

FREE RESOURCE

AI Film Festival Submission Checklist

My two-pass worksheet for carrying a film from production planning to a verifiable submission.

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WHO IT IS FOR

For AI filmmakers preparing a festival entry and checking what must accompany the finished film.

THE PROBLEM IT SOLVES

A finished film can miss eligibility requirements that should have shaped production before generation began.

WHAT YOU GET

- Edition requirements sheet
- pre-production checks
- final delivery checks
- asset evidence table
- submission record

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01 Eligibility belongs in the production plan

A film's eligibility is shaped before the first image exists, through decisions about when material is generated, where it is retained and what the final submission must contain. I use this checklist twice: when the shot plan is ready, and again before delivering the finished film.

It grows out of my Higgsfield festival preparation, but the working method travels further than that particular edition. Fill in the requirements for the competition you are entering; a rule from one festival is not automatically a rule for another.

02 Establish the edition before checking the film

I record the requirements I am actually working against before marking any item complete. That keeps an old production note from silently becoming a rule for a new submission.

Field	Complete from the applicable rules
Festival and edition	The competition this film is entering.
Rules source	Where the applicable requirements are published.
Date read	When those requirements were checked.
Generation window	Opening and closing boundaries for eligible visual material.
Submission deadline	The full deadline and its stated time zone.
Runtime	The required minimum and any stated maximum.
Delivery format	Accepted aspect ratios, containers and resolution limits.
Language	Required subtitles or voice-over.
Generation location	Any required platform or submission project.
Required branding	Watermark, closing brand card or other specified material.
Public release	Whether a public post is required and how long it must remain available.

For context, the Higgsfield checklist I worked from recorded a minimum of three minutes, 16:9 or 21:9 delivery, and MP4 or MOV files up to 4K. Those are historical reference points for that checklist, not universal requirements or a statement about a current edition.

03 First pass: before production

Story and technical delivery

- [ ] I have added the planned shot durations and compared the total with the applicable runtime requirement.
- [ ] The aspect ratio is consistent between the shot instructions and the intended output.
- [ ] Action sequences are settled before I write the instructions that will generate them.
- [ ] The selected model's duration limit fits the shots I have planned.
- [ ] The production schedule fits the eligible generation window.

I separate a festival's minimum from the time the story needs. A planned runtime helps expose a problem before production, but the submitted runtime must come from the finished film rather than an earlier outline.

Content and identity

- [ ] I have checked the shot plan against the edition's prohibited-content categories.
- [ ] I have reviewed named works, protected characters and other third-party intellectual property in the material.
- [ ] I have inspected the reference faces for recognizable resemblance, rather than relying only on a fictional description.
- [ ] Any use of an identifiable person's likeness or voice has the required written consent.
- [ ] The characters' visible ages meet any age restrictions in the applicable rules.

My historical Higgsfield checklist included restrictions concerning explicit sexual content, violence against real people, political or religious messages, and characters represented as under eighteen. I keep that list attached to its festival context instead of presenting it as a general rule for filmmaking.

Generation and preparation

- [ ] I know which submission project must retain the film's underlying material.
- [ ] Look tests are separate from eligible production material where the rules require that distinction.
- [ ] I have checked which models are permitted for this entry.
- [ ] If I rely on an unlimited-generation offer, I have checked its actual coverage and permitted method of use.
- [ ] Music and voices are planned, with the required permissions or licences identified.
- [ ] I have distinguished the visual-generation window from any separate rules for audio.

A production offer and a festival rule answer different questions. I check both before relying on them, because access to a model does not by itself establish that a particular workflow is eligible for

the competition.

04 Keep evidence with the film

I want the final footage to be traceable to its underlying generations. A finished export is only one part of the submission record when the festival also audits the material that produced it.

Material	Evidence to retain	Final check
Final shots	Their corresponding generations and project records.	The footage matches its recorded origin.
Visual references	The underlying images used in production.	Required material remains in the submission project.
Generation dates	The records associated with eligible visual material.	Dates fall within the applicable window.
Uploaded audio	The files and their declared licences or permissions.	Each uploaded file has a documented basis for use.
Finished master	The actual submitted export.	Its duration and delivery settings meet the requirements.
Public post	The published address and required accompanying material.	It is accessible under the required conditions.

- [ ] Required assets remain in the submission project.
- [ ] I have local copies, so the material does not exist only in cloud storage.
- [ ] The final footage can be matched to the retained generation history.
- [ ] I have reviewed what the festival will make public, including prompts and underlying material.

05 Second pass: inspect the finished submission

The actual exported file

- [ ] I have measured the final duration against the edition's requirement.
- [ ] I have checked the delivered aspect ratio and file container.
- [ ] Required English subtitles or voice-over are present where the applicable rules ask for them.
- [ ] The required watermark is present in the final video.
- [ ] The required closing brand card is present in the final video.
- [ ] Any required branding is also included in the public post.

I check the export that will be submitted, not a previous review copy. If the rules distinguish ordinary editing from operations that generate new imagery, that distinction also applies to the final finishing work.

Origin, finishing and sound

- [ ] All eligible visual material was generated within the required dates and location.
- [ ] No pre-existing visual material has entered a submission that prohibits its reuse.
- [ ] Upscaling, interpolation and generative fill comply with any platform-location requirement.
- [ ] External editing stayed within the permitted operations.
- [ ] Every uploaded audio file has its licence or permission recorded.
- [ ] The retained assets support the final version rather than an abandoned earlier cut.

In my historical Higgsfield checklist, editing outside the platform was distinguished from creating new imagery, and audio had separate allowances. I use that distinction as a reminder to check the relevant categories, without assuming another festival defines them in the same way.

Texts the jury will read

- [ ] I have watched the finished film before writing its submission description.
- [ ] The synopsis describes the film that exists, not an earlier production plan.
- [ ] The statement and biography contain only supported facts and credits.
- [ ] Public-facing prompts and descriptions contain no private production notes or technical identifiers.

I write these texts from the completed work because a production plan can preserve intentions that the film no longer contains. The jury's description should correspond to what it will actually watch.

06 Close the delivery record

Item	Complete before calling the film submitted
Final video	Identify the delivered version and confirm its required branding.
Public post	Save the address and verify access without signing in where required.
Availability	Record how long the post must remain public.
Submission evidence	Confirm the required project material is retained.
Later verification	Note any identity, age, declaration or tax-document checks stated in the rules.

Where the competition requires both a final video and a public post, I treat the pair as the minimum delivery. I also record any later verification requirements and their stated response periods, rather than assuming that uploading the film completes every obligation.

I want the work to reach the jury with its eligibility as carefully prepared as its images. This sheet is complete when the finished film, its supporting evidence and its required public delivery agree.

JEFF ZAMBRANO. · AI FILM DIRECTOR

Let's make your film

I direct films, series and brand pieces made with AI, from the script to the final cut. Tell me what you have in mind and I will answer myself.



Commission a film, series or trailer

Start with your film's format, intended length and delivery date, then share the story or material you already have.

A film for a brand

Introduce the brand and the purpose of its film, including the intended audience and release date where known.

AI platform or sponsorship

Introduce your tool or model, then outline the film or sponsorship you have in mind.

Festival, press or distribution

Introduce your event, publication or distributor, specifying the date and the film or material your proposal involves.

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