

Level: Advanced

9 September 2020

Oscars set minimum diversity rules for best picture prize

by 24matins.uk with AFP



Hollywood's motion picture academy unveiled strict new **eligibility** rules to boost diversity among best picture Oscars nominees and the wider movie industry in a landmark announcement Tuesday.

From 2024, all films hoping to win Tinseltown's most **coveted** prize will need to either employ a minimum number of cast, crew and administrative employees from under-represented backgrounds, or directly tackle themes affecting those communities.

The groundbreaking move comes after years of criticism over a lack of diversity among the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' members, and among the Oscar nominees and winners they select.

While the Academy has already taken steps to diversify its membership, Tuesday's new rules mark a more aggressive bid to re-shape Hollywood's broader performance on diversity.

"We believe these inclusion standards will be a catalyst for long-lasting, essential change in our industry," said President David Rubin and CEO Dawn Hudson in a statement.

Under the new rules, films **vying** for best picture will need to comply with at least two of four criteria designed to improve hiring practices and representation on and off screen.

The first criteria requires the movie to feature either a prominent actor from an underrepresented group, 30 percent of its smaller roles from minorities, or to address issues surrounding these communities as its main theme.

The second stipulates that behind-the-scenes senior leadership or technical crew members must be drawn from historically disadvantaged groups, which also include women, LGBT and disabled communities.

The final two measures concern offering internships and training to underrepresented workers, and diversity in the movie's marketing and distribution teams.

Push for diversity

Since 2015 and the #OscarsSoWhite social media campaign, the Academy has made concerted efforts to broaden its membership.

The board of governors vowed to double the number of women and non-white members by 2020, following calls to boycott the glitzy Oscars.

The Academy **surpassed** those membership goals, with 45 percent of this year's intake women, and 36 percent minorities.

The latest move is the product of a new diversity task force announced in June — weeks after mass anti-racism protests swept the United States following the killing of George Floyd in police custody in Minneapolis.

The standards are based on those already employed by Britain's BAFTA, and "are designed to encourage equitable representation on and off screen in order to better reflect the diversity of the movie-going audience," said the statement.



Films contending for the best picture Oscar in 2022 and 2023 will not be bound by the rules, but will need to submit to the Academy confidential data on the movies' diversity based on the new criteria.

The Academy also recently began hosting a series of panel discussions on racist **tropes** and harmful stereotypes in Hollywood films.

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Check your vocab!

Match the words and phrases (1-5) with their definitions (A-E).

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|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. eligibility (noun) | A. to compete eagerly with someone in order to do or achieve something |
| 2. coveted (adjective) | B. greatly desired or envied |
| 3. to vie (verb) | C. a significant or recurrent theme, a motif |
| 4. to surpass (verb) | D. the fact of being allowed to do or receive something because you satisfy certain conditions |
| 5. trope (noun) | E. to do or be better than |

Check your understanding!

Are the statements below true (T) or false (F) according to the article?

1. After years of criticism over a lack of diversity, next year's Oscars will follow new eligibility criteria to tackle this issue. T / F
2. Introducing the new criteria constitutes the most decisive move the Academy has made towards encouraging diversity. T / F
3. The Academy has defined four criteria which movies will have to meet to contend for an Oscar. T / F
4. One of the criteria may affect people wanting to pursue a career in the film industry. T / F
5. The change was occasioned by recent events in the US. T / F

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