

Irish Writers Centre

Novel Fair Competition 2024

About

Now in its 12th year, the **Irish Writers Centre** Novel Fair is an annual competition initiated by the Irish Writers Centre, launched in 2011, with the first Fair taking place in 2012. Described by **The Irish Times** as 'A Dragons' Den for writers', each year the Fair introduces twelve up-and-coming writers to top publishers and literary agents, giving novelists the opportunity to bypass the slush pile, pitch their ideas and place their synopsis and sample chapters directly into the hands of publishers and agents.

Novel Fair has been attended by representatives from: **Curtis Brown, Penguin Random House, Conville & Walsh, époque, Fletcher & Co, Poolbeg Press, Harper Collins, John Murray, Hachette, Lilliput Press, New Island Books, The Book Bureau, The Bent Agency, Greene & Heaton, Storyline Literary Agency** and many others.

Submissions will open on Thursday 1st September 2023 and will close on Friday 30th September 2023. Applicants will be required to submit a 10,000 word novel manuscript sample and a 300 word synopsis (the 12 shortlisted winners will be asked for an additional 50,000 word manuscript in December 2023). The 50,000 words can include the original 10,000 word submission. Before you submit your work, you should familiarise yourself with the Terms and Conditions below. Make sure you meet all the conditions before submitting your manuscript as incomplete manuscripts cannot be accepted.

The Prize

By submitting your manuscript sample to the Novel Fair, each writer will have the chance to pitch the synopsis of their novel, the finished novel itself and biographical material at the Novel Fair event. During the Novel Fair (**Friday 16 and Saturday 17 February 2024**), leading publishers and agents will be invited by the Irish Writers Centre to meet these writers in person or through a series of online meetings.

To fully prepare the 12 shortlisted winners for the day, the winners also receive a place on a seminar on 'How to Pitch Your Novel', two weeks in advance of the Fair. Applicants who are longlisted and who do not proceed to make the shortlist of twelve will have their work evaluated and critiqued by the judging panel.

Entry Details

- > The entry fee is €55 (€45 IWC Members) and is non-refundable. The application window to submit your 10,000 word sample is between 1st - 30th September 2023.
- > Novel Fair is open to novels of all genres.
- > Memoirs, short stories and works of non-fiction will not be accepted.
- > The writer must not have published a novel before i.e. has not previously published a novel with an ISBN. There are some exceptions to this rule, please see below in '**Eligibility**'.
- > To enter, applicants are required to send a synopsis of a max. of 300 words (+/- 10%). and up to five chapters of their novel, which should be approx 10,000 words (+/- 10%).
- > The sample can be from any part of the novel but we strongly advise that applicants submit consecutive chapters.
- > Before you submit your work, you should familiarise yourself with the **Terms and Conditions** below. Make sure you meet all the conditions before submitting your manuscript.

Terms & Conditions for Entry

Eligibility

- > The competition is limited to unpublished novelists who have not signed with any agents or publishers. Applicants who have already had a novel accepted by a publisher, or have previously had a novel published, will not be eligible. Novel Fair accepted applications from writers who have previously published works of short fiction (individually or full length anthologies) and non-fiction, but who are looking to publish their first novel. A published novel is defined as one that has an ISBN. **Exceptions below***
- > *If the applicant has a **self-published Novel** with an ISBN, the applicant can apply as long as they meet ALL below conditions which the applicant must be able to provide evidence of upon request:
 - > The sample submitted to the Irish Writers Centre Novel Fair cannot be from the published novel (i.e. the Irish Centre Novel Fair will only accept new, original work).
 - > The applicant can have a maximum of one self-published Novel with an ISBN.
 - > The self-published novel must not have sold more than 1,000 copies through any medium (i.e. print or e-book).
 - > In the process of publication the applicant cannot have successfully engaged with or had access to a professional publisher, distributor or editor.
- > Entries must be in English.

- > Entries are welcome from anywhere in the world, however, in order to be eligible, applicants need to commit to participating in the two days of Novel Fair on Friday 16 and Saturday 17 February 2024.
- > The submitted manuscript sample cannot have been reviewed professionally (i.e. by any recognised print or broadcast media, or online review).
- > The submitted manuscript is still eligible if parts have been published in a journal or magazine. As long as the applicant has not published the novel in its entirety.
- > Applicants must be over 18 years of age at the time of submitting their application.
- > There is a limit of one entry per applicant per annum. Please pay careful attention to the terms and conditions as you will be ineligible to re-enter until the following year if the submission is incorrect.
- > The applicant's name must not appear anywhere on the synopsis or manuscript. It should appear only on the entry form.

Terms & Conditions for shortlisted applicants

- > The 12 shortlisted writers who attend the Fair and subsequently sign with an agent or publisher must acknowledge the Irish Writers Centre in promotional material relating to the acquisition of the book. The correct term of acknowledgement is The Irish Writers Centre Novel Fair.
- > The shortlisted applicants will be contacted by the Centre by Friday 1 December 2023 at which time they will have 5 days to submit the entire novel and must be able to attend the Fair in person or remotely. Those who were not selected will be informed on the week beginning 11 December 2023.
- > Only shortlisted applicants will be asked for proof of their completed manuscript. At this point, shortlisted applicants will be required to sign a declaration that they have not been signed by a publisher or agent and that they comply with all criteria listed in this document.
- > The completed novel, if shortlisted, should be a minimum of 50,000 words.
- > The complete manuscript must be emailed to the IWC within 5 working days of notification of being shortlisted.

Get in Touch

We can only enter into a limited correspondence with Novel Fair entrants. For urgent queries that cannot be answered from the [FAQs information](#), please email novelfair@irishwriterscentre.ie