

- I. GENERAL INFORMATION
- II. FILM SUBMISSION
 - A. COMPETITIONS
 - B. NON-COMPETITIVE SECTIONS
 - C. SUBMISSION FEES & MATERIALS
 - D. PREMIERE RULE
- III. SELECTION
- IV. FESTIVAL PRESENTATION
- V. RIGHTS & DATA PROTECTION

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

VIENNA SHORTS is the international short film festival in Vienna. The festival is organized by the association Independent Cinema and showcases around 300 productions under 30 minutes annually in competitive and non-competitive sections. The festival is a qualifying festival for the Academy Awards® (Oscars), the European Film Awards, the British BAFTA Awards as well as the Austrian Film Awards.

The 23rd edition of VIENNA SHORTS will take place **from May 26 to May 31, 2026**, on site in Vienna (subject to applicable government regulations or events of force majeure) and also online via the streaming platform THIS IS SHORT. The festival views itself as a political and fair film festival committed to responsible dealings with filmmakers and all those involved as well as to ecologically sustainable practices (see the festival's compliance guidelines at <https://www.viennashorts.com/en/downloads>).

II. FILM SUBMISSION

For VIENNA SHORTS 2026, films of all genres and formats can be submitted, provided they have not been submitted to the festival before. A resubmission is only possible if the film has been **substantially altered**.

Films can be submitted via the festival's own platform Filmchief (through the website viennashorts.com starting Mid-August 2025) or via the submission platform FilmFreeway (starting end of July 2025). Submitters from Iran who are restricted from making international payments can apply for a free submission through the Filmchief platform.

All films must have English subtitles available. This also applies to films with German or English dialog.

Working or rough versions of films are accepted for submission, but the picture editing process should be completed at the time of submission (picture-lock).

The regular submission deadline for the 23rd festival edition is January 5, 2026, for all submissions. There is an extended deadline exclusively for the competition categories (II.A) which ends on January 31, 2026. No

films will be accepted after this date.

A. COMPETITIONS

Films of all genres and formats up to a length of 30 minutes and with a completion date after January 1, 2025, can be submitted for the four competitions of VIENNA SHORTS 2026.

Films can be submitted in four competition categories:

- Fiction & Documentary is devoted to international short fiction and short documentary films,
- Animation Avantgarde to international animation and experimental film
- The Austrian Competition is dedicated to national productions
- The Austrian Music Video Award is given to the best national music video.

On the festival website you can find mission statements for all four categories.

International productions can be submitted for the two competitions Fiction & Documentary and Animation Avantgarde. For the Austrian Competition and the Austrian Music Video Award, only productions by Austrian directors or producers are eligible, or works that were (partially) produced in Austria or mainly financed by Austrian entities. The festival reserves the right to assign films to a category other than the one they were originally submitted for.

The VIENNA SHORTS Awards are endowed with EUR 1,500 to 6,000 per competition and a total of around EUR 30,000. Several prizes are awarded in each competition, including special awards and audience awards. Instead of trophies, the main prize winners are also honored with newly planted trees dedicated to them in Vienna.

Prizes in all categories are awarded by expert juries. The juries each consist of three professionals from the film industry, are international and diverse in terms of fields and gender. Their expertise is brought in by invitation. All films are made available to the jury members in the best possible quality for viewing.

B. NON-COMPETITIVE SECTION

Submissions are also possible for non-competitive festival sections. Films of all genres and formats up to a length of 45 minutes and with a completion date after January 1, 2024, are accepted for this.

All films that have already been submitted for a competition will also be considered for non-competitive festival categories and do not need to be submitted separately. The festival reserves the right to assign films to a category other than the one they were originally submitted for.

Films that either do not meet the conditions of the competition categories or are fundamentally not intended for a competitive presentation are eligible for the non-competitive category. The films must be able to be assigned to one of the following four categories:

- For the International Music Videos category, we emphasize the interplay between image and sound/music
- The Films for Children category seeks short films for people up to 12 years of age

- The Films for Young People category seeks short films for people over 12 years old
- The Late Night Movies category includes different genres, e.g. trash/absurd comedy, horror/thriller or erotic/pornographic films. Submissions may start at a later date with specific subcategories, which will be announced in due course.

Films in these categories are also eligible for a VIENNA SHORTS Award as part of the special awards, but will in any case receive a screening/licensing fee if selected.

For the non-competitive sections, submissions are only possible within the regular submission deadline (until January 5, 2026).

C. SUBMISSION FEES & MATERIALS

In order to guarantee a high-quality selection process and a professional handling, VIENNA SHORTS charges a submission fee:

- for all Austrian films and music videos: EUR 5,-
- for non-competitive films (outside the competition): EUR 10,-
- for animated and experimental films (Animation Avantgarde): EUR 13,-
- for short fiction and documentary films (Fiction & Documentary): EUR 18,-

During the extended deadline (January 6 to January 31, 2026), the submission fee for all competitive categories will be increased by EUR 10. There is no extended deadline for non-competitive films.

The festival reserves the right to make changes to the submission fee. We also note that the submission platform FilmFreeway and the payment platform PayPal may charge additional processing fees. **Refunds of submission fees are not possible for organisational reasons.**

When submitting, only the basic information of the film, along with a viewing copy and a film still, will be requested. In the event of an invitation to VIENNA SHORTS 2026, further details for the festival publications will be requested in a second step.

D. PREMIERE RULE

There is no strict premiere rule. However, to ensure the highest relevance of the competition entries for the audience and industry guests, films in all competition categories that have not been shown in cinemas or made available online in Austria before VIENNA SHORTS will be given preference. The festival reserves the right not to show films or to show them only "out of competition."

Additionally, for public screenings in Vienna, an exclusivity clause applies: If films are shown to an audience in Vienna between January 1, 2026, and the end of the festival, they can only run "out of competition" at VIENNA SHORTS. (The only exception is competition screenings at the animation film festival Tricky Women.)

III. SELECTION

All submitted films will be viewed and evaluated by professional programmers and viewers. This process can be conducted partially outside of Austria and is not limited to the submission platforms.

All submitted films will receive an email notification by April 30, 2026, at the latest. The status of the film can also be checked directly on the submission platform FilmFreeway starting from this date.

The notification of selection for the competition of VIENNA SHORTS 2026 will be sent by March 31, 2026, and for any other sections by April 21, 2026, at the latest. The festival asks for patience as the program selection process is carried out in stages due to the high number of submissions and will be finalized by this time.

If the submitted film is selected for VIENNA SHORTS 2026, the festival will promptly communicate the deadline for submitting the screening copy, request additional information for the festival's publications, and reach out to you regarding attendance at the festival. If a film is not selected, we appreciate your understanding that further feedback can not be provided.

Once a film has been selected and the screening is confirmed, the logo of VIENNA SHORTS and the text "Official Selection VIENNA SHORTS 2026" may be used for advertising purposes. These assets will be provided in digital format. Films in non-competitive sections will also receive laurels.

IV. FESTIVAL PRESENTATION

The festival aims to present each selected film in the best possible form—both in theaters and online. For the theatrical screenings, the festival aims to show all films in their original format and with the presence of directors and film teams.

All competition films will be accompanied by their own texts, which will be published in the festival's publications. These texts can also be reused with proper authorship attribution (first name last name, VIENNA SHORTS).

The guest department will contact the director (or another representative of the creative team) to facilitate their presence at the screening in Vienna. The festival supports environmentally friendly travel to Vienna.

The festival actively fosters connections among filmmakers, industry representatives, programmers, and each other through its dedicated industry program, receptions, meetings, and providing guest lists with contact information (with the consent of the respective individuals).

VIENNA SHORTS pays a screening or license fee for films presented outside the competition. However, the festival cannot cover fees for screenings within the competition framework. If a film submitted for competition is also screened outside the competition, screening fees will be paid.

English subtitles must be provided for the presentation of all films. This requirement applies to German and English-language productions as well. Burned-in subtitles for theatrical screenings must not appear in the black part of the film.

For cinema screenings, the festival accepts ProRes files, DCPs, 35mm film, and 16mm film. Files will be converted to DCP format for screening. Film copies will be insured for the duration of the festival. The festival will not accept deliveries subject to customs duties, taxes, or shipping charges. In the case of an analog film copy, the festival will handle the return shipment (including shipping charges) to the original shipping address or an address provided by the submitter beforehand.

For presenting the film in the video library for accredited professionals and in case of a screenings on the festival's streaming platform THIS IS SHORT, the festival requires a file upload. Specifications regarding digital formats for theatrical and online screenings will be communicated to submitters upon selection of the film.

V. RIGHTS & DATA PROTECTION

With the submission, the submitter guarantees that they own all rights to the film (particularly intellectual property) or are authorized to submit on behalf of the rights holder, and that no rights of third parties will be infringed by screening or other uses for the festival's purposes. In case of any third-party rights infringement, the festival must be indemnified by the submitter.

If selected, the film may be screened multiple times during the festival period, including reruns. If the film wins an award at VIENNA SHORTS 2026, it may also be shown twice in cinemas and online as part of Best-of programs following the festival. Additionally, for the trees dedicated to the main award winners, a plaque with a QR code linking to the film's stream will be installed, accessible only within a 100-meter radius. In this case, the submitting person or institution will be contacted in advance.

By submitting the film, the festival is granted permission to use the film title, credits, director's name, film stills, and excerpts (up to 40 seconds) for general promotion, including reporting on the festival (TV, web, cinema, showreel). The festival also reserves the right to provide password-protected access to the film to press representatives or selected industry visitors.

All selected competition entries are automatically included in the video library available on the streaming platform for accredited industry professionals. The video library is password-protected.

By submitting to VIENNA SHORTS, the festival is authorized to process the provided data for managing the festival and its archive. This consent serves as the legal basis for data processing under the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation of the European Union). Data will only be retained as long as necessary for the aforementioned purposes and will not be shared with third parties. Further information on data protection and GDPR rights can be found here: <https://viennashorts.filmchief.com/shop/privacy-policy>

Submission guidelines for VIENNA SHORTS are available in both German and English. In case of discrepancies, the German version will prevail.

Any changes to the festival's implementation, organization, structure, or prize money will be promptly communicated through festival channels.

For any questions regarding submissions, please contact us at film@viennashorts.com