



Submission Information, Rules & Guidelines

2026 Entry

Please read the following guidelines carefully. Due to the volume of entries we receive, it is essential that films be submitted in the format specified below.

ALL FILMS MUST BE 25 MINUTES OR LESS, INCLUDING ANY TITLES/CREDITS.

REFUNDS MAY NOT BE OFFERED IF RULES ARE NOT ADHERED TO.

Festival Dates

Norwich Film Festival 2026 will take place in November 2026, with provisional dates set for 6th-15th November 2026. Please note that exact dates may be subject to change. The festival is planned to be in-person only.

Submission Deadlines

Submissions will be accepted from 12th Jan 2026. Best prices will be offered to those submitting before our Earlybird submission deadline of 22nd Feb 2026.

The very latest we will accept submissions is 23:59 on 28th June 2026 - this does come with a higher submission fee.

- **Earlybird (12th Jan – 22nd Feb)**
- **Regular (23rd Feb – 24th May)**
- **Late (25th May – 21st June)**
- **Extended (22nd June – 28th June)**

For the avoidance of doubt, films submitted during later deadlines are given the same consideration as films submitted during earlier deadlines. A film submitted at the start of the submission period has the same chance of being selected as a film submitted on the final day.

Submission Categories

Awards will be given to the best film in each of these categories:

- **British Film**
- **International Film**
- **Animated Film**

- **Student Film**
- **Documentary Film**
- **East Anglian Film**
- **East Anglian Student Film**

To be eligible for the Best East Anglian Film or Best East Anglian Student Film awards, the film must have been made predominantly in the region, or by filmmakers either living or studying in the area at the time of production. The region is defined as Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, and Essex.

Films submitted in the Student Film or East Anglian Student Film categories must be either directed, written or produced by a student at an educational organisation at the time of the film's completion. Films can have either been produced specifically as a student project, or independently whilst the filmmakers were students. **Student ID valid at the time of the film's completion must be provided to prove eligibility.**

No specific award is planned for the Micro Short Film category, though films submitted in the Micro Short Film category may be nominated in a relevant award category if deemed appropriate by the festival team. This will be at no extra cost to the submitter.

Films submitted in one award category may also be considered for other award categories if deemed appropriate by the festival team. For example, a Student film entry could also be considered for East Anglian Student Film or British Film if it meets the relevant criteria. This is at no extra charge to the submitter.

Submission Format

All submissions should be made online via FilmFreeway, using their secure online screening methods. Within this, you can choose to upload your film directly to FilmFreeway, or embed it from another site such as YouTube or Vimeo. Before submitting, please ensure that any links are correct and any required passwords are included. All films must be playable within a browser - please do not send file downloads. Any films not in the English language must feature English subtitles within the player.

Your film must be included and fully watchable at the time your submission is sent. If we cannot view your film, we cannot consider it for the festival. We do not base selection decisions on any other materials, such as trailers or synopses.

We do not accept postal or email submissions.

Refunds will not be offered if you fail to adhere to these rules.

What to include in your submission

At the time of your submission, we require the below to be included and available via your FilmFreeway submission before we can consider it:

- Your full film (watchable within a browser)
- A brief (100-character minimum) synopsis of your film
- Key credits (director, producer, writer, key cast)
- A brief director biography
- At least 5 high quality still images from the film (not behind-the-scenes photos)

If there is anything you'd specifically like to tell us about your submission, you may also add a brief cover letter and/or director statement.

If your film is selected for the festival, we will also request the following items to be either added to your FilmFreeway submission page, or emailed to our team within two weeks of the notification date:

- A trailer (either a link to, or a downloadable file)
- A poster (portrait, 300dpi)
- A press kit (consisting of at least a longer synopsis of the film and a bio of the director)
- Additional information on the cast / crew and BTS imagery is recommended, but not essential.

The festival will also require a quality-checked DCP file for your film's screening during the festival to be delivered to our DCP partner no later than 45 days before the festival. Exact delivery specifications will be communicated with selected filmmakers upon selection. The festival will also provide guidance to filmmakers who do not yet have a DCP in order to assist with this process.

Please do not send hard copies of any of the above as we will be unable to store them at the Festival office. Any hard copies sent will be recycled.

FilmFreeway allows digital press packs to be uploaded with submission, and we strongly recommend you do this to avoid missing out later.

The more (digital) information you include with your submission, the more we can promote your film once accepted into the festival. Of course, if non-essential assets are not ready at the time of submission, you may provide these at a later date.

Submission Eligibility

- Only films completed after 1st January 2024 will be considered for 2026 entry.
- Your film must be no more than exactly 25 minutes in duration, including any credits and intros. Any films that are 25:01 or longer will not be considered.
- At this time, we do not accept music videos or promotional content as submissions.
- The film must be your own work – all credits must be accurate. If you are submitting on behalf of somebody else, this must be clearly stated on your submission.
- All rights, permissions and clearances must be obtained prior to submission and applicants must ensure that they have the right to submit the work with regard to third parties connected to the production of the film in question. By entering your work, you agree to this and the responsibilities involved. The Norwich Film Festival assumes no responsibility for violation of copyright law.

- Please note that submission fees will not be refunded if your film does not meet these conditions.

Work-in-progress Submissions

Whilst we can accept work-in-progress films, we generally advise against this unless your film is picture-locked and only has relatively minor changes remaining, such as credits, colour grade, or sound mixing. The version of the film we receive is the version we will base our decision upon, so we advise not submitting an incomplete version of the film unless you are comfortable with your film being considered in its current state. If submitting a WIP film, this must be clearly stated on your submission, otherwise it will be assumed to be in a complete state.

Guidelines regarding generative AI use

As a festival, we are primarily interested in original films that celebrate human creativity & storytelling and we encourage filmmakers to consider the ethical implications of generative AI in their work.

We will not consider films where core creative elements (visuals, audio, writing/direction) have been completed either fully or predominantly using generative AI (artificial intelligence) tools throughout the film's duration.

Any minor use of generative AI tools amounting to less than the above in your film may be permitted but must be clearly disclosed on your submission, such as in your Cover Letter, for the sake of transparency. This includes generative AI use in relation to visuals, audio, writing/dialogue, performances and post-production/visual effects. This is an honesty-based policy and we kindly ask for transparency regarding this matter.

We recognise that AI is a rapidly evolving technology and we will continue to carefully assess our approach to this issue.

Submission Fees

Norwich Film Festival runs on an extremely limited budget. We regret that, owing to the number of submissions we receive and events we put on, we must charge a small fee to cover our administrative costs, as well as the costs of running the festival each year. These fees are in pounds sterling (foreign currency conversion is handled by FilmFreeway at the time of transaction).

- **Earlybird**
 - For films received as per the dates above, the entry fee for early bird submissions is £25.00. Student entries will be charged at £20.00 (proof required). East Anglian Student entries will be charged at £10.00 (proof required) and Micro Short Films at £10.00.
- **Regular**
 - For films received as per the dates above, the entry fee for regular submissions is £35.00. Student entries will be charged at £30.00 (proof required). East Anglian Student entries will be charged at £15.00 (proof required) and Micro Short Films at £15.00.

- **Late**
 - For films received as per the dates above, the entry fee for late submissions is £45.00. Student entries will be charged at £35.00 (proof required). East Anglian Student entries will be charged at £15.00 (proof required) and Micro Short Films at £20.00.
- **Extended**
 - For films received as per the dates above, the entry fee is £60.00. Student entries will be charged at £35.00 (proof required). East Anglian Student entries will be charged at £15.00 (proof required) and Micro Short Films at £25.00.

Valid proof of status will be required for student submissions and East Anglian/East Anglian Student submissions in order to be moved from pending to in consideration.

We are a GOLD FESTIVAL on FilmFreeway, which allows for certain members to obtain further discounts. Please see <https://filmfreeway.com/gold> for more information.

We are unable to waive fees under any circumstances so please do not contact us to request that we make an exception, as we won't be able to help you.

Methods of payment

All entries must be made through FilmFreeway, which accepts online payment. If, for some reason, you are unable to pay through this website, we will accept PayPal payments, made to submissions@norwichfilmfestival.co.uk – please also email us separately prior to doing this.

Please note, if you intend to pay online, PayPal charges 3.4% per transaction, so please add a £1.50 transaction fee to any submissions sent via this method.

Submissions will not be accepted until payment is received in full.

Shipping

If requested, any publicity materials should be sent to:

NFF Submissions Team

% Larking Gowen LLP

1st Floor Prospect House Rouen Road

NORWICH NR1 1RE

The entrant must pay all shipping and postage costs incurred in submitting work to us. The Festival will not accept Cash on Delivery shipments and will not absorb any fees incurred in customs. Submission packages from outside the UK must be labelled 'No commercial value - for cultural purposes only' on any customs label and for customs purposes must be given a value of no more than US\$10, £10 Sterling or 10 euro.

Please remember to put the FilmFreeway submission number on the envelope (ie: 26NFF0001)

Receipt of Submission

Once you have submitted your film online, please check your account to find out if the Festival has received your submission.

Selection

Selection will be carried out by the Norwich Film Festival team. No correspondence will be entered into regarding the selection process and the decision of the Festival Executive Committee is final. We aim to inform successful applicants by the end of August at the latest. Unfortunately, due to the volume of entries and time constraints, we will be unable to offer individual feedback or enter into any discussion about your work.

Successful submissions will be listed on our website (www.norwichfilmfestival.co.uk) and social media outlets, and successful applicants will be notified by email or over the phone. Please therefore make sure that we can reach you in the months of August and September so that we can confirm your film's inclusion in the Festival programme.

Please note that only successful applicants will be notified personally. If we are unable to contact you during this period your film may be removed from the Festival line up. Any contact will be sent to the email address listed on your submission – please ensure that this is an email that you will retain access to. We advise against using work/student emails for this reason.

Festival Screenings and Scheduling

All screenings during the Festival period will take place at the discretion of the Festival. We reserve the right to make changes to the advertised schedule at any time for any reason and will not accept liability for any costs incurred as a result of such changes. No film may be withdrawn from the Norwich Film Festival programme by its submitter after its selection / participation has been confirmed.

The Festival is not able to cover the costs of any format transfers or subtitling. Digital screening copies of selected titles (if requested) must be received by the Festival by 15 September 2026. Please use the following format only:

- 2K DCP of your film, completed & tested to industry standards. If your film is not in the English language, English subtitles must be burned-in to the file.
- The Festival will provide instructions regarding delivery of the DCP once your selection has been confirmed. Please do not send the file until it is requested.

Copyrights and clearances

All entries must be the original work of the entrant and must not infringe upon the copyrights, trademarks, rights of privacy, publicity, or other intellectual property or other rights of any person or entity.

If the film contains any material or elements that are not owned by the entrant and/or which are subject to the rights of third parties, the entrant is responsible for obtaining, prior to the submission of the film, any and all releases and consents necessary to permit use and exploitation of the film by Norwich Film Festival in the manner set forth in the official rules without additional compensation, including, without limitation, location releases for footage shot at any location; name, voice and likeness releases for any person whose name, voice and/or likeness appears in the film (other than entrant); releases for the use of any props, set dressings and other materials used in the film; releases from any individuals participating in the production of the film and releases for any other audio and/or audio-visual materials not wholly owned by entrant, which, in each case, are used in the film (collectively the "Clearances"). If any person(s) appearing in any film is (are) under the age of majority in their place of residence, the signature of a parent or legal guardian is required with each release. All signatures must be original.

Our rights

Norwich Film Festival reserves the right, at any point during the competition, in its sole and unfettered discretion, to disqualify and remove any film that potentially or actually infringes any third party's copyright(s).

At any time during the Competition, Norwich Film Festival reserves the right, in its sole and unfettered discretion, to disqualify and remove any film that it believes does not fall within the entry requirements in these official rules.

Norwich Film Festival reserves the right, in its sole and unfettered discretion, to verify at any time during the Competition that all necessary Clearances relating to any film have been obtained. If we believe, in our sole and unfettered discretion, that an entrant has failed to obtain any of the necessary Clearances relating to the entrant's film, the entrant's film will be disqualified and removed.

By participating in this Competition, entrants agree that during the Competition Period, Norwich Film Festival and its sponsors and partners are authorized to display the films on the Norwich Film Festival website and on any and all other media in connection with the Competition. By participating in the Competition, entrants grant permission to Norwich Film Festival to use their names, likenesses, photographs, voices, sounds and/or biographical information and films in connection with the Competition and for any and all advertising, publicity and promotional purposes relating to the Competition without additional compensation, unless prohibited bylaw. This will extend to cover the period used to promote the next festival as well.

As a condition of entering the Festival, each entrant grants Norwich Film Festival:

i) the right to display their film, in whole or in part, on the Norwich Film Festival website and/or on any websites owned or operated by or on behalf of Norwich Film Festival or any of its related or affiliated companies, and on any website owned or operated by or on behalf of Norwich Film

Festival; ii) the right to use their film to create trailers, either for individual films or as a collection of films; and/or (iii) the right, if his/her film is selected, to display the film on any website owned or operated by or on behalf of Norwich Film Festival following completion of the Competition Period. The Festival is also granted (iv) the right to utilise any and all publicity materials for the film in its own promotion and marketing of the Festival, this includes but is not limited to trailers, posters, film stills, BTS stills, bios and blurbs. The Festival may incorporate this into its own branding or design style for the purpose of promoting the Festival. Lastly, during the Festival Period, the Festival has (v) the right to display the film, in whole or in part, at any and all Cinemas or other dedicated Screening Venues through ticketed or non-ticketed public events without the Filmmaker or Submitter being entitled to any compensation, financial or otherwise.

Entrants will be fully credited where possible, and retain sole ownership of their work.

Limitation of Liability

By entering into this Contest, entrants hereby release and discharge Norwich Film Festival and its respective affiliates, subsidiaries, assigns, agents, representatives, independent contractors, officers, employees and directors from and against any and all claims, liabilities, costs, damages and expenses of any kind arising out of or relating to their participation in this Contest, their use or acceptance of any prize, the use by Norwich Film Festival of any films submitted by entrants and/or any actions or decisions of Norwich Film Festival in connection with the conduct and administration of this Contest.

Entrants hereby waive any right to seek injunctive or other equitable relief in connection with any claim against Norwich Film Festival, any of the Co-Sponsors, or any of their respective affiliates, subsidiaries, assigns, agents, representatives, independent contractors, officers, employees and directors.

Cancellation Process

Should the festival organisers decide to cancel the festival without reason prior to the Official Selection, every effort will be made to reimburse those who have paid to submit their film.

Should the festival get cancelled without reason after the announcement of the Official Selection, priority reimbursement will be given to those filmmakers who have been selected to be a part of the festival. Those filmmakers who were not due to be a part of the festival because their film was not selected will not be reimbursed.

In the event of circumstances being beyond the control of the festival organisers (such as natural disaster, viral/bacterial pandemic, etc) then every effort will be made to pause, postpone, or amend the festival so that it still goes ahead in some form. We will never look to cancel the festival if we can look to rearrange. In such circumstances, no refunds will be issued as submission fees will be used to continue the planning of the festival at a different place or time.

Thank you for your interest in submitting to the Norwich Film Festival. We look forward to receiving your film!