



Research in Film Awards 2020 application guidance

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Document history

Version	Date	Changes
1.1	4 May 2020	Clarity to eligibility rules, update to COP26 information
1.0	24 April 2020	First published

2. Introduction

We're the Arts and Humanities Research Council. We're the biggest funder of arts and humanities research in the UK.

The Research in Film Awards is our annual competition to celebrate and reward the best short films produced as part of, or inspired by, arts and humanities research. We want to encourage researchers to use film, and for filmmakers to take an interest in arts and humanities research. We're hoping this will mean better arts and humanities research, and that it'll help make arts and humanities research more accessible to the public.

This is the sixth annual Research in Film Awards. In the past five competitions, we've seen documentaries, visual essays, experimental films, broadcast programmes, and many more. These films were made as outputs, as by-products, as records of research, as practice-based research (where making the film was the research), as collaborations, and others. There's been reconstructions and enactments, animations, installations and gallery pieces, games, and interactive storytelling. We see new formats and new ideas every year.

There are five categories, which cover lots of different kinds of films. Two of the categories are open to anyone. The only real restriction on format is length, as all entries have to be less than 30 minutes long.

We change one category every year to take in a current area of interest. This year, our special category is for films that link arts and humanities research with the climate emergency. We also have a special public category that's open for nominations, where members of the public can enter or nominate a short film which has been inspired by the arts and humanities.

We give winners a trophy and a £5,000 prize for future filmmaking. If you're shortlisted, you'll be invited to our awards ceremony at BFI Southbank on Wednesday 11 November 2020.

We look forward to hearing about your research film.

3. Award categories

The Research in Film Awards 2020 have five categories:

- Best Research Film of the Year
- Best Doctoral or Early Career Film of the Year
- Best Climate Emergency Film (public category)
- Best Animated Film of the Year
- Inspiration Award (public category).

You can enter a film in more than one category, provided you meet the eligibility criteria for each category. However, you must complete a [separate Smart Survey form](#) for each category entered.

3.1 Best Research Film of the Year

This category is for all films produced as outputs or by-products of arts and humanities research in the UK and is open to all those employed by AHRC-recognised Research Organisations in the UK (see section 5, Eligibility) at the time the film was completed, launched or made publicly available.

Your film must have been completed or made available during the last year since 1 April 2019. Films entered for this category do not have to be produced as a result of AHRC funding.

The judges will be looking for films that:

- Bring new research to wider attention
- Showcase excellent practice in the dissemination of research findings
- Highlight the value and importance of research in the arts and humanities
- Illustrate the value and importance of subjects or questions within the arts and humanities.

3.2 Best Doctoral or Early Career Film of the Year

This category is for all films produced as outputs or by-products of arts and humanities research by doctoral students and early career researchers funded by the AHRC (see Eligibility section for details).

You don't need to be registered as a doctoral student or as part of our Early Career Researchers scheme at the point of submission or on the release date of the film, but the primary research for the film must have been conducted while the applicant was still registered.

Your film must have been completed or made available during the last year since 1 April 2019.

The judges will be looking for films that:

- Portray or represent excellent research
- Have brought new research to wider attention
- Showcase excellent practice in the dissemination of research findings
- Bring arts and humanities research to new audiences
- Highlight the value and importance of research in the arts and humanities
- Highlight the value and importance of subjects or questions within the arts and humanities.

3.3 Best Climate Emergency Film (public category)

This category is our 'special' category, which changes every year. In previous years we have celebrated films around topics such as migration and mental health and wellbeing; in 2020 we will recognise films that relate to climate change. The RIFA 2020 awards ceremony was scheduled to take place during the gathering of the 2020 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November (also known as 'COP26'); though the conference has been postponed due to the current novel coronavirus pandemic, COP26 remains relevant to RIFA and underlines the issues and international focus on the UK in the response to climate change.

The arts and humanities have shown they are vital for giving us the tools, as individuals and as society at large, to understand environmental change, to adapt and be resilient in the face of it, and to communicate the threats to our planet. Arts and humanities research can offer unique and essential perspectives and approaches to understanding weather, climate change, and natural history, each with important implications for the way we engage people in caring for and protecting their environment.

The Best Climate Emergency Film award is open to films that explore the links between the arts and humanities and the ongoing climate emergency. Films entered in this category might:

- Contribute to our cultural understanding of the natural world
- Raise awareness of environmental issues through film
- Help protect our natural heritage by understanding what cherished spaces mean to us, and why we value them
- Reveal how people have adapted during previous periods of climate change and offer lessons for the ways we could live in the future.

(this is by no means an exhaustive list).

This category is open to the public and recognises films produced in the UK which have been inspired by the arts and humanities. Entrants can be individuals, community groups, teams or collaborative groups who have been stimulated by arts and humanities research.

Your film must have been completed or made available during the last five years (since 1 April 2015).

Judges are looking for films which:

- Are imaginative and showcase the stories and impact of climate change through the lens of the arts and humanities
- Are effective in translating stories and voices across disciplines.

3.4 Best Animated Film of the Year

Arts and humanities research touches everywhere, from the mundane everyday life of individuals to the mass movement of millions; from our shared histories to our most complex inner selves. With this vast tapestry of human experience to illustrate, it is no surprise that animation often has the greatest potential to bring arts and humanities research to life.

This new category for 2020 recognises films that have creatively used animation to tell stories or explore ideas in arts and humanities research.

We define 'animation' as the output of any technique in which the illusion of a moving image has been created, as contrasted with a live-action recording. This could include traditional animation, stop motion animation, computer animation, mechanical animation, or other experimental disciplines. Photorealistic animation or live-action animated films (that combine animation with a live-action recording) will also be considered.

This category is for all videos produced as outputs or by-products of arts and humanities research in the UK and is open to all those employed by AHRC-recognised Research Organisations in the UK at the time the video was completed, launched or made publicly available (see section 5, Eligibility for more details). There must be a clear and demonstrable link to arts and humanities research.

Your film must have been completed or made available during the last year since 1 April 2019.

The judges will be looking for films that:

- Have creative, powerful storytelling
- Display technical ability
- Have the arts and humanities at their core
- Showcase research in the arts and humanities in an accessible way.

3.5 Inspiration Award (public category)

This category is open to the public and recognises films produced in the UK which have been inspired by the arts and humanities. This could be as a result of attending an arts festival, visiting a museum exhibition, or through books, plays or performances which have helped to fire the imagination. Entrants can be individuals, community groups, teams or collaborative groups who have been stimulated by the arts and humanities. All films submitted must have been completed or made available during the last year (since 1 April 2019).

The arts and humanities touch all areas of our lives and this award aims to recognise their value and importance to us all.

The judges will be looking for films that:

- Have been inspired by the arts and humanities and which have creative – either real or imagined – representations in film.
- Convey a sense of the importance of the arts and humanities to our lives.

We also accept nominations for films in this category.

These nominations should include a 300-word summary of how the film has been inspired by the arts and humanities, together with contact details to enable the AHRC to access the nominated film for judging purposes.

Please note: any nominations must be submitted with the knowledge and permission of the nominee(s).

4. How to apply

To enter the competition, you must [complete our online Smart Survey form](#) by 9am on Thursday 25 June 2020. If you want to enter more than one category, you will need to complete the form again, once for each category.

To complete the form, you will need to provide:

- Your name, the names of any collaborators, and details of your research organisation, if applicable
- A contact email address and telephone number
- A link to your film on the free online video service, Vimeo (with a password, if your video is password-protected)
- A 300-word summary explaining your film's links with arts and humanities research, written in plain English

- A 150-word summary of how you would use the prize money to fund future filmmaking.

Your film must be:

- No longer than 30 minutes, including titles and credits
- In English, or with English subtitles
- Uploaded to Vimeo and playable in a standard web browser
- Created, completed or made public since 1 April 2019, or by 1 April 2015 if you are entering your film in the Best Climate Emergency Film category
- Produced without direct input from the UKRI/AHRC Communications or Public Engagement teams.

Entries that don't meet these criteria, or that are submitted after the deadline, will be disqualified.

We define 'film' broadly as a series of moving images, but we do not specify the nature of the images.

If your film is shortlisted:

- Your film must be made viewable to the public; in exceptional cases it is acceptable that a short 60 second clip or trailer is created which can be made available on the AHRC website
- Your film will be screened at the RIFA ceremony on 11 November 2020, and in other locations around the UK during an AHRC film festival in late 2020
- An excerpt from your film must be made available on the AHRC website after the shortlist is available and on the AHRC's social media channels
- All winning films will be made publicly available on the AHRC website and on the AHRC's social media channels shortly after the awards ceremony, unless an exception has been agreed as above
- You must be available for media and communications opportunities, typically from September to December 2020
- The AHRC will issue a press release announcing the shortlist and winners and require all those who have been nominated to share this press release with their academic institution or any relevant organisations that have been involved with the film.

If your film cannot meet these requirements (for example, due to intellectual property restrictions), your entry will be disqualified. If you have concerns that your film might include intellectual property that cannot be shared, please [contact us](#) as early as possible.

We reserve the right to disqualify any entries that we deem offensive or otherwise unsuitable.

5. Eligibility

All categories

To enter a film into **any category** of the Research in Film Awards, you must be:

- a UK resident, and
- Over the age of 18, and
- Not employed directly by the AHRC or UK Research and Innovation.

You **can** apply if you have entered before, but **not** with the same film unless it is substantially different to what you entered before.

There are **no further restrictions on who may enter the two public categories**.

Categories other than the public categories

To enter a film into **any category other than the two public categories**, at the time your film was released you must have been working or studying at a UK research organisation that is eligible to receive funding from UK Research and Innovation. Your organisation is eligible if it is either:

- A UK higher education institution that receives grant funding from a UK funding body, such as Research England, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, the Scottish Funding Council or the Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland, or
- A [research institute](#) which UKRI has established a long-term involvement with as a major funder, or
- An independent research organisation (IRO) which has been [awarded IRO status by UKRI](#).

You **do not** need to have a permanent contract of employment to be eligible.

We recognise that films often involve collaboration with broadcasters, community groups, cultural bodies and so on, which may sometimes span multiple countries, and as such awards can be made to teams as well as individuals. However, to enter a category other than the public category there must be an identified research lead who meets the eligibility criteria above.

You can find out more about your organisation's eligibility in the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#).

Best Doctoral or Early Career Film of the Year category

To enter a film into the '**Best Doctoral or Early Career Film of the Year**' category, you must be either:

- A doctoral researcher engaged in PhD research through an AHRC funded position, and registered as an AHRC funded doctoral student at the time the primary research for the

film was completed, or

- Within eight years of the award of your PhD, excluding any period of career break such as parental leave, caring responsibilities or health reasons, or
- Within six years of your first academic appointment, excluding any period of career break such as parental leave, caring responsibilities or health reasons. This must be a paid contract of employment, either full-time or part-time, which lists research and/or teaching as the primary function, including research assistantships.

As with the other academic categories, you **do not** need to have a permanent contract of employment to be eligible, as long as you meet the conditions above.

6. Judging and assessment process

The films will be judged by a panel consisting of academics, media and film industry experts. The judges will view films on a single 16:9 screen.

Judges will primarily be interested in the quality of the films submitted as considered against the requirements outlined for each category, but the accompanying text (300 words) will provide vital information about the film's links with arts and humanities research and therefore careful consideration should be given to the writing of these submissions. Please avoid jargon and make your application succinct and easy to understand.

All entrants will be told the outcome of their submission by the end of August 2020.

Timeline

Activity	Date
Launch of call	Thursday 30 April 2020
Deadline for entries	Thursday 25 June 2020, 5pm
All entrants notified	End of August 2020
Awards ceremony in London	Wednesday 11 November 2020

7. Awards

Winners in each category will win £5,000 and a trophy. The cash awards should be invested in future filmmaking work and all entrants are required to state in their applications how this money will be used.

Awards ceremony

Awards in all five categories will be made and announced at an awards ceremony in London at BFI Southbank, Belvedere Road, South Bank, London SE1 8XT, on Wednesday 11 November 2020. All shortlisted entrants will be invited, along with the judges, industry dignitaries, and others.

8. Terms and conditions

We reserve the right to change one or more of the judges if necessary, at any stage of the competition. The judges' decisions are final. We won't enter into any correspondence regarding the judges' decision.

We reserve the right to alter or amend any of these rules or cancel the Research in Film Awards at any time, in our absolute discretion.

This document, and these terms, make up the rules of the Research in Film Awards scheme. By entering the Research in Film Awards, you accept these rules and guidance.

Your data

To enter the Research in Film Awards, you must supply full details as required, and comply with all rules of the scheme.

You agree with your personal data being shared with the judging panel and any relevant contractors for the purposes of this scheme. Your details will not be shared with any other parties for any other purpose.

9. Contact information

For enquiries about this competition, please [email the AHRC Public Engagement team](#) or telephone 01793 416060 (available Monday to Friday 08:30-16:30).