



**RULES & GUIDELINES
PART – I**

AWARDING CATEGORIES & RULES

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NOTE:

Rules & Guidelines were drafted and are being updated for FOI Online Awards' procedures since its 3rd edition. The first two editions were not preceded according to the rules mentioned here.

SECTION – I ELIGIBILITY

- 1.1 A feature film and all credited artists/technicians under it are eligible to be submitted as a nominee for various categories mentioned in Section II, if and only if they satisfy the conditions mentioned in Clauses 1.2 to 1.9 below.
- 1.2 For feature films produced solely by Indian production companies, the feature film should have its first public release on Indian theatrical screens or digital OTT to Indian audiences between 1st January and 31st December (both days included) of the year being considered for.
- 1.3 For feature films produced as an international collaboration, headlined by production companies from various countries, one of the production companies should be based in India. Release date for such feature films would be considered on the day it is premiered to Indian audiences on Indian theatrical screens or digital OTT, and should be between 1st January and 31st December (both days included) of the year being considered for.
- 1.4 The feature film should be primarily in Hindi or English language. Dubbed or subtitled films, originally produced in other primary languages, are not eligible.
- 1.5 If the feature film was only premiered at a film festival, it is not considered as a public release and hence ineligible. Such films are eligible once they release on Indian theatrical screens or digital OTT to Indian audiences between 1st January and 31st December (both days included) of the year being considered for.
- 1.6 For feature films released on digital OTT platforms, the streaming platform should have active operations in India. This category of feature films does not include web series/episodes.
- 1.7 Short films (having duration excluding credits of less than 40 minutes) are not eligible. Exception is given to short film collections, which are released as an anthology, however they are to be considered as a whole feature film.
- 1.8 Animation feature films having an exclusive theatrical or digital OTT release to Indian audiences are eligible.
- 1.9 Documentary feature films are not eligible. Core Jury reserves the right to decide whether the feature film is to be categorised as a documentary or not.
- 1.10 For special cases or genres of feature films not covered in the above clauses, the Core Jury reserves the right to independently take decisions on subject matter of film's eligibility.
- 1.11 For all nominees under consideration as individuals, there would be no age restriction or restriction on their nationality.

SECTION – II AWARDING CATEGORIES

- 2.1 All awarding categories currently described in the procedures of FOI Online Awards are grouped into two (2) segments, namely:
1. Award Categories – Group I
 2. Award Categories – Group II
- 2.2 The categories named under **Award Categories – Group I** are to be featured in award procedures, mandatorily. The number of nominations in each category is limited by an upper bound, as specified in Section VIII, Clause 8.1. This includes a total of sixteen (16) categories as mentioned below:
1. Feature Film
 2. Direction
 3. Actor in a Leading Role
 4. Actress in a Leading Role
 5. Actor in a Supporting Role
 6. Actress in a Supporting Role
 7. Original Screenplay
 8. Dialogues
 9. Cinematography
 10. Editing
 11. Music Direction
 12. Original Song
 13. Playback Singer (Male)
 14. Playback Singer (Female)
 15. Lyricist
 16. Sound Design
- 2.3 The categories named under **Award Categories – Group II** are to be featured in award procedures on the basis of deserving nominees shortlisted. If no entry is found eligible or deserving, these categories could be skipped. If only one (1) nominee is found deserving, the nominee would be declared as the final winner of the category, without being revealed in the Final Nominations List. If more than one deserving nominees are shortlisted, then number of nominations in each category is limited by an upper bound, as specified in Section VIII, Clause 8.2. Currently, the following nine (9) categories are named under this segment, namely:
1. Performance by an Ensemble Cast
 2. Adapted Screenplay
 3. Choreography
 4. Background Score
 5. Production Design
 6. Costume Design
 7. Make-Up & Hairstyling
 8. Special Effects/VFX
 9. Action Direction

SECTION – III SPECIAL RULES FOR FINAL CATEGORIES

3.1 Feature Film: The following rules apply:

1. The feature film should comply with conditions of eligibility mentioned in Section I.
2. While awarding, the producer(s) and director(s) of the feature film are to be credited.

3.2 Direction: The following rules apply:

1. Assistant directors are not included in the credits.
2. Feature film with multiple directors is to be counted in a single nomination.

SECTION – IV SPECIAL RULES FOR WRITING CATEGORIES

4.1 Original Screenplay: The following rules apply:

1. Screenplay with multiple writers is to be counted in a single nomination.
2. Screenplay submitted under this category should be a work of original research or fiction and should not be based on any of previously released work as mentioned in Clause 4.2 for Adapted Screenplays.

4.2 Adapted Screenplay: The following rules apply:

1. Screenplay with multiple writers is to be counted in a single nomination.
2. A screenplay would be valid to be called adapted, if it is based on one or more of the following sources, previously published/released:
 - a) A book, novel, short story or any printed media, which has been officially credited.
 - b) A play, skit or any previously performed art, live or recorded, which has been officially credited.
 - c) A previously released feature film (in any language), which includes remakes (both official and unofficial).
 - d) Sequels and franchise features, if storyline or characters are adapted from the previous/original.
 - e) A previously on-air/released television show, documentary or short film (in any language), which has been officially credited.
3. Feature films in the genre of biopic are not to be counted under Adapted screenplay, unless the filmmakers officially credit the biography, printed media or a film/documentary highlighting the person from which it is being adapted.
4. Feature films based on true life stories/events are not to be considered for adapted screenplay, until and unless the filmmakers officially credit any other media for its inspiration.

4.3 If the filmmakers credit a story writer other than the screenplay writer, he/she will be included in the nomination credit.

4.4 For a case where opinions on whether a screenplay is to be categorised as Original or Adapted are conflicted, final categorisation is to be based on the majority received.

- 4.5 **Dialogues:** The following rules apply:
1. Dialogue script with multiple writers is to be counted in a single nomination.
 2. Dubbed dialogue writing is not to be considered.
 3. Features with multilingual dialogue can be considered, provided the film's primary language remains Hindi or English.
 4. If filmmakers don't credit a dialogue writer, the screenplay writer is to be credited for this category, by default.

SECTION – V SPECIAL RULES FOR ACTING CATEGORIES

- 5.1 **Actor/Actress in a Leading/Supporting Role:** The following rules apply:
1. Multiple actors/actresses in a feature film are to be counted in multiple nominations.
 2. For a case where opinions on whether the performance of an actor/actress is to be categorised as Leading or Supporting are conflicted, final categorisation is to be based on the majority received.
- 5.2 **Performance by an Ensemble Cast:** The following rules apply:
1. There is no restriction on minimum number of performers in the cast for the feature to be considered in this category.
 2. If possible, while awarding, the primary cast of the feature is to be credited.

SECTION – VI SPECIAL RULES FOR TECHNICAL CATEGORIES

- 6.1 **Cinematography:** The following rules apply:
1. Feature films with multiple technicians catering to this craft to be counted in a single nomination.
 2. Assistants catering to the craft are not to be included in credits.
 3. The category is equivalent to Director of Photography.
- 6.2 **Editing:** The following rules apply:
1. Feature films with multiple technicians catering to this craft to be counted in a single nomination.
 2. Assistants catering to the craft are not to be included in credits.
- 6.3 **Choreography:** The following rules apply:
1. Feature films with multiple technicians catering to this craft to be counted in a single nomination.
 2. Assistants catering to the craft are not to be included in credits.

- 6.4 **Sound Design:** The following rules apply:
1. Feature films with multiple technicians catering to this craft to be counted in a single nomination.
 2. Assistants catering to the craft are not to be included in credits.
 3. The category is equivalent to Sound Editing.
- 6.5 **Production Design:** The following rules apply:
1. Feature films with multiple technicians catering to this craft to be counted in a single nomination.
 2. Assistants catering to the craft are not to be included in credits.
 3. The category is equivalent to Art Direction.
 4. If the filmmakers credit Set Decorator/Art Director separately other than Production Designer, they should be included in nominations.
- 6.6 **Costume Design:** The following rules apply:
1. Feature films with multiple technicians catering to this craft to be counted in a single nomination.
 2. Assistants catering to the craft are not to be included in credits.
 3. For historical or other such features, armour designer and equivalents are to be considered in the nominations.
- 6.7 **Make-Up & Hairstyling:** The following rules apply:
1. Feature films with multiple technicians catering to this craft to be counted in a single nomination.
 2. Assistants catering to the craft are not to be included in credits.
 3. The credit should include prosthetics artists, if any.
- 6.8 **Special Effects/VFX:** The following rules apply:
1. Feature films with multiple technicians catering to this craft to be counted in a single nomination.
 2. Assistants catering to the craft are not to be included in credits.
 3. While awarding, VFX supervisor is to be credited.
- 6.9 **Action Direction:** The following rules apply:
1. Feature films with multiple technicians catering to this craft to be counted in a single nomination.
 2. Assistants catering to the craft are not to be included in credits.
 3. If mentioned separately, Stunt Choreographer or Action Designer should be included in the credits along with the Action Director.
- 6.10 In case a craft studio, creative studio or production studio is credited by the filmmakers instead of individuals for crafts catering to the Technical categories above, they are allowed to be included as nomination credit.

SECTION – VII
SPECIAL RULES FOR MUSIC CATEGORIES

7.1 Music Direction: The following rules apply:

1. The category is defined for the direction/composition of feature film's whole music album or soundtrack.
2. Feature film's music album with multiple music directors is to be counted in a single nomination.
3. The songs in the soundtrack being considered should be specifically composed and written for the feature film.
4. If a previously released and commercially utilized song is reprised in the feature film's music album, in original or remixed format, the music directors of such reprised song (both the original composer and the composer reprising it) are to be barred from being credited for this category.
5. Additionally, for a music album to be eligible in this category, number of reprised songs should not exceed 40% of the total number of songs in the soundtrack.
6. Credit for the category should not include other music technicians such as arrangers and engineers.

7.2 Original Song: The following rules apply:

1. The category is defined for individual songs in the feature film's music album.
2. The song being considered should be specifically composed and written for the feature film.
3. If a previously released and commercially utilized song is reprised in the feature film's music album, in original or remixed format, the song is considered ineligible.
4. While awarding, the music director(s), playback singer(s) and lyricist(s) of the song are to be credited.

7.3 Playback Singer (Male/Female): The following rules apply:

1. Song with multiple playback singers to be counted in a single nomination.
2. Playback singer(s) of a reprised song are eligible for this category provided he/she is not the original artist of the song being reprised.

7.4 Lyricist: The following conditions apply:

1. Song with multiple lyricists to be counted in a single nomination.
2. Lyricist(s) of a reprised song are considered ineligible for the category. Exception is given to cases where only a few lines from the lyrics of another song is used in the one being considered, however, the final decision for the eligibility of such songs in this category is based on the majority received.

7.5 Background Score: The following rules apply:

1. Score with multiple composers are to be counted in a single nomination.
2. The background score being considered should've been specifically composed for the feature film.

SECTION – VIII

LIMITS ON NUMBER OF NOMINATIONS FOR EACH CATEGORY

8.1 For categories named under Award Categories – Group I, the following preferred and special case upper bound on number of nominations is proposed:

Category	Preferred	Special Case
Feature Film	6	8
Direction	5	6
Actor in a Leading Role	5	6
Actress in a Leading Role	5	6
Actor in a Supporting Role	5	6
Actress in a Supporting Role	5	6
Original Screenplay	5	5
Dialogues	5	5
Cinematography	5	5
Editing	4	5
Music Direction	5	6
Original Soundtrack	5	6
Playback Singer (Male)	5	6
Playback Singer (Female)	5	6
Lyricist	5	6
Sound Design	4	5

8.2 For categories named under Award Categories – Group II, the following preferred and special case upper bound on number of nominations is proposed:

Category	Preferred	Special Case
Performance by an Ensemble Cast	5	6
Adapted Screenplay	5	5
Choreography	4	5
Background Score	4	5
Production Design	4	5
Costume Design	4	5
Make-Up & Hairstyling	4	5
Special Effects/VFX	4	5
Action Direction	4	5

8.3 The lower limit on number of nominations in each category is two (2).

8.4 Special Case Limits as specified in both Clause(s) 8.1 and 8.2 are proposed for circumstances where for the same number of available spots on the nominations list, number of contenders with equal votes is higher. Hence, the limit is increased, according to the Special Limits mentioned for each category to accommodate the equally deserving nominees. If increasing spots on nominations list, according to these limits, still fails to accommodate all equally deserving contenders, Core Jury should vote again for the contenders (with equal votes) to fill the remaining available spots on the nominations list.

SECTION – IX SPECIAL JURY MENTIONS

- 9.1 Special Jury Mentions may be awarded to deserving entries in the List of Submissions, which were eliminated in the screening procedure before being shortlisted to the Final Nominations List.
- 9.2 To be eligible for the Special Jury Mention, it is mandatory for the entry to be mentioned in the List of Submissions.
- 9.3 Entries that are already selected for the Final Nominations List cannot be considered for this segment. However, an artist who is already nominated may be awarded Special Jury Mention for some other work of art performed/represented by him/her which was not nominated. Same artist can be awarded Special Jury Mention for more than one work of art performed/represent by him/her.
- 9.4 Number of Special Jury Mentions awarded cannot be more than fifteen (15).
- 9.5 Only Core Jury would participate in voting procedures to select the final awardees for Special Jury Mentions. Research Assistants and Guest Jury Members may participate for listing their suggestions only.

SECTION – X SEQUENTIAL ORDER OF CATEGORIES IN ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 10.1 The order in which the winners and nominations in each category are announced should be strictly followed as:

1. Action Direction	14. Special Jury Mentions (alphabetically)
2. Special Effects/VFX	15. Editing
3. Make-Up & Hairstyling	16. Cinematography
4. Costume Design	17. Performance by an Ensemble Cast
5. Production Design	18. Actress In A Supporting Role
6. Sound Design	19. Actor In A Supporting Role
7. Choreography	20. Actress In A Leading Role
8. Background Score	21. Actor In A Leading Role
9. Lyricist	22. Dialogues
10. Playback Singer (Female)	23. Adapted Screenplay
11. Playback Singer (Male)	24. Original Screenplay
12. Original Song	25. Direction
13. Music Direction	26. Feature Film
- 10.2 If a particular category is being skipped, the announcement continues with the next in order, without giving any clarification for the skipped category.

END OF DOCUMENTATION