

Definition of Specialised Film - full version

The UK market, in common with most others around the world, is generally driven by mainstream, US studio-originated material. In such a context, specialised films offer audiences a different experience of cinema. Such films are often characterised by an innovative cinematic style and by an engagement with challenging subject matter. As such, specialised films will challenge and educate audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

The UK Film Council's definition of 'specialised' in this context, therefore, is quite broad and relates to those films that do not sit easily within a mainstream and highly commercial genre. They may be characterised as being predominantly from the independent production sector (although they may be being handled by a mainstream, studio-based distributor), or made with a relatively low production budget (e.g. as compared to a Hollywood production), and have a focus that is more script and character than effect and event driven and might be expected to appeal at present to a more narrow audience segment than a more mainstream film.

Specifically the UK Film Council will consider the following criteria when assessing whether or not a film qualifies as Specialised.

Foreign language with subtitles

In almost all circumstances a film of this type will be classified as 'specialised'. Examples include; *Hero*, *Downfall*, *The Consequences of Love*, *Aaltra*, etc.

Documentaries

Again, under almost all circumstances documentaries will be classified as specialised. Examples include; *Fahrenheit 911*, *Touching the Void*, *Super Size Me*, *Tarnation* etc.

Archive/classic films

Notwithstanding the focus of the original film or the language it is presented in, and the audience which today it might appeal to, archive or classic films will be regarded as specialised. Examples might include; *The Leopard*, *Gone With The Wind*, *The Big Red One*, etc.

For films that do not fall into these categories, other criteria will be applied. Specifically consideration will be given to:

Genre

Whereas mainstream films might be regarded as falling within popular and recognisable genres (e.g. Comedy, Romance, Period, Crime/Thriller, Horror, Action, Sci-Fi). Specialised films are often less easy to define and thus more difficult to categorise in this way. Examples include: *21 Grams*, *American Splendor*, *Enduring Love*, *Somersault* etc.

Hook or USP

With mainstream films, the subject matter is generally immediately obvious, appealing and easy to communicate to audiences. Specialised films often deal with more complex and challenging subject matters that are less easy to communicate. Examples include: *The Station Agent*, *Garden State*, *Solaris*, *Palindromes* etc.

Cinematic style

Within the mainstream genre, the film's narrative and cinematic style are generally quite straightforward, uncomplex, conventional and with high production values. Specialised films are often characterised as having a more innovative or unconventional storytelling style or aesthetic and may deviate from the straightforward narrative structure found in mainstream cinema. Overall, the film is more dependent on story, character development and a challenging subject matter than on high production values, effects and star names. For example: *Sideways*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *I Heart Huckabees*, *Elephant*, *Dogville* etc.