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TELEVISION ACADEMY ANNOUNCES RULES CHANGES FOR 78th EMMY[®] COMPETITION

(LOS ANGELES – Jan 9, 2026) — The Television Academy today announced rules changes for the 78th Emmy Awards competition in 2026, including a new name for the Outstanding Television Movie category; changes to the Short Form, Sound Mixing and Music categories; and expanded eligibility in the Casting, Costume and Lighting, Camera & Technical Arts categories.

The 2026 Rules & Procedures book will be posted the week of Jan. 19.

Partial Rules changes for 78th Emmy competition (2026):

Television Movie Category:

The name of the Outstanding Television Movie category has been changed to Outstanding Movie to more accurately reflect the evolving landscape of cinematic content created for broadcast or streaming.

Short Form Program Categories:

Outstanding Short Form Nonfiction or Reality Series and Outstanding Short Form Comedy, Drama or Variety Series will now be tracked categories. Each category will recognize two genres: original series and series based on/derived from other programming. The number of nominees will be proportional to the number of submissions in each genre with at least one nomination for each genre.

Sound Mixing Category Split:

Outstanding Sound Mixing for a Nonfiction or Reality Program has been split into two categories: Outstanding Sound Mixing for a Nonfiction Program and Outstanding Sound Mixing for a Reality Program.

Music:

- Outstanding Music Composition for a Documentary/Nonfiction or Reality Program (Original Dramatic Score): Will now allow eligibility for reality programs that contain an original dramatic score.
- Outstanding Main Title Theme Music: Expanded eligibility to include main-on-end themes. Both a Main Title Theme (appearing at the beginning of the program) and a Main-on-End Title Theme (appearing after the final act, before the end credits/crawl) are eligible.

Emmy Eligible Titles:

The following peer groups have expanded professional titles for eligibility.

- Casting: Associate Casting Director has been added as an eligible title for scripted series categories (comedy, drama, and limited or anthology series). Associate Casting Director entrants must have had meaningful, creative impact. All eligibility is subject to final and definitive review by the Casting Directors Peer Group Executive Committee to determine principal creative contributions.
- Costumes: Key Costumer has been added as an eligible title.
- Lighting, Camera & Technical Arts: Director of Photography has been added as an eligible title in the Technical Direction and Camerawork categories, if the following conditions are met:
 - They are not eligible in any other category of the competition.
 - They are not submitting a petition to be included in the Lighting Direction/Lighting Design categories.
 - The Technical Director has been notified and approves their inclusion.
Note: If there is no eligible Technical Director; the Director will be responsible for approving the DP.
- Reality Programming: Line Producer has been added as an eligible title in all reality programming categories.

AI Statement:

The following statement has been added to the Rules & Procedures:

The Television Academy reserves the right to inquire about the use of AI in submissions. The core of our recognition remains centered on human storytelling, regardless of the tools used to bring it to life.

Previously announced 2026 rules changes include:**Legacy Award:**

The Television Academy announced the creation of the Legacy Award, recognizing a television program that has made a profound and lasting impact on audiences and sustained its relevance to society, culture and the industry.

Casting:

To streamline the number of reality casting titles that are eligible for Emmy consideration, the following titles will be eligible starting with the 2026 Emmy competition:

- Casting By
- Executive in Charge of Casting
- Supervising Casting Director
- Supervising Casting Producer
- Senior Casting Director
- Casting Director
- Senior Casting Producer

- Casting Producer
- Celebrity Casting By

Music – Main Title Theme:

A Main Title Theme must appear in 50% or more of eligible episodes submitted for the 2026 Emmy competition. The Main Title Theme has been further defined as a musical fingerprint and calling card that is identifiable and unique to a show, thereby drawing an audience in by setting the show's tone and what is to come.

The complete list of new rules for the 78th Emmys linked [HERE](#).

About the Television Academy

The Television Academy strives to shape and advance the dynamic television landscape; cultivate a diverse, inclusive and accessible professional community; and advocate for the television industry while capturing the spirit of a new generation of content creators and industry professionals. Through innovative programs, publications and events, the Academy and its Foundation foster and empower storytellers. The Academy also celebrates those who excel in the industry recognizing their achievements through awards and accolades, including the renowned Emmy® Award. Membership in the Academy is open to working professionals in the television industry. For more information, please visit TelevisionAcademy.com.

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