

2026-2027 Magic City Film Exchange

1. Overview

By submitting an application or film to the Film Exchange Festival or participating in the Film Exchange Fellowship, you agree to the following Terms and Conditions. These terms apply to all student participants, team members, and their parent/guardian (if under 18). Failure to comply may result in disqualification, forfeiture of awards, or removal from the Fellowship.

2. Eligibility

- Applicants must be currently enrolled in a public high school or career/technical program within Jefferson, Shelby, Tuscaloosa, Walker, Blount, Cullman, or St. Clair County, Alabama. Applicants may enter only one regional competition: Dothan or Birmingham.
 - Team size is limited to two (2) student filmmakers per project. Actors or on-screen talent do not count toward this limit.
 - Films must be student-created. No outside professional help (editing, filming, or producing) is permitted.
 - All applicants must have parent/guardian's consent.
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3. Film Competition Rules

- Films must be 1–3 minutes in length (credits excluded).
 - The film must relate to the 2026 Film Exchange prompt, “Dear Future”: A short film competition about creativity, artificial intelligence, and what should remain human. Tell us what you hope happens to creativity as artificial intelligence becomes more present in how we write, design, and see the world. What should AI help us create? What should always remain human? Your film does not have to look or sound like a traditional letter. It could be a comedy, a fictional story, a news broadcast from the future, or even a genre we have not named. Speak directly to the future, imagine yourself living in it, or create a world that shows us what you hope it becomes. Have fun with the form. Surprise us. Make something only you would make. The future is still being written. This is your chance to speak into it.
 - Submissions must be original work produced by the student(s).
 - Films must not contain profanity, explicit content, violence, or material deemed inappropriate by organizers.
 - All music, footage, and images must be copyright-free, original, or licensed for use.
 - By submitting, you confirm you have obtained all necessary location and talent releases.
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4. Submission Requirements

- All films must be posted publicly on TikTok, Instagram, or Facebook with the hashtags #FilmExchange and #AlabamaCreates. Students who do not use social media may instead submit a Google Drive link set to “Anyone with the link can view.” Social media submission is preferred.
 - Students must also complete the official Film Exchange Application Form at alabamacreates.com/filmexchange
 - The submission deadline is October 30, 2026, at 11:59 PM CST.
 - Late, incomplete, or ineligible submissions will not be judged.
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5. Judging and Awards

- All films will be judged by an independent panel using the following criteria:
 - Creativity and Storytelling (25%)
 - Technical Quality (25%)
 - Theme Connection (25%)
 - Overall Impact (25%)
 - Judges' decisions are final and may not be appealed.
 - 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners will receive Film Exchange Fellowship invitations and prize packages (see Section 6).
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6. Film Exchange Fellowship & Equipment Policy

Fellowship Duration

- January–May 2027 (includes an opening weekend training and monthly real-world projects). Exact dates will be communicated to competition winners.
- Participants will be paired with a professional industry mentor for ongoing guidance.

Equipment Package

Each winning filmmaker receives:

- MacBook
- Professional Camera + Lens Kit
- One Year of Professional Creative Software Access
- Shotgun Microphone
- 128GB SD Card
- Tripod

- Studio Headphones
 - External SSD
 - Micro-Grant for Website, Business Cards, and Professional Attire
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Retention & Completion Requirements

- All equipment and cash prizes awarded through the Film Exchange Fellowship are yours to keep once you have fully completed the program and its required five (5) work-based learning projects.
 - “Full completion” means:
 1. Attending the January Opening-Weekend Training in full,
 2. Successfully completing one client-style project each month (assigned by Film Exchange leadership, January through May),
 3. Submitting all deliverables on time and to professional standard, and
 4. Participating in the May showcase.
 - Participants who do not complete the full Fellowship—including all five projects—may forfeit eligibility for certification and recognition and may be required to return all equipment. In this scenario, if the equipment is damaged or missing, the parent/legal guardian will be responsible for reimbursing Student Creative Exchange DBA AlabamaCreates for the original cost of the equipment.
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7. Conduct and Participation

- Fellows must uphold professional standards in communication, punctuality, and project delivery.
- Offensive, disruptive, or disrespectful behavior may result in dismissal and forfeiture of equipment.
- Students must comply with all school, community, and state laws during filming and fellowship participation.

- Attendance at all required sessions (training, mentorship meetings, reviews, and showcase) is mandatory.
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8. Intellectual Property & Media Use

- Students retain copyright ownership of their films.
 - By entering, students grant Student Creative Exchange DBA AlabamaCreates, Film Exchange, and their partners the right to screen, share, and promote their work for educational and promotional purposes—without additional compensation.
 - The organizers may use the student's name, image, likeness, and school name in media coverage, press releases, and promotional materials.
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9. Safety & Liability

- All filming must comply with safety regulations and school policies.
 - Student Creative Exchange DBA AlabamaCreates, Film Exchange, and affiliated partners are not liable for injury, loss, or damage incurred during participation, production, or Fellowship activities.
 - Participants assume full responsibility for their safety, conduct, and equipment use.
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10. Communication & Updates

- Participants and parents/guardians consent to receive email and SMS notifications about program deadlines, workshops, and events.
 - It is the participant's responsibility to monitor communication and respond promptly.
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11. Disqualification & Withdrawal

- The Film Exchange reserves the right to disqualify any participant who violates these terms, provides false information, or fails to meet deadlines.
 - Students may voluntarily withdraw but must notify organizers immediately and return all issued equipment.
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12. Agreement

By submitting your application, you acknowledge that:

1. You have read and understood these Terms and Conditions.
2. You agree to abide by all rules of the Film Exchange Festival and Fellowship.
3. You (and your parent/guardian, if under 18) consent to the use of your image and film for promotional and educational purposes.
4. You understand that violation of these terms may result in disqualification and/or forfeiture of awards.