

WHAT IS PEER JUDGING?

NATAS contests are judged category-by-category by a panel of experts in that particular field– for example, editors judge editing. Specific qualifications for judges per each individual contest are outlined in each contest’s rules. The success of the Emmy® Awards process depends on the willingness of qualified professionals to serve as judges.

JUDGES ARE VOLUNTEERS

Judges for all NATAS Emmy Award contests are volunteers. Judges do not receive any compensation for participation.

JUDGING RESPONSIBILITIES

With a few exceptions, noted in each individual contest’s Call for Entries, judging is done entirely online. Judges must sign up to judge. Contest administration will verify credentials and eligibility of potential judges and assign approved judges to category panels based on their backgrounds and expertise. Judging requires watching videos, reviewing associated materials and scoring all entries in the assigned category.

NATAS contests do NOT use a “check one” or ranked system of judging. The window for judging is several weeks. Judges evaluate each entry on its individual merits and judges are permitted to give the same score to multiple entries. Each category has a minimum percentage judges are required to view for each entry video prior to being permitted to submit a score. After an entry in the category is viewed by at least the minimum amount, the judge’s ballot will open up and become available for scoring. Each entry is judged individually on its own merits based on each judge’s individual perception of excellence.

All judging criteria and procedures, including scoring scale, minimum scores required for nomination, and tie-breaking procedures, are determined by the National Awards Committee.

In order to maintain fair, consistent peer judging without influence, judges must not disclose how they voted. If a judge ignores or abuses this policy, their ballot will be disqualified and/or their judging status revoked.

JUDGING RESPONSIBILITIES

Judges are invited to respond to an optional series of demographic survey questions. If a judge declines to participate, that fact is kept confidential and has no impact on the judge's potential role as an Emmy judge or otherwise, in any manner whatsoever. Demographic information is not associated with ballot results in any way. Accordingly, survey data is representative of the full population of registered judges, and not of the subset of judges from whom completed ballots are received. All information is gathered consistent with [NATAS's Key Principles For Collecting Personal Data](#).

If a judge chooses to participate, that judge may further choose to make their responses available to NATAS to facilitate equitable representation on specific judging panels, or the judge may elect for their responses to be kept anonymous and used only for aggregate analysis.

NATAS encourages all networks, platforms, production companies and other content creators, whose employees make up the majority of the judging pool, to focus on increased diversity in their companies and on their sets and to encourage participation in the Emmy judging process. To this end, NATAS will share anonymized survey data with organizations represented by significant numbers of judges so that such companies may better understand the current diversity of their submitted judges and work with NATAS toward increased representation in future cycles.

More broadly, NATAS proactively pursues dialogue and solutions with individual company Diversity Officers and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), industry executives, and allied trade associations and community organizations to further promote diversity within the television industry as a whole.

JUDGING METHODOLOGY

1. SCORING SCALE

Submissions in NATAS contests are scored on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being the highest possible score and 1 being the lowest possible score.

2. NOMINEE COUNT

In each category, there is a default target of one (1) winner and five (5) nominees. In any category where the tabulated scores result in such a clearly-defined winner and collection of nominees, one (1) winner and five (5) nominees will be so-certified. The target nominee count for a category may be reduced or increased, at the direction of the National Awards Committee, in proportion to the number of entries in the category as it relates to the competition average.

3. TRACKING

When two or more adjacent crafts, program genres, or production techniques within a craft or genre lack sufficient submissions to be competitive categories on their own, NATAS may opt to combine into a single category. That category may be tracked or not tracked. If tracked, the different subsets within the category will be designated as such and nominated according to their proportion of entries within the category. The minority track is rounded up to the nearest 20%, still subject to minimum viability rules.

4. MINIMUM VIABILITY FOR NOMINATION

In general, submissions must have an average judge-assigned score of 4.0 (“Good – Worthy of a Nomination”) or greater to qualify for nomination. No submission shall be eligible for nomination if the average judges’ score is less than 3.0 (“Average – Potentially Worthy of a Nomination”). Submissions with average scores between 3.0 and 4.0 may be nominated at the discretion of the National Awards Committee.

5. TIEBREAKING

Ties for the win will be broken, if possible, by comparing the high scores for each tied entry (the number of 7’s and 6’s received by each tied entry). In cases where ties cannot be broken by this method, there may be multiple winning entries in a given category.

Ties for nomination, not affecting the win, will not be broken and all tied entries will instead be nominated if the resulting number of nominations will remain within the maximum number of allowable nominations. The maximum number of nominations is seven (7) by default, but may be reduced or increased, at the direction of the National Awards Committee, in proportion to the number of entries in the category as it relates to the competition average.

Ties for nomination that would result in a number of nominees in excess of the maximum nomination number will be broken using the methodology applied to ties for the win.

6. NATURAL CUTOFFS

When a statistically significant distinction appears in the distribution of tabulated scores such that, in the consideration of the National Awards Committee, that distinction presents a more appropriate method for nominee selection, the Committee may, at its option, employ that method.

7. JUDGING IMPROPRIETY

Judging scores and behavioral patterns are monitored via algorithms for potential outliers that may indicate improper behavior such as coordination, bias, or manipulation. Ballots identified by the algorithms are investigated by the competition auditor, who then determines whether to refer the matter to the National Awards Committee for further discussion and/or adjudication. All matters determined to be instances of judging impropriety requiring Committee action are subsequently disclosed in the Transparency report.

8. ANONYMITY

All determinations by the National Awards Committee regarding target and maximum nominee counts, nomination viability, natural cutoffs, and judging impropriety are conducted entirely on the basis of anonymized scores provided by the auditor. At no time are Committee members provided names of submissions, judges, or any other identifying information which could impact their decision. Except where necessary, the affected category is not even disclosed. Some identifying information may be disclosed to the Committee and Administrative staff for further investigation and corrective purposes after the conclusion of the competition and associated ceremony only.

9. TRANSPARENCY REPORT

NATAS publicly releases a Transparency Report for each competition outlining statistics as well as instances in which significant judgment calls are made by contest administration and/or the National Awards Committee regarding eligibility, ballot disqualification, or other matters which may have impacted the outcome of the competition. The report is anonymized as much as possible to protect privacy while providing insight into the complex, often difficult, discussions and decisions that form the bedrock of any fair competition.

JUDGING RECRUITMENT

Competition judges must receive no remuneration, compensation, or other consideration for their efforts as judges.

Entities and/or individuals must not offer compensation of any kind to anyone for signing up to be a competition judge - be it via payment, quid pro quo voting, or by way of offering to provide access to events or other benefits.

Organizations submitting entries are encouraged to recruit people from their respective organizations to serve as judges (“internal recruiting”).

However, any use of “coordinated recruitment” or “recruiting programs” of the nature below-described, shall be deemed strictly prohibited unless approved in advance by NATAS on a case-by-case basis in the manner as follows:

- (A). Any proposed hosting of an event with invitees from outside the submitting organization for the express purpose of recruiting judges; or
- (B). Any proposed distribution of any materials to more than fifty (50) persons outside the submitting organization with the express purpose of recruiting judges; must in either case first be reported to NATAS contest administration in writing and in advance of the proposed initiative. The proposed initiative must not be taken unless approved in writing and in advance by NATAS in each case, which NATAS may elect to render, or not, in its sole discretion.

Additionally, on their judging applications, all proposed judges must fully disclose as a potential conflict-of-interest any and all relationships that they may have to any “recruiting program” or “coordinated recruitment”, other than the aforementioned permitted internal recruiting conducted by the corresponding entrant organization itself.

Any failure by either the entrant or the judge to fully disclose to NATAS all activities of coordinated recruitment and all recruiting programs, is grounds for disqualification of the judge’s ballot, and disqualification of the competition entry or entries corresponding to the coordinated recruitment or recruiting program and the entrant, each in the sole discretion of NATAS.

“FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION”

As the nominees and recipients are decided in the same round of judging via scores, all so-called “For Your Consideration” campaigns are of limited, if any, usefulness surrounding NATAS competitions and are discouraged.

PRELIMINARY VERSUS BLUE RIBBON

The result in most categories is determined by a single “Blue Ribbon” round of judging that decides both the nominees and the recipient (or recipients) in the category. In the majority of cases, there is no additional round of judging after nominations are announced in which winners are chosen. At NATAS’ discretion, a juried round of judging to select honorees may take place after nominations are announced.

Where a category receives a large number of entries, resulting in screening sessions that would exceed what is deemed a reasonable viewing length for a single judging round, it will undergo a Preliminary Judging Round. Depending each year upon the number of entries per category, various categories in various contests will be routed through such a Preliminary Judging Round, whereby the number of entries are narrowed down prior to commencement of the “Blue Ribbon” round.

Categories with a high proportion of self-published entries, such as those distributed on user-generated video-sharing platforms, may also be routed to a Preliminary Judging Round at the discretion of contest administrators.

The results of a Preliminary Judging Round are merely procedural; they are not publicly announced, and are not considered “nominations,” “prenominations,” or any other formal recognition.

RANDOMIZED SECOND ROUND PANEL COMBINATION

Typically, in categories where the number of submissions require two rounds of judging: a) a number of subpanels are created for the first round of judging, and each subpanel is judged by a single group of judges and b) a single second round panel is created from the highest scoring first round entries. The second round panel is judged by a single group of judges, and winners and nominees are determined from the results of that second round panel. In cases where the number of first round subpanels are inordinately large (for example categories with a large number of entries with lengthy running times) it may be necessary to create two second round subpanels in which entries will be distributed randomly to ensure equal consideration by two groups of second round judges, and nominees and winners will be determined from the combined results of those panels.

BALLOT CONFIDENTIALITY

All judges for NATAS contests are expressly forbidden from disclosing, to anyone, what entries they judged, their opinion of materials viewed, or the scores they assigned. This prohibition applies, without limitation, to any communications with colleagues, friends, family members, other judges, other submitters, the press, on social media, or elsewhere. Violations of this policy may result in disqualification of the ballot and/or judge, and potential disqualification of associated submissions.

CHALLENGES AND/OR INAPPROPRIATE SITUATIONS

The fair adjudication of all NATAS competitions is of foremost importance. Any individual or organization that has observed potential impropriety or inappropriate behavior by any entrant, judge, administration staff, or others in the course of the competition, or that has any concerns about a submission, judging, or other awards procedures or processes, is encouraged to report the matter immediately to NATAS by sending an email to reports@theemmys.tv.

All substantive reports will be thoroughly investigated and may be summarized in the Transparency Report. The identity of the reporting party shall be kept confidential.

RESULTS CONFIDENTIALITY

From the time of the nomination announcement until the winners are announced at the respective live ceremonies, the identities of award recipients in judged categories are known only by an independent accounting firm, unless exceptional production accommodations are made for prerecorded presentations or emergency situations. Any such exceptions must be approved in writing by the chairs of NATAS and the National Awards Committee and shall be disclosed during the ceremony itself.

In the case of juried panels, jurors are required to maintain confidentiality until the award is announced.

Lifetime Achievement Emmy Award honorees, Gold & Silver Circle inductees and scholarship recipients are known to contest administration and announced prior to the ceremony.