



Guidelines for Short-listing Meeting: Laureate for Irish Fiction, 2018-2021

Introduction

These guidelines are intended for the project partners for the Laureate for Irish Fiction to assist in compiling the shortlist for the Laureate for Irish Fiction, 2018-2021. The shortlist should consist of between five and eight names.

The assessment process

The aim of this process is to ensure that the system of compiling the shortlist is fair and transparent, and that it adheres to the published criteria. Please note that the shortlist for this honour is completely confidential and should not be shared. The reasons for this are as follows:

- The shortlist is based on individual writers and their entire body of work rather than a particular book (as would be the case in other major literary prizes where the shortlist is announced).
- Those who are shortlisted for the 2018-2021 Laureate may also be shortlisted in subsequent years. We hope that the Laureate for Irish Fiction will be a long lasting honour that will celebrate many Fiction writers now and far in to the future. Keeping the shortlist confidential protects the reputation of the writers and the dignity of the honour.

Project partners are asked to consider the nominations received for the inaugural Laureate for Irish Fiction. Nominations were sought from the period 16 May – 7 July 2017. The Arts Council wrote to arts organisations, book clubs, book shops, libraries, university residency partners, poets and playwrights to compile the nomination list. Please note the names of these nominees will not be published. Following the nomination closing date, the Acting Head of Literature Marcella Bannon wrote to all of the nominees to ascertain if they wished to have their names put forward for the role. Those who agreed to have their names put forward have formed the final nominee list.

Following the selection of the shortlist by the partner panel, the following steps will be taken:

- A final shortlist will be established.
- A panel pack, containing biographical information, bibliography and links to key pieces of criticism, will be forwarded to the final selection panel. The final selection panel is comprised of:
 - Paul Muldoon (Chairperson)
 - Tessa Hadley
 - Claire Armistead
 - Sarah Crossan
 - Michael Longley
 - Gerbrand Bakker

- The final selection panel will convene to make its final decision at a meeting on the 23rd November 2017.
- The announcement of the first Laureate for Irish Fiction will be announced in January 2018. Date to be confirmed.

Role of the Chair

Paul Muldoon will chair both shortlisting panels to provide consistency across the process. The primary role of the Chair is to facilitate the panel in making its assessment, and to make sure that fair and equitable decisions are made in as efficient a manner as possible. The Chair must also ensure that assessments are made in line with the published criteria and that assessment procedures are followed.

The Chair does not have a role in voting on the panel. The exceptions to this are:

- when consensus cannot be reached and a casting vote is necessary.
- when a conflict of interest is declared by another panel member.

Role of the Project Partners

Based on the list of nominated names, coupled with the project partners' knowledge of the writers and the biographical information provided, the project partners are asked to use their expertise and knowledge to assess and make decisions in line with the published criteria for the Laureate for Irish Fiction.

The project partners are asked to review material in advance of the shortlisting meeting. On the day of the meeting, they are asked to score each application against the criteria and also to articulate the rationale for their support or otherwise of a nominee.

Project partners cannot abstain from making decisions unless in the case that an interest is declared (see below).

Criteria for the Laureate for Irish Fiction 2018 – 2021

Nominees are to be considered in a competitive context, and assessed against the published criteria.

The criteria for selection will be based on the Laureate possessing the following qualities:

- a significant contribution to the field of literature in Ireland and internationally, one which has had a considerably positive impact on readers
- a demonstrated commitment to engaging with the public, the media and the literary sector
- an internationally recognised body of high quality literary writing

What preparation is required?

Before you come to the meeting, we would ask you to review the material you have been sent. You can use the score/comment sheet to record any comments or notes.

What happens at the panel meeting?

On the day of the assessment the panel will be briefed on:

- The role of the Laureate for Irish Fiction
- The assessment criteria
- The next steps in selecting the Laureate

Each nominee will be considered by the project partners. The project partners will be asked to review, discuss and then score all nominees. All scores will be recorded by a member of Arts Council staff. The four scores for each nominee will be totalled to arrive at a final score for each writer.

At the beginning of the meeting, any questions about the Laureate can be directed to the Chair.

How will the shortlist be finalised?

The shortlist should consist of no fewer than five, and no more than eight, names. Following the allocation of scores by each of the project partners for each of the nominees, the nominees will be ranked from highest to lowest score. The shortlist will consist of the highest ranking scores. You will be asked to use the score/comment sheet provided to write down your score on the day of the assessment (A, B, C or D) - (see Appendix I and II for more information on how scoring works)

What happens to the shortlist?

The project partners have authority to compile the shortlist for the Laureate for Irish Fiction. The Arts Council will note the shortlist at its next Council meeting.

Evaluation

As part of the Arts Council's on-going aim to improve its systems, the project partners will be asked to take 5 - 10 minutes at the end of the assessment meeting to comment on the process overall. The Chair will facilitate this process.

Declaration of interest

In order to ensure fairness and equity in decision-making, project partners must declare an interest where they have a close personal or professional link with a nominee. An 'interest' is either 'pecuniary' or 'non-pecuniary' (e.g., familial relationships, or partners, or formal or informal business partnerships etc).

The interest must be declared to the Head of Literature as soon as the project partner becomes aware of it but within 3 working days of receiving notification of the list of nominees. Where an interest is declared the panellist will not receive papers relating to that nominee and will be required to leave the room when the specific nominee is being reviewed. The Chair will vote in the project partner's place in this instance.

Confidentiality

Records of panel discussions and deliberations are subject to the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts, however business conducted during the course of an assessment is considered confidential and should not be discussed outside of the meeting.

Freedom of Information

The Arts Council comes within the scope of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, 2000. This Act provides a legal right to individuals to obtain access to information held by public bodies, to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy.

The Act provides strong protections for information supplied to the Arts Council, which is confidential, commercially sensitive or personal (Sections 26, 27 and 28 of the FOI Act refer). The Act also gives certain rights to individuals or companies who supply such information. These rights ensure that information which is confidential, commercially sensitive or personal cannot be released under FOI without the person supplying such information being consulted. There is also a right of appeal to the Information Commissioner, who is an independent authority for FOI

matters. In order to observe the Freedom of Information Act (1997, 2003) and in the interests of clarity and transparency, the Arts Council is obliged to offer reasons on any decisions taken in relation to an individual. Specifically, the Council is obliged to offer *“reasons for a decision on any matter particularly affecting that person”* and *“criteria relevant to a decision, the weighting attached to each criterion and the conclusion reached on each”* (Section 3.17. Freedom of Information Act).

Notes and documentation after the meeting

In order to record as accurately as possible any decisions made, for Freedom of Information purposes and to protect any sensitive information from leaving the building, panel members are asked to leave all assessment documentation with the Council, including any notes in relation to decisions made.

Appendix I Nomination scoring system

We ask the project partners to use the following scoring system.

On the day of the shortlisting meeting, we ask you to use the following marks: 'A' (*must shortlist*), 'B' (*should shortlist*), 'C' (*could shortlist*) and 'D' (*does not adequately meet criteria*) and indicate this on your score/comment sheet.

When the meeting takes place, we will calculate an average score for each application based on the panel's collective mark. See Appendix II for how the scores will be calculated.

sample

Name	Final rank
Writer One	B
Writer Two	D
Writer Three	B
Writer Four	C
Writer Five	B

Your actual score sheet will list the full set of nominees.

Appendix II Sample calculation of scores based on a collective mark

The chart below will form the basis for a discussion on each short-listed application.

The final mark awarded to each application will be calculated on the day of the assessment meeting and will be based on each panel member's scores. Arts Council staff use an excel spreadsheet to calculate scores which can range from A to D (representing a mark from 10 to 2).

- A = 10 marks
- B = 8 marks
- C = 5 marks
- D = 2 marks

Sample score sheet

Nominee	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Total Score	Shortlist/Non-shortlisted
Writer One	10	8	10	10	38	
Writer Two	2	5	5	2	14	
Writer Three	8	8	8	8	32	
Writer Four	2	5	8	5	20	
Writer Five	10	10	10	10	40	

The scores are then sorted in order of the highest score downwards. The shortlist will then be compiled. Ideally, no more than eight names will be shortlisted and no fewer than five. Nominees with a similar score must be treated in the same way (ie either shortlisted or not shortlisted). In the case that it is not possible to limit the shortlist to eight names on the basis of treating nominees equally based on score, the shortlist may be extended.

Nominee	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Total Score	Shortlisted/Non-shortlisted
Writer Five	10	10	10	10	40	
Writer One	10	8	10	10	38	
Writer Three	8	8	8	8	32	
Writer Four	2	5	8	5	20	
Writer Two	2	5	5	2	14	