



Mairtín Crawford Award

Run by Belfast Book Festival
& The Crescent Arts Centre

Mairtín Crawford Awards 2026 Terms & Conditions

Eligibility and Submission Criteria

- The Awards are open to those who were born in, are citizens of or are resident of Ireland and UK

Poetry Award

Eligibility

- Poetry entries can have been previously published in print or online, been broadcast or won a prize on the condition that the entrant has not had a full collection of poems published, however, we ask that at least one poem submitted is unpublished work.
- The entrant must not have had a full collection of poems published by a recognised publisher.
- You must be 18 and over to enter the Awards

Submissions and Judging Process

- One payment of entry fee entitles entrants to submit a minimum of 3 and up to a maximum of 5 pieces of poetry
- Each poem must be no longer than 60 lines. This does not include the title or stanza breaks
- Each page should be numbered at the bottom of the page if the poem runs to more than one page long
- All pages must include a header with the title of the poem only. If the entry is untitled, please entitle it with the opening five words of the piece
- Entries will be read anonymously

Short Story Award

Eligibility

- Short stories must be unpublished works
- The entrant must not have had a collection of short stories or a novel published by a recognised publisher.
- You must be 18 and over to enter the Awards

Submissions and Judging Process

- One payment of entry fee entitles entrants to submit 1 story
- Entries must be no longer than 2,500 words. There is no minimum word count.
- Each page should be numbered at the bottom
- All pages must include a header with the title of the story only. If the entry is untitled, please title it with the opening five words of the piece



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Prizes

- The Winner for each Award will receive a £500 cash Prize. In addition, each Winner can take up time a 'Time to Write' package which includes a 3-night stay at a Hotel in Belfast, and 4 days dedicated writing space in The Crescent*.
- The 2 Runners Up for each Award will each receive a cash prize of £250.

** Please note, prize is subject to date availability.*

Practical information and FAQ's pertaining to both Awards

Please also refer to Submissions Procedure on our [website](#).

- Online submissions only please!
 - If it's not possible for you to submit online, then please contact us by **Wednesday 25 February 2026** by phone or email to inform us, and The Crescent will seek to accommodate the request
- The deadline for entries is **12pm (midday UK time) on Wednesday 11 March 2026**
- If you need to withdraw entries from the competition, notification should be made via email (BBFSubmissions@CrescentArts.org). Entry fees cannot be refunded.
- Submissions will become automatically ineligible should the entrant have a collection or novel accepted for publication before the prize-giving date.
- Entrants must inform the Belfast Book Festival via email (BBFSubmissions@CrescentArts.org) as soon as possible if the entrant accepts an offer of publication for a collection elsewhere. Entry fees in these circumstances will not be refunded.
- Entries must be entirely the work of the entrant. By submitting you are confirming that the work is your own
- Once an entry has been made, no correspondence regarding the making of amendments to an entry will be entered into. If an entrant wishes to amend an entry, a separate paid entry must be made and the words "Amended Final Version" marked clearly document
- All entries should be saved as Microsoft Word (.doc / .docx) or PDF documents
- Entries must be written in English
- Entries should be typed, single spaced, in plain, black, 12 point, Times New Roman font
- Valid order number should be included in the Subject Line of email submission
- All submissions should be sent to BBFSubmissions@CrescentArts.org.
- Emails should be titled as follows: MCA Submission: 'Poetry' / 'Prose' (delete as appropriate) - 'Author name - confirmation number of fee payment E.g. "MCA Submission: Prose - Maggie May - 140200000"
- Each submission will be acknowledged by email



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- £10 for each submission of between 3 - 5 poems or 1 short story, paid via the Belfast Book Festival website. If the fee is a barrier to submission, please contact us to avail of a free entry place, at BBFSubmissions@CrescentArts.org.

Short-Listing

- A shortlist for each Award will be announced in May 2026
- Winners will be announced in June 2026
- The shortlisted poets and short story writers will be notified privately via email shortly prior to public announcement.

Copyright

Worldwide copyright of each entry remains entirely with the author, but the Belfast Book Festival Mairtín Crawford Award will have the unrestricted right to publish the winning poems and stories in any future anthologies of the prize and/or in any relevant promotional material.

Judging

- The judges' decision is final.
- No individual correspondence with any judge may be entered.

FAQs

My story / poetry has been published in my writing group's newsletter/website or on my personal blog. Can I still submit to the competition?

The short story cannot have been published elsewhere, and we ask that at least one of the poems is unpublished.

I have had a pamphlet published by a publisher. Can I still submit to the competition?

Yes!

I have made changes to my story / poems since submitting my entry to the competition. Can I send a replacement story?

Unfortunately, no. if you would like your revised story / poetry to be considered, you can enter it again with the relevant fee and the document clearly marked with the word "Amended Final Version" on the first page.

How do I pay the submission fee?

Payment is made through the Belfast Book Festival website or by calling our Book Office. Once a fee has been paid, an email confirming the payment will be sent to your email along with an order number. This order number should be included with the submission, as proof of purchase. The Fee is 10GBP.



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I didn't receive my confirmation email / order number. What should I do?

It's possible the confirmation email was sent to you, but was recognised as junk or spam. If, after checking your junk or spam folder, and in the event that no email has been received, it is most likely that the email address you supplied was incorrect. In this event, contact The Crescent Arts Centre by email at Hello@CrescentArts.org and a member of the staff will be able to supply you with your order number and/or amend your email contact.

I have a self-published collection of short stories/novel/poems, am I still able to enter the awards?

Yes - Self-published authors are eligible to enter. Those who have been published by a recognised publisher are prevented from entering the awards

Can I enter both the Short Story and Poetry Award?

Yes - The Awards (poetry and short story) are separate entities. Someone who publish a novel can participate in the Poetry Awards (and vice versa).