

## **Halo Fest 2026 – Short Film Contest – Official Rules**

### 1. SPONSOR

These Official Rules (“Rules”) govern the operation of the Halo Fest 2026 – Short Film Contest (the “Contest”). Microsoft’s Halo Studios, One Microsoft Way, Redmond, Washington, 98052 is the Contest Sponsor (“Sponsor”). ESL FACEIT Group (“EFG”) is the prize provider for this Contest.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

In these Rules, “Microsoft”, “Halo Studios”, “we”, “our”, and “us”, refer to Sponsor and “you” and “yourself” refers to a Contest participant, or the parent/legal guardian of any Contest entrant who has not reached the age of majority to contractually obligate themselves in their legal place of residence. By entering you (your parent/legal guardian if you are not the age of majority in your legal place of residence) agree to be bound by these Rules. “Event” means the Halo Fest held in the Seattle Convention Center in Seattle, Washington from December 11, 2026 until December 13, 2026.

### 3. ENTRY PERIOD

The Contest starts at 12:01 a.m. Pacific Time (“PT”) on September 1, 2026, and ends at 11:59 p.m. PT on November 2, 2026 (“Entry Period”).

### 4. ELIGIBILITY

To enter, you must be eighteen (18) years of age or older. If you are eighteen (18) years of age or older but have not reached the age of majority in your legal place of residence, then you must have consent of a parent/legal guardian.

Employees and directors of Microsoft Corporation, Halo Studios, EFG, and its subsidiaries, affiliates, advertising agencies, and Contest Parties are not eligible, nor are persons involved in the execution or administration of this promotion, or the family members of each above (parents, children, siblings, spouse/domestic partners, or individuals residing in the same household). Void where prohibited by law.

### 5. HOW TO ENTER

No purchase necessary. To register to participate, you must visit the Contest website at <https://aka.ms/HaloFest-ShortFilm> and complete the registration form. All required areas must be completed to register.

To create an entry, you must create a short film inspired by Halo and the Halo Universe. Your film must meet the requirements provided in Section 6 (Eligible Entry):

To submit your entry complete the following steps:

- Create a new or use an existing account on YouTube
- Upload your film to YouTube

- Visit the Contest website and follow the instructions to submit your entry, including acceptance of a Media Release Form. This includes submitting your entry in one of the following categories:

Category Name	Description
Live Action	Predominantly live action with human actors. May include VFX, 3D models, etc.
3D Animation	Predominantly 3D animated. May include stop motion
2D Animation	Predominantly 2D animated (hand drawn, anime/cartoon, etc.). May include stop motion
Machinima	Created using in-game captured footage with additional effects or animation layered on top
Montage	Gameplay highlight montage with music overlay

- After submitting your contest form, you will receive an email invitation with upload instructions. Follow these instructions to upload a copy of your entry in a broadcast-ready file via Media Shuttle.

The entry limit is one (1) entry per Category, per person/group. Any attempt by you to obtain more than the stated number of entries by using multiple/different accounts, email addresses, identities, registrations, logins, or any other methods will void your entries and you may be disqualified. Use of any automated system to participate is prohibited.

We are not responsible for excess, lost, late, or incomplete entries. If disputed, entries will be deemed submitted by the “authorized account holder” of the email address, social media account, or other method used to enter. The “authorized account holder” is the natural person assigned to an email address by an internet or online service provider, or other organization responsible for assigning email addresses.

## 6. ELIGIBLE ENTRY

To be eligible, an entry must meet the following content/technical requirements:

### 6.1 General Requirements:

- Runtime: Between two (2) and five (5) minutes
- Any non-English dialogue must include **English subtitles (baked into the video)**
- No variable frame rate
- No mixed frame rates
- No HDR
- No clipped audio
- No black frames at the start or end
- No freeze, dropped, or duplicate frames
- All text and graphics must remain within **title-safe areas**
- If you include music in your film, such music must be:
  - Official Halo Music, except for the songs on the restricted music list, as provided in Appendix 1 to these Rules.
  - Original music created by entrant

- Your entry must be your own original work. The video must be solely the work of the team, including but not limited to, the actual filming, editing, graphic design, etc. of the video.
- Your entry cannot have been selected as a winner in any other contest; **and**
- You must have obtained all consents, approvals, or licenses required for you to submit your entry. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes permission from all persons appearing in your entry to use their likeness as part of your entry.
- To the extent that entry requires the submission of user-generated content such as software, photos, videos, music, artwork, essays, etc., entrants warrant that their entry is their original work, has not been copied from others without permission or apparent rights, and does not violate the privacy, intellectual property rights, or other rights of any other person or entity. You may include Microsoft trademarks, logos, and designs, for which Microsoft grants you a limited license to use for the sole purposes of submitting an entry into this Contest.
- Your entry may NOT contain, as determined by us in our sole and absolute discretion, any content that is obscene or offensive, excessively or graphically violent (i.e. beyond the level of violence depicted in existing official Halo media), defamatory, disparaging, or illegal, or that promotes alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, or a particular political agenda, or that communicates messages that may reflect negatively on the goodwill of Microsoft.

## 6.2.YouTube Submission Requirements

- Video must be **public on YouTube**
- Resolution: **720p minimum (1080p–4K recommended)**
- Any non-English dialogue must include **English subtitles**, either:
  - Baked into the video, or
  - Added as YouTube captions / SRT
- Keep all text, titles, and graphics within **title-safe areas**
- Audio must be **clear and in sync**

## 6.3.Broadcast File Submission (Required)

### File Naming Convention

- Format: YourAlias\_NameOfVideo
- Example: MasterChief417\_BestDayEver

### Broadcast Technical Specifications

- Codec: **H.264**
- Resolution: **1920 x 1080**
- Frame Rate: **59.94p**
- Bitrate: **CBR 30 Mbps (Constant Bit Rate)**
- Color: **Rec. 709**

### Audio Requirements

- **48 kHz, 24-bit stereo**
- **-24 LKFS integrated loudness**
- Max true peak: **-2 dBTP**
- Audio must remain **in sync for full duration**

## 7. USE OF YOUR ENTRY

We are not claiming ownership rights to your Submission. However, by submitting an entry, you grant us an irrevocable, royalty-free, worldwide right and license to (a) use, review, assess, test and otherwise analyze your entry and all its content in connection with this Contest, and (b) use your entry in any media whatsoever now known or later invented for any non-commercial or commercial purpose, including, but not limited to, the marketing, sale or promotion of Microsoft products or services, without further permission from you. You will not receive any compensation or credit for use of your entry, other than what is described in these Official Rules.

By entering you acknowledge that we may have developed or commissioned materials similar or identical to your entry and you waive any claims resulting from any similarities to your entry. Further you understand that we will not restrict work assignments of representatives who have had access to your entry and you agree that use of information in our representatives' unaided memories in the development or deployment of our products or services does not create liability for us under this agreement or copyright or trade secret law.

Your entry may be posted on a public website or displayed during the Event. We are not responsible for any unauthorized use of your entry by visitors to this website or Event Attendees. We are not obligated to use your entry for any purpose, even if it has been selected as a winning entry.

## 8. WINNER SELECTION AND NOTIFICATION

Pending confirmation of eligibility, potential winners will be selected in each Category by Microsoft, our designated agent, or a qualified judging panel (collectively, the "Judges") by no later than the date of the Event from among all eligible entries based on the following judging criteria ("Judging Criteria"):

- 33% - Originality / Creativity: Creativity, humor, originality, theming, and overall entertainment value.
- 33% - Quality of Execution: Demonstrated filmmaking skill, including editing, storytelling and technical execution.
- 33% - Passion / Emotional impact: Demonstrated connection to the Halo Universe and the creator's passion for the franchise.

In the event of a tie between any eligible entries, an additional Judge will break the tie based on the Judging Criteria. The decisions of the Judges are final and binding. If we do not receive enough entries meeting the entry requirements, we may, at our discretion, select fewer winners than the number of Contest Prizes described below.

Potential Winners will be announced live at the Event, and will be contacted via the contact information provided during entry no more than seven (7) days following judging with prize claim instructions and tax form ("Forms"), including submission deadlines. If a selected winner cannot be contacted, is ineligible, fails to claim a prize or fails to return any Forms, the selected winner will forfeit their prize and an alternate winner will be selected. If you are a potential winner and you are eighteen (18) years of age or older, but have not reached the age of majority in your legal place of residence, we may require your parent/legal guardian to sign all required forms on your behalf. Only

three (3) alternate winners will be selected, after which unclaimed prizes will remain unawarded. The winners will be publicly announced during the Event.

## 9. PRIZES

The following prizes will be awarded in each Category:

**One (1) First Prize.** Each first place winner will receive:

A cash prize, to be awarded as a check made payable to the winner. Approximate Retail Value (ARV) \$1,500.00 USD.

**One (1) Second Prize.** Each second place winner will receive:

A cash prize, to be awarded as a check made payable to the winner. Approximate Retail Value (ARV) \$500.00 USD.

The total approximate retail value of all prizes is **\$10,000.00 USD**.

We will only award one (1) prize per person during the Entry Period. No more than the stated number of prizes will be awarded. No substitution, transfer, or assignment of prize permitted, except that Microsoft reserves the right to substitute a prize of equal or greater value in the event the offered prize is unavailable. Prizes will be sent no later than twenty-eight (28) days after winner notification. Prize winners may be required to complete and return prize claim and/or tax forms ("Forms") within the deadline stated in the winner notification. Taxes on the prize, if any, are the sole responsibility of the winner, who is advised to seek independent counsel regarding the tax implications of accepting a prize. By accepting a prize, you agree that Microsoft may use your entry, name, image and hometown online and in print, or in any other media, in connection with this Contest without payment or compensation to you, except where prohibited by law.

## 10. ODDS

The odds of winning are based on the number and quality of eligible entries received.

## 11. GENERAL CONDITIONS AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY

To the extent allowed by law, by entering you agree to release and hold harmless Microsoft and its respective parents, partners, subsidiaries, affiliates, employees, and agents from any and all liability or any injury, loss, or damage of any kind arising in connection with this Contest or any prize won. All local laws apply. The decisions of Microsoft are final and binding.

We reserve the right to cancel, change, or suspend this Contest for any reason, including cheating, technology failure, catastrophe, war, or any other unforeseen or unexpected event that affects the integrity of this Contest, whether human or mechanical. If the integrity of the Contest cannot be restored, we may select winners from among all eligible entries received before we had to cancel, change or suspend the Contest.

If you attempt or we have strong reason to believe that you have compromised the integrity or the legitimate operation of this Contest by cheating, hacking, creating a bot or other automated program, or by committing fraud in any way, we may seek damages from you to the full extent of the law and you may be banned from participation in future Microsoft promotions.

## 12. GOVERNING LAW

This Contest will be governed by the laws of the State of Washington, and you consent to the exclusive jurisdiction and venue of the courts of the State of Washington for any disputes arising out of this Contest.

## 13. WINNERS LIST

Send an email to [HaloHCSAll@halostudios.com](mailto:HaloHCSAll@halostudios.com) with the subject line "HALO FEST 2026 SHORT FILM CONTEST WINNERS" within thirty (30) days of December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026 to receive a list of winners.

## 14. PRIVACY

Your privacy is important to us. Microsoft uses the personal data you provide to *notify you of important information about our products, upgrades and enhancements, and to send you information about other Microsoft products and services*. We share your personal data with your consent or as necessary to complete any transaction or provide any service you have requested. We also share data with Microsoft-controlled affiliates and subsidiaries; with vendors working on our behalf; when required by law or to respond to legal process; to protect our customers; to protect lives; to maintain the security of our services; and to protect the rights or property of Microsoft. Microsoft is committed to protecting the security of your personal data. We use a variety of security technologies and procedures to help protect your personal information from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. Your personal data is never shared outside the company without your permission, except under the conditions explained above. For more information about Microsoft's Privacy Practices, see <https://aka.ms/privacy>.

If you believe that Microsoft has not adhered to this statement, please contact us at <https://aka.ms/privacyresponse>. We will respond to questions within thirty (30) days.

**Appendix 1**  
Restricted Music List

<b>Game</b>	<b>Album Title</b>	<b>Track #</b>	<b>Song Title</b>	<b>Artist</b>
Halo 2	Halo 2 Original Soundtrack: Volume 1	1	Halo Theme MJOLNIR Mix	Steve Vai
Halo 2	Halo 2 Original Soundtrack: Volume 1	2	Blow Me Away	Breaking Benjamin
Halo 2	Halo 2 Original Soundtrack: Volume 1	5	Follow (1st Movement of The Odyssey)	Incubus
Halo 2	Halo 2 Original Soundtrack: Volume 1	9	Never Surrender	Nile Rodgers & Nararaj
Halo 2	Halo 2 Original Soundtrack: Volume 1	11	2nd Movement of The Odyssey	Incubus
Halo 2	Halo 2 Original Soundtrack: Volume 1	15	3rd Movement of The Odyssey	Incubus
Halo 2	Halo 2 Original Soundtrack: Volume 1	19	4th Movement of The Odyssey	Incubus
Halo 2	Halo 2 Original Soundtrack: Volume 1	21	Connected ("Bonus Song")	Hoobastank
Halo 4	Halo 4 Soundtrack	12	117	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	Halo 4 Soundtrack Volume 2	1	Atonement	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	Halo 4 Soundtrack Volume 2	2	Gravity	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	Halo 4 Soundtrack Volume 2	3	Wreckage	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	Halo 4 Soundtrack Volume 2	7	Escape	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	Halo 4 Soundtrack	12	Lasky's Theme	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	Halo 4 Soundtrack	16	Intruders	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	Halo 4 Soundtrack	17	Mantis	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	Halo 4 Soundtrack	18	Sacrifice	Kazuma Jinnouchi

<b>Game</b>	<b>Album Title</b>	<b>Track #</b>	<b>Song Title</b>	<b>Artist</b>
Halo 4	Halo 4 Soundtrack	19	Never Forget - Midnight	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	Halo 4 Soundtrack	20	Majestic	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	Generic Action	n/a	Skirmish	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	M10Opening	n/a	When You Need Me	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	M20 Tower	n/a	Veritgo	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	M32 Infinity	n/a	Mayday	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	M42 End	n/a	Ascendant	Kazuma Jinnouchi
Halo 4	M80 Opening	n/a	Installation 04	Kazuma Jinnouchi