be shown in full so as not to have adverse reaction on viewer.

Commercial references – should not contain advertising of a product nor appear to promote a particular brand or product through editorial.

Undue prominence – no prominence should be given to any specific company or brand so as to make it stand out from any others.

No strobing or fast flashing sequences, or subliminal images within the programme.