



Irish Writers Centre

Novel Fair 2025

Irish Writers Centre Novel Fair 2025 is a literary competition that awards twelve first-time novelists to sit down and pitch their novels to leading publishers and agents. Described by The Irish Times as ‘A Dragons’ Den for writers,’ Novel Fair winners gain access to a two-day speed dating style event (one day in-person and one day online) where they will bypass the slush pile and place their manuscripts directly into the hands of industry professionals. Some winners have even gone on to sign contracts with literary agents and publishers.

We all know that the path to publication can feel bewildering and mysterious. The Novel Fair mission is to facilitate first encounters between budding novelists and members of the publishing industry. These encounters will take the form of a series of 15-minute meetings with publishers and agents where the 12 winners are given the opportunity to pitch their novels.

As a first-time novelist it can be difficult to know what an agent or publisher wants. In preparation for Novel Fair, winners will participate in a half-day workshop where they will learn how to craft the ideal pitch and what to expect from their encounters at Novel Fair. The workshop will be facilitated by the Novel Fair judges and a previous Novel Fair winner.

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.**

Terms and Conditions 2024 – 2025

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.

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 2024.
- Novel Fair is open to novels of all genres. We accept hybrid forms of genre, including works that play with the boundary between fiction and non-fiction (e.g. autofiction and experimental memoir). Please be aware that this is a novel competition and your manuscript will be judged as a novel.
- Memoirs, short story collections 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 approximately 10,000 words (+/- 10%).
- The sample can be from any part of the novel but we strongly advise that applicants submit consecutive chapters.
- The applicant's name must not appear anywhere on the synopsis or manuscript. It should appear only on the entry form.
- Compile manuscript sample and synopsis in to one document. File name: = 'Your Novel title Novel Fair 2025.'
- Format your manuscript in a standard clear font (e.g. Times New Roman), font size 12, Double spaced with page numbers.

Before you submit your work, you should familiarise yourself with the Eligibility requirements below. Make sure you meet all the conditions before submitting your manuscript.

Eligibility

Terms & Conditions for Entry

- 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 accepts applications from writers who have previously published works of short fiction (individually or full length anthologies) and non-fiction, and 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 is not from the published novel (i.e. the Irish Centre Novel Fair will only accept new, original work).
 - ✓ The applicant has 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 has not successfully engaged with or had access to a professional publisher, distributor or editor.
 - ✓ The self-published novel has not been reviewed professionally (i.e. by any recognised print or broadcast media, or online review).
- Entries are welcome from anywhere in the world, however, in order to be eligible, applicants need to commit to participating in the two-days Novel Fair event in mid February 2025.
 - Entries must be in English.

- 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.
- **Your submission must be your own work.** Writers may not make Novel Fair submissions that have used AI in their creation, whether in the outlining or writing of the manuscript. We have taken this stance on AI to reflect most publishing contracts that require authors to warrant that the work submitted will be original to them. The inclusion of AI-generated text in the final manuscript will violate this warranty, as the text is not considered “original” to the author. For more information on AI best Practices for Authors, please see Authors Guild resource [here](#).
- The 10,000 word submission sample that you submit must be part of a larger sample. We understand that you will still be working on your full manuscript at the time of submitting your 10,000-word sample to Novel Fair. However, please be aware that if you are shortlisted, proof of a full novel (of a minimum of 50,000 words) is required to gain access to the two-day event (Novel Fair). We request to see proof to make sure you are sufficiently prepared for Novel Fair as agents/publishers may request to see your novel at the Fair.

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 December 2024 at which time they will have one week to show proof of their completed novel. The novel should be a minimum of 50,000. We recommend 50,000 words as this industry standard.*
- Shortlisted writers must be able to attend the Fair in person or remotely.

- 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.

*Please note, the 50,000 + manuscript is kept confidential and is only used as proof of a finished novel. The complete manuscript must be emailed to the Irish Writers Centre within a week of notification of being shortlisted (December 2024).

Do you have a question? We can only enter into a limited correspondence with Novel Fair entrants. For questions that cannot be answered from the [Frequently Asked Questions](#), please email novelfair@irishwriterscentre.ie.