

IRISH FILM CLASSIFICATION OFFICE

Annual Report of the Director of Film Classification 2019



AN ROINN DLÍ AGUS CIRT AGUS COMHIONANNAIS
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Contents

1. Letter to the Minister for Justice and Equality	1
2. Statements on Compliance with State Body Governance	2
3. Key Developments in 2019	7
4. Financial	12
5. Certification of Cinema Submissions	14
6. Certification of Video/DVDs	16
7. Licences Issued	17
8. Staff	19





IRISH FILM CLASSIFICATION OFFICE

To Charles Flanagan
T.D., Minister for
Justice and Equality

Dear Minister,

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Director of Film Classification for 2019 as prescribed by Section 29 of The Video Recordings Act 1989.

Our statutory functions are governed by the Censorship of Films Act 1923 and The Video Recordings Act 1989 together with their relevant amendments. We also adhere to the following principles as described on our website www.ifco.ie:

- We believe that adults (i.e., persons over 18) should be free, within the law, to choose what they wish to view.
- We have a duty to protect children and young people from harm.
- We strongly encourage and promote the exercise of parental responsibility.

In 2019 a total of 509 films were certified for cinema release in Ireland. This is an increase of 10.7% on the previous year and shows continuing growth in the number of theatrical works.

As forecast in 2018, the decline in DVD works submitted continues with the total number of titles certified in 2019 being 1,942, a decrease of 25%.

During 2019 there were two decisions appealed to the Classification of Films Appeal Board, both of which were successful.

I would like to place on record my appreciation of the work done by my IFCO colleagues, the Assistant Classifiers and also the Governance team in the Department of Justice & Equality for their continued support.

Yours Sincerely,

Ger Connolly
Director of Film Classification

Statements of Compliance with State Body Governance

1. I confirm that an Oversight Agreement has been agreed with the Department of Justice & Equality which indicates compliance with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

2. An Appropriate assessment of IFCO's principal risks has been carried out. The two main risks identified are:

- Possible Brexit implications of materials delivery from UK which could hamper our commitment to client service delivery.
- Possible breakdowns in online data transmission also resulting in delayed service delivery.

3. IFCO is adhering to the Public Spending Code.

4. IFCO is compliant with Irish tax law.

5. On Behalf of the Irish Film Classification Office, I acknowledge my responsibility as Director for ensuring an effective system of internal control is maintained and operated.

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a tolerable level rather than to eliminate it. The system can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or detected in a timely way.

Risk and Control

A risk register is in place which identifies key risks facing IFCO and these have been identified, evaluated and graded according to their significance. This register will be reviewed again in 2020.

The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibility for operation of controls assigned to specific staff. I confirm that a control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- There is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is kept under review by senior management.
- There are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the information and communication technology systems.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

Procurement

I confirm that IFCO has procedures in place to ensure compliance with current procurement rules and guidelines.

Internal Control Issues

No weaknesses in internal control were identified in 2019 that require disclosure.

Financial control environment

I confirm that a control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.

Administrative controls and management reporting

I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place, including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that there is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget, which is kept under review by management.

- There are regular reviews by management of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts.
- A risk management system operates within IFCO.
- IFCO ensures that there is an appropriate focus on good practice in purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant guidelines and procurement policy.

Compliance with Section 42 of the Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014

I confirm that IFCO is in compliance with the relevant provisions of the Act having regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment of staff and persons to whom we provide services, and protection of human rights and service users. These commitments are reflected, as required, in the current Strategic Plan.

'Mild comic violence, threat and rude humour.'
(Consumer advice for *The Secret Life of Pets 2* on IFCO's website)



The Secret Life of Pets 2
Director: Chris Renaud, Jonathan del Val.



Key Developments in 2019

Operational Activity

The total number of cinema feature films certified during 2019 was 509, an increase of 10.7% on the previous year. This is an ongoing trend. 20 Years ago, at the turn of the century there were 180 submissions giving an almost 3 fold increase over this period.

The total number of video works certified was 1,942, a significant decrease on the submissions over 2018. As the demand for physical DVDs continues to decrease so too will the number of submissions. This is also reflected in the number of Video Licences issued which has halved in the last 10 years.

Appeals

There were two appeals in 2019. The films in question were Mid 90s and Downton Abbey. For Mid 90s the classification decision was 18 with an appeal request for 16; for Downton Abbey the decision was 12A with an appeal for PG. In both cases the Classification of Films Appeal Board allowed the appeals.

Video Games

During 2019, IFCO examined 35 games rated 18 by the Pan European Games Information System (PEGI) to ensure compliance with provisions of The Video Recordings Act, 1989.

This Pan European classification model for video games, instituted in 2003 with IFCO as a founding member, continues to evolve, and in 2019 has been examining the issue of "loot boxes" and their relationship with gambling with a view to amending, where necessary, the classification criteria. Ger Connolly is a member of the PEGI Council which establishes classification criteria. He is also a member of the PEGI Complaints Board which adjudicates on classification appeals.

Focus Groups/Presentations

A number of interactive presentations were made to Second and Third level students during the year. Included amongst these was a "Meet the Classifier" event, a part of the Cinemagic film festival. This marked the second occasion where we partnered with the British Board of Film Classification to discuss respective approaches to classification in Ireland and the U.K.

IFCO was also pleased to partner with the Dublin International Film Festival in hosting its Fantastic Flix Kids jury strand. Special thanks are due to Assistant Classifier David Power for his role in these events.

Research

It was hoped to complete a robust research project during the year but, due to timings and other developments, it was decided to defer until 2020. As stated previously, this will form the basis of a review of guidelines and age bands to reflect the attitudes of the Irish public.

Website

In May, Minister David Stanton launched the new IFCO website which was designed in co-operation with the department IT section.

This provides more accessible and easier to read information regarding cinema and DVD releases to provide the public and, parents/guardians in particular with consistent consumer information regarding their viewing choices.



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'Mild threat.'

(Consumer advice for *Frozen 2* on IFCO's website)



Frozen 2

Director: Chris Buck, Jennifer Lee.



Complaints

During 2019, IFCO received 20 complaints from the public which related specifically to classifications awarded. The most received in respect of any one title was 2 in the case of both JOKER and MIDSOMMAR.

Given that cinema admissions generated 117.4 million Euro, the level of complaints is very low. While this would suggest a high satisfaction level with the current age ratings, it is hoped that the detailed research to be commissioned in 2020 will give us a true reflection of consumer satisfaction.

Digital Delivery

From January we have implemented a system whereby all DVD submissions can be transmitted to IFCO online. This is of great benefit in again reducing the time between submission and classification. With ever decreasing windows between production and release, this is a vital resource for our business customers and there has been a significant uptake on its use. With the uncertainties concerning Brexit border controls, this is also a safeguard against possibly significant delivery delays in receipt of materials.

Goals and Performance 2019

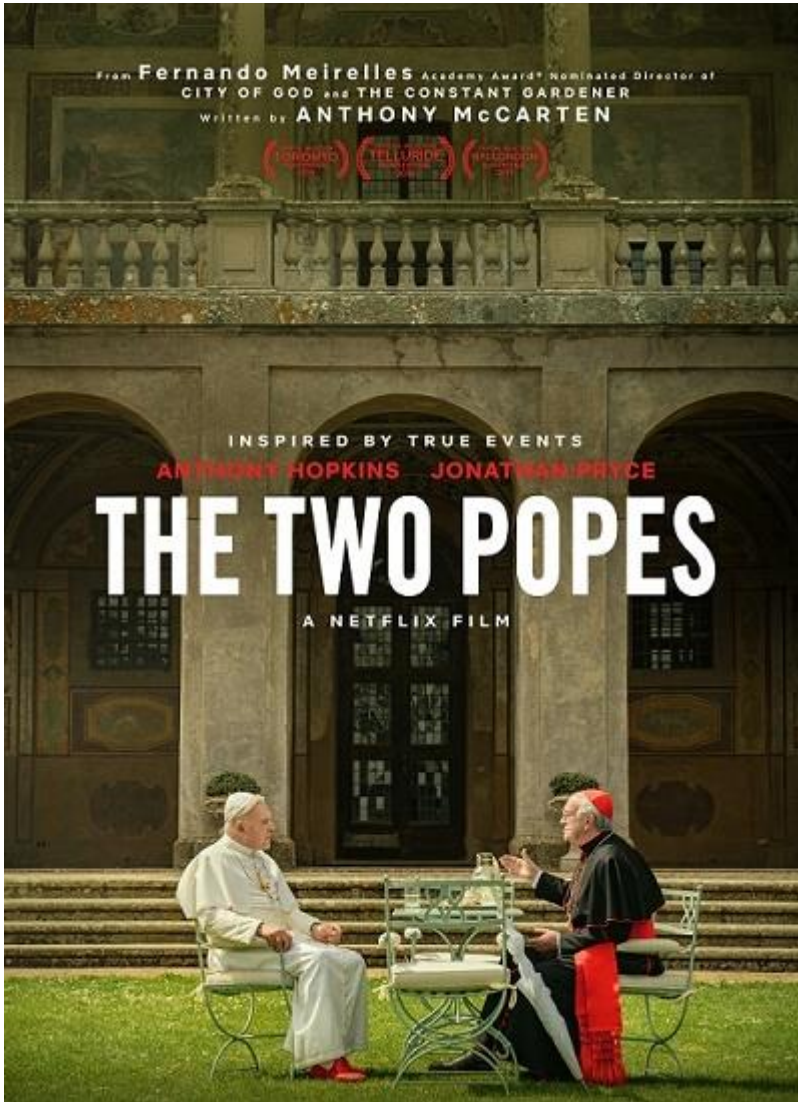
The following were the main outcomes of the targets set for 2019:

- The number of classification certificates issued was 3,111 which was 15% lower than anticipated. This was due to a higher than expected drop in DVD submissions, particularly in Q4.
- The research and review of guidelines will now take place in 2020.
- Online delivery platform was successfully delivered on target in Q1 and is being widely used by our business clients.
- The new website was launched in May and the target of 25,000 visits per month has been achieved and exceeded.
- The spend outturn for the year was €503K, a saving on budget of €143K.



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'References to child abuse. Moderate sex references and violent scenes.'
(Consumer advice for *The Two Popes* on IFCO's website)



The Two Popes
Director: Fernando Meirelles.



Financial

The fees charged by the Office for the certification of cinema films and DVD/videos and for the issuing of licences in 2019 were as follows:

○ Video	€595,372.42
○ Film	€430,270.93
○ Licences	€175,200.00
○ Appeals	€1,000.00

Total income received on behalf of the Department in 2019 was **€1,201,843.35**.



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Sex scenes, drugs use, strong language.
(Consumer advice for *Rocketman* on IFCO's website)



Rocketman
Director: Dexter





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Certification of Cinema Submissions

Cinema Submissions Certified 2019

Features	502
Shorts	7
Trailers	<u>660</u>
Total	1169

All by Category

G	248
PG	187
12A	361
15A	287
16	65
18	<u>21</u>
Total	1169

Features/Shorts Certified by Category

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
G	37	38	41	45
PG	62	58	61	64
12A	131	126	124	138
15A	142	164	159	177
16	35	45	52	64
18	<u>13</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>21</u>
	420	451	460	509

Single Country of Origin

140	USA
92	India
62	UK
26	Ireland
17	Poland
13	France
11	China
5	Australia
5	Japan
5	South Korea
3	Lithuania
2	Canada
2	Germany
2	Spain
1	Austria
1	Belgium
1	Burkina Faso
1	Iceland
1	Italy
1	Norway
1	Portugal
1	Romania
1	Russia
394	Total

Multiple Country of Origin

16	UK/USA
4	China /USA
4	Ireland/USA
4	Sweden/Denmark
3	Canada/USA
3	France/Belgium
3	UK/Ireland
3	USA/Canada
3	USA/UK
3	Various
2	Australia/USA
2	France/USA
2	Ireland/UK
1	Australia/USA/Canada
1	Austria/UK/Germany
1	Belgium/Canada
1	Brazil/France
1	Brazil/USA/China
1	Canada/USA/Cayman Island
1	Chile/USA
1	China/Australia
1	Colombia/Denmark/Mexico
1	Czech Republic/New Zealand
1	Denmark/Canada/Norway/Australia
1	Finland/USA
1	France/China/Guadeloupe
1	France/Japan/USA
1	France/Spain/Romania/USA/Belgium
1	Germany/Belgium
1	Germany/Belgium/UK/Italy
1	Germany/France
1	Germany/France/UK/Poland/USA
1	Germany/India/USA
1	Germany/UK
1	Germany/USA
1	Hong Kong/USA
1	Iceland/France/Ukraine
1	Iceland/Australia/France/UK
1	Ireland/Belgium
1	Ireland/Palestine
1	Italy/France
1	Italy/Switzerland/France/Germany
1	Japan/France
1	Japan/USA
1	Kenya/UK
1	Lebanon/USA
1	Malaysia/Maldives/Bhutan/Djibouti
1	New Zealand/USA
<u>1</u>	Romania/France/Germany/Sweden
<u>1</u>	South Africa/USA
<u>1</u>	Spain/Belgium/France/UK/Portugal
<u>1</u>	Spain/Cuba/UK/Germany
<u>1</u>	Spain/France/Italy
<u>1</u>	Spain/UK
<u>1</u>	Spain/USA
<u>21</u>	Other
115	Total



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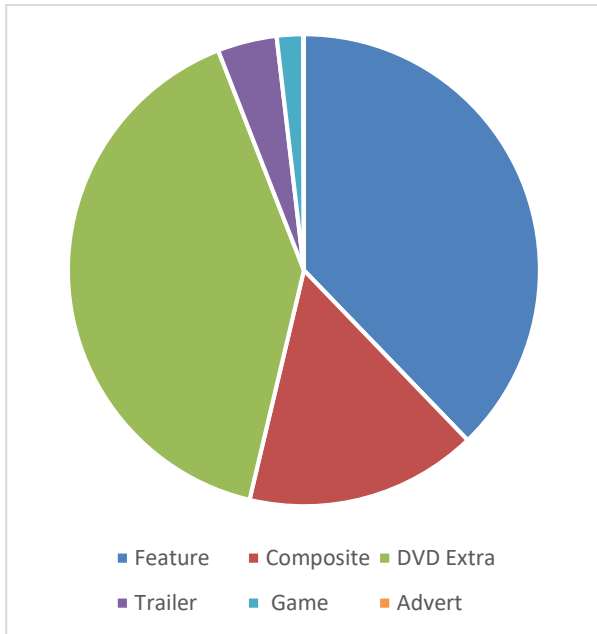
'Strong gory violence.'
(Consumer advice for *Joker* on IFCO's website)



Joker
Director: Todd Phillips

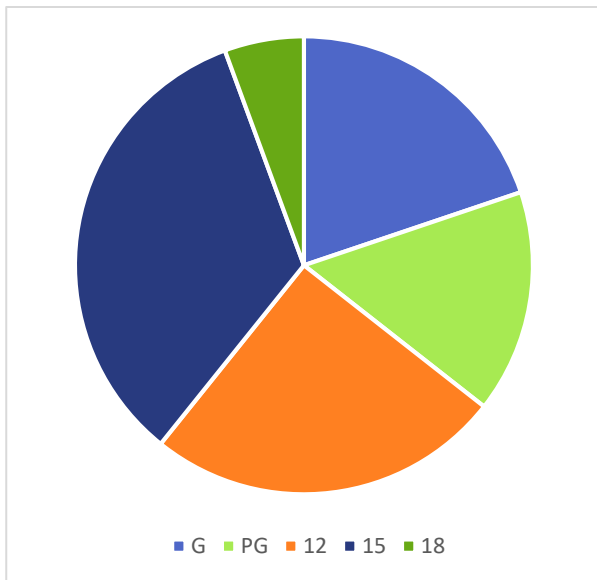


Certification of Video/DVDs



By Type of Work

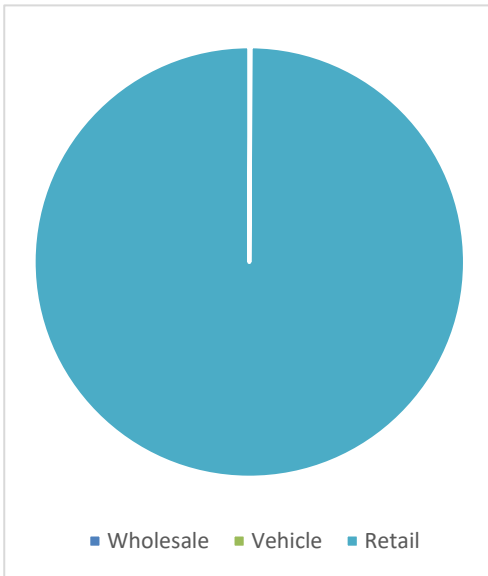
Feature	734
Composite	309
DVD Extra	784
Trailer	79
Video Game	35
Advert	1
Total	1942



DVD/Video Works Classified by Category

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
G	805	551	471	385
PG	590	531	436	306
12	845	705	657	489
15	1427	1118	929	653
18	163	184	128	109
Total	3830	3089	2621	1942

Licences Issued 2019

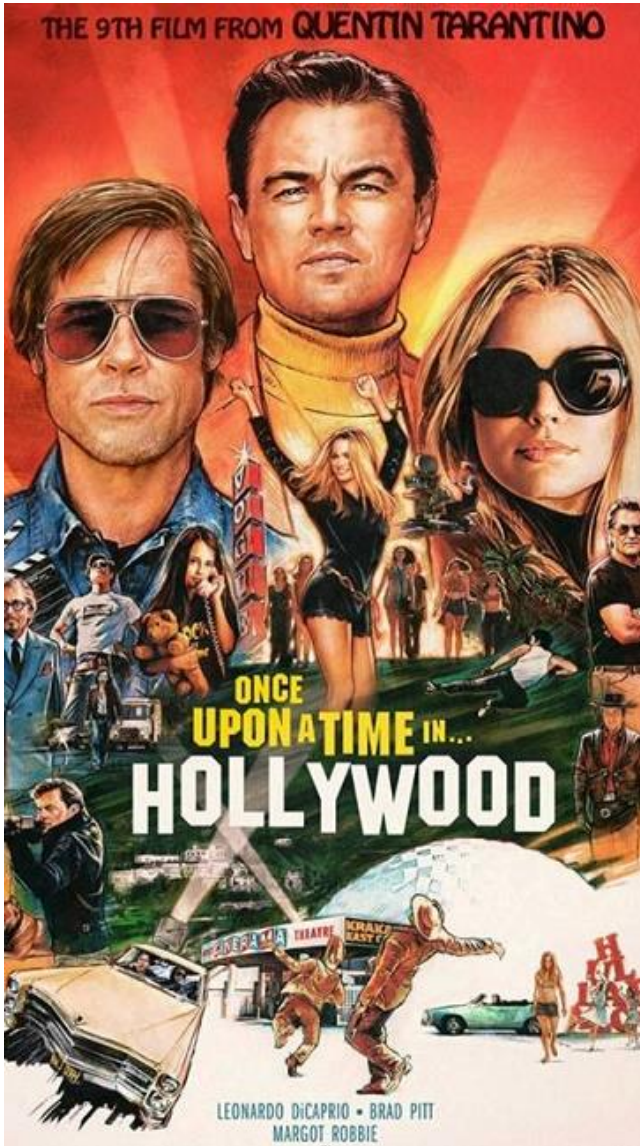


Wholesale	0
Vehicle	1
<u>Retail</u>	<u>744</u>
Total	745



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Very strong gory violence. Strong references to child abuse.'
(Consumer advice for *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* on IFCO's website)



Once Upon a Time in Hollywood
Director: Quentin Tarantino



Classification Team

Director of Film Classification

Ger Connolly was appointed as Director of Film Classification in May 2016. He was formerly an Assistant Censor and Deputy Director.

He was appointed a part-time assistant film censor in November 1993 and served as Deputy/Acting Director from 2003-2016.

He represents Ireland on the Council of PEGI, the Pan European Games classification system, and sits on both its Advisory Board and Complaints Board.

Part-Time Assistant Classifiers During 2019

Zélie Asava

PhD in Film Studies
Appointed 2017

Mark Brennan

Journalist
Appointed 2017

Niamh McCole

PhD in Film Studies
Appointed 2017

David Power

TV Producer
Appointed 2017

Martin Scanlon

Barrister
Appointed 2017

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