Short Film Editing Checklist

Before You Start Editing

[ ] Organize footage by scene and take

[ ] Sync audio and video (if recorded separately)

[ ] Backup all files to at least two locations

[ ] Label B-roll, cutaways, and inserts clearly

[ ] Gather all production notes and script revisions

Rough Cut

[ ] Assemble clips in story order (per script or shot list)

[ ] Choose best takes based on performance and coverage

[ ] Rough out the full timeline (no sound mix or color yet)

[ ] Focus on pacing and story clarity

[ ] Review with director or creative lead for major notes

Sound & Music

[ ] Clean up dialogue (remove noise, adjust levels)

[ ] Add temporary music or score placeholders

[ ] Sync in sound effects (foley, ambients, transitions)

[ ] Use EQ and basic mixing to balance audio

[ ] Get feedback on emotional tone of the soundscape

Picture Lock & Color

[ ] Lock all picture edits (no more frame changes!)

[ ] Apply basic color correction (white balance, exposure)

[ ] Add color grading to set the mood and match scenes

[ ] Check consistency between shots and scenes

[ ] Export a reference copy for review

Titles, Graphics & Subtitles

[ ] Add opening titles and end credits

[ ] Insert any lower thirds or on-screen text

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[ ] Double-check spelling, names, and logos

[ ] Add subtitles (optional but helpful for accessibility)

[ ] Test text readability on mobile and desktop

Final Polish

[ ] Remove any black frames, glitches, or temp files

[ ] Normalize final audio levels to broadcast/web standards

[ ] Watch full film without stopping-take final notes

[ ] Export in multiple formats (ProRes, H.264, etc.)

[ ] Check video and audio quality on different devices

Delivery & Archive

[ ] Create a master version (with and without subtitles)

[ ] Export social media trailers or teaser cuts

[ ] Save all project files, assets, and exports in labeled folders

[ ] Upload to cloud backup or physical drive

[ ] Log your editing timeline and notes for future reference