



**BBFC Guide to
Nudity**

BBFC Guide to Nudity

Audience expectations regarding nudity can depend upon the context in which it appears and how it is presented.

Nudity in the context of a sex scene or presented in a sexualised manner, for example, is more likely to be classified more highly than nudity which is wholly natural.

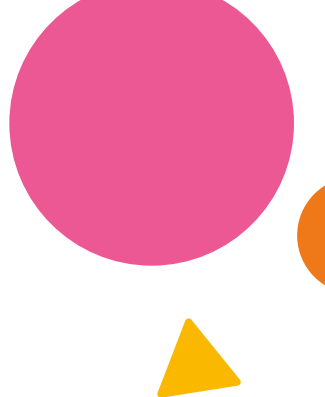
At U and PG natural nudity may occur if it is free of any sexualisation. Examples include someone getting dressed or breastfeeding, or footage of indigenous tribal communities in a documentary. Natural nudity may also occur in artistic contexts, such as statues or paintings, or in content aimed at children that is presented in a comic and undetailed manner, such as the cheeky sight of someone's buttocks in an animated adventure.

When there is a sexual context, nudity will be classified at a higher age rating. This could include nudity in seemingly natural contexts, such as a person showering, but if the content presents the nudity in a titillatory manner it becomes sexualised. Nudity in a sexual context at 12A/12 must be brief and discreet.

If sexualised nudity is focussed upon or frequent, such as scenes set in a strip club, then the content is much more likely to be suitable at 15. An 18 may be required if the sexualised nudity is pervasive or there is focus on sexualised genital detail.

Pornographic content, which is created with the primary purpose of arousing the viewer through extensive or gratuitous nudity, will be rated at 18 or even R18, depending on the level of detail.

To find out more, see the case studies included in this guide for examples.





Shaped By You.

Our latest guidelines consultation
involved 12,000 people.



To find out more about our age
ratings, content advice and new
Classification Guidelines go to
bbfc.co.uk/about-classification

How each age rating deals with Nudity



Universal

U-rated content is suitable for audiences of all ages, although not all U-rated content is aimed at children.

Children's content should be set within a positive framework and should offer reassuring counterbalances to any violence, threat or scary scenes. Generally a U is unlikely to unsettle a four-year-old, although it is impossible to predict what might affect any particular child.

There may be occasional nudity with no sexual context.

Parental Guidance

General viewing, but some scenes may be unsuitable for young children

PG-rated content is suitable for general viewing. A PG should generally not unsettle a child aged around eight, although parents and caregivers should be aware that some scenes may be unsuitable for more sensitive children.

There may be nudity with no sexual context.



12A/12

Cinema content classified 12A and video content classified 12 contain material that is not generally suitable for children aged under 12.

No one younger than 12 may be permitted to attend a 12A cinema screening unless they are accompanied by an adult. Adults planning to take a child under 12 to a 12A should consider whether the main feature is suitable for that child. To help them decide, we recommend that they check the BBFC's content advice for the film in advance. No one younger than 12 may rent or buy a 12-rated video.

There may be nudity, but in a sexual context it should be brief and discreet.



15

Suitable only for 15 years and over

No one younger than 15 may see 15-rated content in a cinema. No one younger than 15 may rent or buy a 15-rated video.

Sexualised nudity may be permitted, but graphic detail should be brief and justified by context.



18

Suitable only for adults

No one younger than 18 may see 18-rated content in a cinema. No one younger than 18 may rent or buy an 18-rated video.

Adults should be free to choose their own entertainment. Exceptions are most likely where material or treatment appears to us to risk harm to individuals or, through their behaviour, to society. For example, the detailed portrayal of violent or dangerous acts, or of illegal drug use, which may cause harm to public health or morals.



Case studies



Emma

brief natural nudity

A stylish and light-hearted adaptation of the 1815 Jane Austen novel of same name, *Emma* centres on a woman's efforts to set up her friends in romantic relationships, nearly missing out on the chance for love herself as a result.

This gentle and comedic film presented very few classification issues, but a brief moment of nudity had to be considered at the U category. In the scene, Emma's eventual love interest, Mr. Knightley, returns to his extravagant home and changes his clothes with the assistance of his butler. In the process, Knightley's buttocks are briefly seen.

Sight of nudity is allowed at all categories under our guidelines, depending on the context in which it is presented. Prolonged or frequent sight of nudity, or nudity in a non-natural context – most commonly in a sexual one – will require a higher age rating. However, where there is no sexual context and natural nudity is occasional, it is allowed at U.

In *Emma*, the nudity occurs in an entirely natural and non-sexual context. It also rear nudity as opposed to genital nudity.

The aim of the scene is not to highlight nudity, but to depict Georgian-era customs in a charming and somewhat comic manner. This is one of many small details that shape the historical world of the film, alongside immaculate design choices – a factor which earned the film two Academy Award nominations for its costume and make-up and hairstyling.

Ultimately, given the lack of any aggravating factors and the brevity of the sequence, we classified *Emma* U for brief natural nudity.

FILM

Classification date
30/01/2020

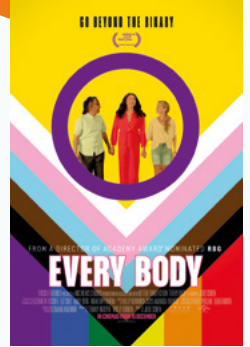
Director(s)
Autumn de Wilde

Genre(s)
Drama, Comedy

Approx. running minutes
120m



12A



Every Body

infrequent strong language, moderate sex references, nudity, discrimination

This US documentary charts the experiences of three intersex people who were once encouraged to hide their condition. Campaigning to spread awareness and acceptance, they shed light on the traumatic experiences their bodies have endured, such as surgeries they were pressured to undergo at young ages and now regret.

Insightful and moving, the documentary aims to create understanding of intersex individuals. In doing so, it includes images of naked people in the context of an art exhibition highlighting the appearance and identity of intersex bodies. The photographs include sight of breasts and pubic areas, but they are not presented in a sexualised manner.

There are also black and white medical photographs of naked bodies, along with drawn and painted artistic depictions of nudity. The purpose of these images are to reveal the prejudicial outlook of the medical community in the past and how intersex people were regarded, as

well as how the human body has predominantly been presented in a binary fashion in art and culture.

Our Classification Guidelines allow for natural nudity at any category, although more frequent images or those that dwell on detail, such as genitalia, may require a higher rating. At 12A/12, there may also be nudity in a sexual context, so long as it is brief and discreet.

Every Body does feature some dwelling on nudity, including focus on genitals, but it is not sexualised. Some of the nudity is also presented as part of a discussion of discriminatory attitudes, and so the context is more complex than depictions of nudity at U or PG.

The film has value for young audiences to learn about an underseen group of people, and it presents its content, including the nudity, in a positive and constructive framework. We classified the film 12A for infrequent strong language, moderate sex references, nudity, discrimination.

FILM

Classification date
04/12/2023

Director(s)
Julie Cohen

Genre(s)
Documentary, Drama

Approx. running minutes
92m



Portrait Of A Lady On Fire

sexualised nudity

Portrait Of A Lady On Fire is a French-language period drama in which a young artist is commissioned to paint the portrait of a woman about to enter an arranged marriage. The film explores the romance that blossoms between the two over the course of their time together, and includes some sensual and passionate scenes.

In one sequence, after it is implied the two women have made love, they are seen lying in bed with their breasts exposed. One proceeds to rub a drug, which is implied to be an opiate, onto her armpit, and then to place her fingers into her partner's armpit in a sensual and suggestive manner.

Context is important in determining the classification of nudity, as our guidelines state that at 12A/12 there may be nudity, but it should be brief

and discreet if occurring in a sexual context. Post-coital scenes carry an inherently sexual context, though if they are visually discreet, with nudity hidden or implied, they can sometimes be accommodated at 12A/12.

In *Portrait Of A Lady On Fire*, the nude women appear in bed in what is evidently a post-coital context. This nudity remains present throughout the scene, and the sensuality of their touching and the application of the drug heightens the impact.

While it is a quiet, tender and moving film, the depiction of nudity combined with drugs and a sexual context ultimately led us to classify the film 15 for sexualised nudity.

FILM

Classification date
11/11/2019

Director(s)
Celine Sciamma

Genre(s)
Drama

Approx. running minutes
116m



18

Babylon

strong sex, nudity, drug misuse

From Damien Chazelle, the director of *Whiplash*, *La La Land* and *First Man*, *Babylon* explores the thrilling chaos of 1920s Hollywood, charting the rise and fall of various people in the movie industry during the introduction of sound to cinema.

In a world of opulence and extravagance, Chazelle's film rarely shies away from graphically depicting the debauched parties, brutal working conditions and crude excess of its characters and those in their orbit. For example, the film opens with an extended party sequence featuring death, drugs, sex, nudity, drinking, swearing and a defecating elephant.

Sex and nudity feature prominently throughout the film. Our guidelines at 15 allow for sexualised nudity, but graphic detail should be brief. Although *Babylon* doesn't feature the strongest detail, it is sustained and, at times, the intense party sequences

feature prolonged and extensive sight of nudity, including full frontal male and female nudity. There is dark humour to how certain sequences play out, but the comedy in this case was not sufficient to counterbalance the extent of the nudity.

Furthermore, these scenes often feature people engaging in sexual acts, or are further complicated by the addition of drug misuse. Breast nudity, for instance, features in scenes of cocaine abuse, and while many of the characters suffer for their extravagances, the parties are presented in a whirlwind way that could be seen as promotional.

The frequent sexualised nudity in these contexts therefore exceeds our guidelines at 15, and we classified *Babylon* 18 for strong sex, nudity, drug misuse.

FILM

Classification date
19/11/2022

Director(s)
Damien Chazelle

Genre(s)
Drama

Approx. running minutes
189m

BBFC Classification Guidelines. Shaped by you.

We provide age ratings and content advice for films and other content in line with our published Classification Guidelines.

With more content more accessible than ever before, it is imperative that our age ratings and content advice provide a trusted guide that people can rely on when choosing what to watch, whether at the cinema, on DVD and Blu-ray or on Video on Demand (VoD) services.

Every four to five years, we speak to thousands of people from all over the country to explore what matters to them when it comes to classification. In our most recent guidelines research, 12,000 people took part – the highest number of participants we have ever consulted – providing us with a very robust set of findings to help ensure our standards continue to reflect the views of UK audiences. Here's what we found:



Classification Guidelines

To read the latest edition of the full BBFC Classification Guidelines, visit our website at bbfc.co.uk

87%

of parents agree with BBFC age rating decisions all or most of the time

97%

of people see a benefit to age ratings for some or all audiences

Trust in BBFC age ratings has grown to

90%

among parents/caregivers in the last five years

81%

of people want consistent age ratings across cinema, DVD and Blu-ray and Video on Demand/streaming services

85%

trust BBFC age ratings to indicate whether content is suitable for themselves or their family

99%

recognise at least one BBFC age rating symbol (78% recognise them all)

About the BBFC



The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) is the independent film and video regulator for the UK. We are here to help everyone choose age-appropriate films, videos and websites, wherever and however they watch or use them.

We do this primarily through our widely recognised and trusted age ratings and content advice.

Every BBFC age rating decision and every piece of content advice is based on our Classification Guidelines, which we refresh every four to five years through an extensive consultation with thousands of people across the UK. This gives us an unmatched insight into what audiences find acceptable for different age groups.

The result is a transparent, well-understood and trusted classification system that gives people the best information to help them choose what to view and to protect children and vulnerable adults from harmful content.

We are not-for-profit and are funded through the fees we charge for our services.

We classify:

- films, trailers, advertisements and other content for theatrical (cinema) release on behalf of local authorities who licence cinemas under the UK's licensing legislation¹
- video works distributed on physical media under the Video Recordings Act 1984 (VRA)
- video content distributed on Video on Demand and streaming services (VoD) under a voluntary, self-regulatory service
- commercial and internet content distributed via the UK's Mobile Networks under a voluntary, self-regulatory service

As well as being based on consultation with thousands of people across the UK, our guidelines incorporate other relevant research, expert advice and our accumulated experience. The guidelines, and our practice in applying them, pay particular attention to changes in audience expectations, attitudes and concerns and to changes in the law.

Here, and throughout the guidelines, we take video content to include films, programmes and other content released on DVD and Blu-ray and on VoD services.

We take responsibility for applying the guidelines to all content submitted to us, to ensure their application and interpretation is consistent, fair and reasonable. From time to time, issues may arise that are not addressed directly in the guidelines. Where such issues occur, we will deal with them in line with the standards expressed and implied in these guidelines. The guidelines are not a legal document and should be interpreted in the spirit of what is intended as well as in the letter.

We will provide, on request, guidance on the interpretation and application of these guidelines.

¹Since 31 March 2016 the BBFC has sub-contracted the assessment of cinema advertisements for commercial goods and services to the Cinema Advertising Association, while retaining responsibility for classifying, on behalf of local authorities, films, trailers, public information films and charity campaigns, and other cinema content.

Our guiding principles

To protect children and vulnerable adults from potentially harmful content

To empower consumers, particularly parents and those with responsibility for children, to make informed viewing decisions

To enable content to reach the widest possible audience appropriate for the theme and treatment

To support the right of adults to choose their own entertainment as long as it remains within the law and is not potentially harmful

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