

# [***Anti- Woke Critics Target The Oscars But Here s What The Academy s New Diversity Rules Actually Require***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68HF-RY81-DXVP-50MH-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** Some right-wing critics are zeroing in on an onscreen diversity standard, which is only one of four requirements of which just two must be met for Best Picture eligibility.

**Body**

**Topline**

The Oscars are the latest in a long line of targets branded as woke over rules that are set to take place next year to encourage diversity among Best Picture nominees but some right-wing critics are erroneously stating that all nominees must meet an onscreen diversity requirement, which is just one of several standards that could be met for eligibility.

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The Academy s new standards governing diversity for Best Picture nominees will take effect with next year s ceremony.

VALERIE MACON/AFP via Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

The Academy announced in September 2020 a set ofrulesto encourage diversity would take effect with the upcoming 96th Oscars ceremony in March 2024.

To be eligible for Best Picture, the ceremony s top prize, a film must meet two of four new diversity standards.

The first, Standard A, which has come under fire from conservatives, can be met in one of three ways: 1) Either one lead or significant supporting character is from an underrepresented racial or ethnic group; 2) at least 30% of the acting ensemble is from at least two underrepresented groups (women, the LGBTQ community, disabled or deaf people, or people from an underrepresented racial or ethnic group); and 3) the storyline centers on an underrepresented group.

Screenshots of just Standard A have circulated on social media as some right-wing criticsfalsely statefilms must meet this requirement, when in practice they could be eligible for Best Picture by satisfying two of the other three.

Standard B: Films must meet one of three criteria: At least two creative leaders or department heads (including casting directors, cinematographers, composers and more) must be from an underrepresented group, at least six crew or technical positions must be from an underrepresented group, or at least 30% of the crew must be from an underrepresented group.

Standard C: The film s production, distribution or financing companies offer paid internship or apprenticeships and training opportunities for people from underrepresented groups.

Standard D: The film studio must have multiple senior executives from underrepresented groups on its marketing, publicity or distribution teams.

The Academy announced these policies five years after the #OscarsSoWhiteboycott, in which activists criticized the Oscars for nominating all white actors at the 2015 ceremony.

**Chief Critics**

Fox News host Tomi Lahrencalledthe diversity requirements a snake eating its own tail, suggesting that whiny, rich, white Hollywood liberals are going to be out of work as these rules take effect. Some of the social media outrage was sparked because of viral misinformation: Popular right-wing Twitter account End Wokeness tweeteda screenshot of just Standard A (which has been retweeted thousands and viewed millions of times) and falsely stated that films must meet the onscreen diversity requirement to be eligible. Oscar winner Richard Dreyfuss blasted the diversity rules last month: No one should be telling me as an artist that I have to give in to the latest, most current idea of what morality is, hesaid. The **New York Post** quotedan anonymous director who called the requirements ridiculous, stating: I m for diversity, but to make you cast certain types of people if you want to get nominated? That makes the whole process contrived. Some, including the**New York Post**, speculated that films like**The Godfather** would not win Best Picture today, with one social media usersuggestingit is too white & too male.

**Contra**

The diversity requirements may seem strict on the surface but will likely be easy for films to satisfy, the **New York Times** reportedin 2020, given that studios may already have internship programs and many women and gay men work in publicity. The first criteria of Standard A, which mandates one lead or significant supporting character must be from an underrepresented racial or ethnic group, would have been an easy bar to clear for predominantly white Best Picture nominees like**La La Land** and**Joker**, which featured Black actors John Legend and Zazie Beetz, respectively, in supporting roles, the **Times** reported. The new requirements drew some praise: Activist April Reign, who started the #OscarsSoWhite campaign,calledit another step forward toward equity and inclusion but stated we are far from there. Film producer Axel Kuschevatzkytweetedhe fully supports the new standards, which hecalled important.

**Tangent**

The Oscars and other award shows have faced criticism in recent years over what critics say is a lack of diversity among nominees. The British Academy Film Awards, Britain s most prestigious film awards, announced similardiversity requirementsin 2016 for two categories, Outstanding British Film and Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer. To be eligible for these categories, films must meet diversity requirements in two of four areas, which are similar to those later implemented by the Oscars: onscreen representation and themes, project leadership, industry access or opportunities for diversity in audience development. BAFTA laterannounceda significant overhaul to their awards process in 2020, after it nominated all white actors and all male directors, including mandating unconscious bias training for voters; adding more than 1,000 members to the voting pool, with a focus on underrepresented groups; and implementing a quota for women on the best director award long list.

**Key Background**

Companies deemed woke have drawn online right-wing outrage one by one over the past several months. Conservatives boycotted Bud Light in April for sending transgender TikTok creator Dylan Mulvaney, known for documenting her gender transition, a customized can with her face on it, starting a wave of momentum that has targeted others like Nike (which also collaborated with Mulvaney), Target and Kohl s. The most recent targets include country musicianGarth Brooks, who angered conservatives by pledging to sell all beers, including Bud Light, at his new Nashville bar, andMark Cuban, who offended conservative commentators and fellow**Shark Tank** star Kevin O Leary for calling wokeness good business. Conversely, Starbucks recentlyfaced criticismfrom the left and self-congratulatory reactions from the right after a workers union, Starbucks Workers United, accused the company long known as an LGBTQ ally of banning stores from putting up Pride decorations. The company refuted this, stating no policy regarding Pride decorations had changed.

**Surprising Fact**

This year s Oscars ceremony made some strides towarddiversity:**Everything Everywhere All At Once**, which stars a predominantly Asian cast, won a leading seven awards, including Best Picture, and Michelle Yeoh became the first Asian woman to win Best Actress. Four Asian actors in total were nominated, the most ever in a single year. The ceremony still garneredcriticism, however, for snubbing Black actresses Viola Davis (**The Woman King**) and Danielle Deadwyler (**Till**), who many awards pundits considered locks for nominations.

**Further Reading**

The Oscars New Diversity Rules Are Sweeping but Safe(**The New York Times**)

Garth Brooks, Cracker Barrel Are The Latest Targets Of LGBTQ Culture Wars: Here Are All The Others From Bud Light To Target(Forbes)

What Does Woke Even Mean? How A Decades-Old Racial Justice Term Became Co-Opted By ***Politics***(Forbes)

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