

Solidarity Film Festival of Guadalajara

Technical guidelines for digital projection prints

Films screened at FESCIGU film festival are shown in 1080p, with stereo sound (two-channel, left-right).

1. Audio and video accepted formats.

- **Accepted file formats:** audio and video must be contained in a QuickTime or MP4 file. We may accept a Blu-Ray disc. (A high quality MPEG-2 file could be exceptionally accepted).
- **Accepted video codecs:** H264 (we recommend encoding with the x264 free codec due to its high quality). Apple ProRes (we accept 444, 422 or HQ. We won't accept 422 LT or Proxy).
- **Audio:** we require at least a 48 kHz sampling rate and a 16 bit depth. 5.1 multichannel audio will be accepted but will be downmixed to stereo during projection.
- **Audio Codecs:** We accept AAC encoding and uncompressed audio.

2. Accepted subtitle file formats.

Subtitles must be submitted in a separate file. We favor Subrip SRT due its simplicity. The following formats are also accepted:

- Adobe Encore
- Sub Station Alpha and Advanced Sub Station Alpha
- DCP (cinemascope, interop and smpte)
- EBU Subtitling data exchange format (*.stl and binary)

All subtitle files must have their proper file extension. Exceptionally other formats could be accepted at the festival's discretion, prior consultation with the technical department.

2.1 Subtitle file character encoding.

Various character encoding formats are allowed but the specific character encoding of your subtitle file must be specified (UTF-8, Windows-1252, ISO-8859-1 etc...)

If the subtitles have been created especially for FESCIGU we favor UNICODE / UTF-8 format.

In exceptional circumstances and at the festival's discretion, a hard subtitled print (burnt-in subtitles) could be accepted. In that case we need another additional copy with no subtitles at all.

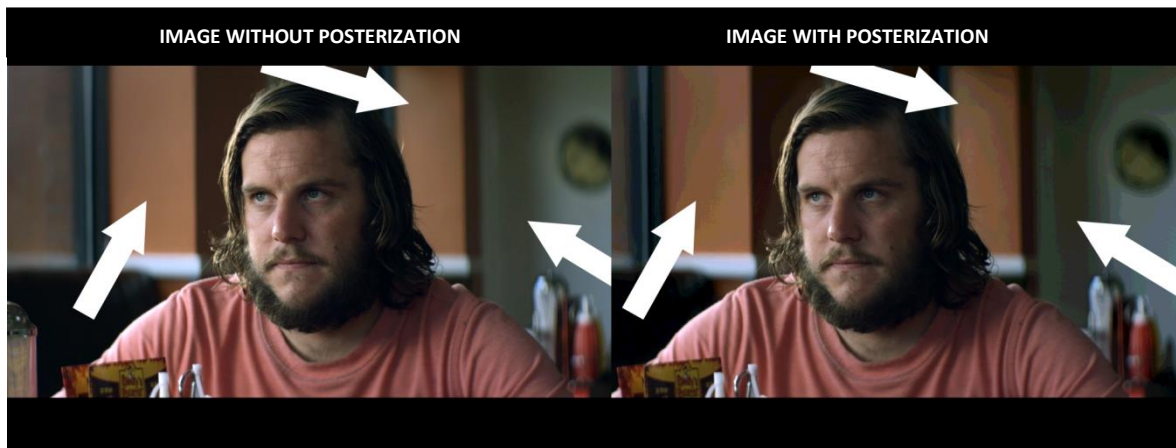
3. Technical Standards and recommendations for Audio and Video

FESCIGU wants to offer a different experience to online viewing and aims to offer an optimum sound and image quality to our audience.

There are some common problems for which your copy might be rejected and a new one requested, or in extreme cases the short film could be disqualified. Those problems are:

3.1 Image. Image must be free of any anamorphic or geometric distortion.

3.2 Compression artifacts – posterization. The compression must not have any visible posterization or banding. The areas designated by the arrows indicate the posterization or banding artifacts due to a bad compression which will be more evident on uniform areas such as walls or skies.

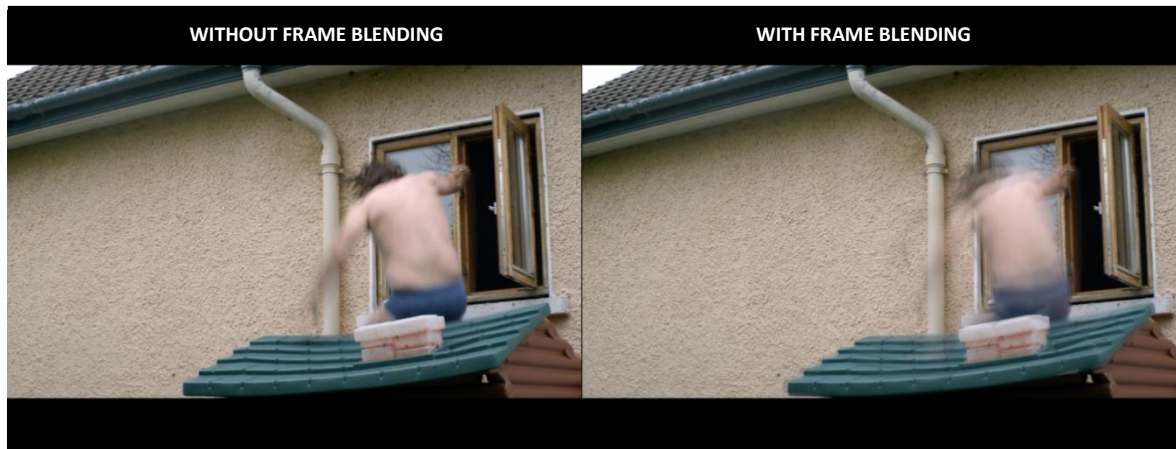


3.3 Standard white and black levels: The films at FESCIGU are projected on a RGB 0-255 colour space, in which black is represented by 0 and white by 255. Sometimes, due to errors during duplication or recompression the black and the white appears faded, lacking in contrast. Unless it is an intended aesthetic effect by the authors a new copy will be requested.



3.4 24-25 fps conversion: In films shot at 24 fps, the software conversion to 25 fps is usually achieved repeating 1 frame each 24 frames (that is: the 24th frame is repeated twice to fill the requested 25 frames per second). This method produces jerky and stuttering movements and camera pans which are not acceptable for screening at FESCIGU.

Sometimes software try to hide this jerkiness using some type of frame blending, which fades consecutive frames. This technique gives the image a blurry and undefined look which is not acceptable for us.



We have found some productions which inadvertently shot at 24 fps and edited at 25 fps. This usually translates into a print containing the two foresaid problems.

The only accepted technique at FESCIGU in case the cadence of the master is 24 or 23.976 fps is the speed-up of video and sound, from 24 or 23.97 fps to 25 fps. That is, speeding-up the video and sound aprox. 4%, without any frame blending.

As an exception, prior consultation with the technical department a print at 24 or 23.976 fps could be accepted, but a bad conversion to 25 won't be admitted under any circumstances.

3.5 Interlaced video: If the film is shot in traditional interlaced video (25 frames / 50 fields), our preference will be a progressive copy at 50 frames per second, in which each field is contained in a progressive frame, or a deinterlaced 25 fps copy. Exceptionally an interlaced copy could be accepted if the film belongs to a documentary or TV genre.

3.6 Audio. The audio must be in perfect sync with the image. It would be convenient for us if you could specify the level of dialogue at which the film has been mixed in dBFS, measured according to any of the following standards: LUFS/LKFS/Leq (A)/ Dialnorm or Dolby (all these systems are very technical and are found in professional audio post production software as Pro Tools or hardware from manufactures like Dolby, the typical audio meters from editing software are unable to make this type of measurement).

The dialogue level will usually be between -20 and -31 dBFS. Your sound mixer should be able to give you this information. If you can't get this information in a trustworthy and accurate manner, then we would need you to specify us two or three timecodes in the film (minutes and seconds) containing two or three fragments of dialogue representative of the average dialogue level of the film. (Not specially low or high. Nor shouting disputes or whispering segments of dialogue).

3.7 Sound pressure level and hearing damage: The mix should be made judiciously according to professional standards. The wide dynamic range of current audio recording formats (and the projection equipment at FESCIGU) allows the filmmakers to raise some parts of the mix to very distressing levels, or even dangerous levels which may cause hearing damage. We must ask you for restraint and judgment, especially to those films with small budgets which can't afford

professional sound mixers or mixing rooms, which are usually the type of short films where we found these situations taking place. In such extreme cases we could be forced to request a new print or even to disqualify your film.

4. Technical standards for subtitles

We expect you to take the same care for the subtitle file SRT as you would for hardcoded subtitles (burned into the image). To that end, you must follow these rules:

1. Subtitles must be in sync with the precise print you are sending to the festival (either 24 or 25 fps) and must be checked before delivery. We cannot accept out of sync subtitles.
2. Each subtitle length must not be greater than two lines. Each line must not exceed 42 characters.
3. It is essential that the audience have enough time to read the subtitles. The reading speed must not exceed 140 words per minute.
4. This means that the text must be simplified and compressed if necessary so enough reading time is allowed. For example:
 - Real Dialogue: **Why do you think they are doing this?**
 - Subtitle: **Why are they doing this?**
5. The position in time and duration of the subtitles must be synchronized with the sound from the character speaking, to avoid confusion.
6. Suspension points (...) must be avoided unless the sentence continues in the following subtitle or is incomplete.
7. Voiceovers and off-screen dialogue (voice from a radio or TV, public address systems...) should use italics.
8. When two characters are speaking in the same subtitle each line must be preceded by a dash:
 - **How was your breakfast today?**
 - **Great, thank you.**
9. Posters and signs visible on screen that are important for the story must be subtitled.
10. Any subtitle that does not meet these standards could be rejected and a new one will be requested from you.

If you have any doubt, please contact the FESCIGU audiovisual department through the following email: audiovisuales@fescigu.com

Images of short film "Doghouse" courtesy by Fastnet Films