[GB] New Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Videos

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The British Board of Film Classification has published new guidelines at the end of October 1999. The BBFC is an independent, non-governmental body which classifies films on behalf of the local authorities who license cinemas under the Cinemas Act, 1913 and videos, DVDs and digital games under the Video Recordings Act 1984. The new draft is intended to be clearer and simpler, but also to provide a more comprehensive, practical guide to BBFC's classification policy. There are 7 classification categories: U (Universal), Uc (this video-only category denotes particular suitability for young or pre-school children) and PG (Parental Guidance) which are advisory only, 12, 15 and 18 which restrict viewing by age and R18 which is only available to adults through licensed outlets. In classifying films, videos or digital media, the BBFC gives consideration to the following basic principles: (i) the work should be allowed to reach the widest audience that is appropriate for its theme and treatment; (ii) adults should be free to choose what they see, providing in particular that it remains within the law and is not harmful; (iii) while precedent is an important factor, classification policy must continue to develop in line with changes in public taste, attitudes and concerns; (iv) no two works are identical, and the context in which something (e.g. sex or violence) is presented is central to the question of its acceptability. Consultation with the general public, interest groups, opinion-formers and representatives of the film, video and broadcast industries is currently taking place, before finalising the guidelines.

Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Videos.

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