



## THE FOLIO PRIZE

### 1. The Prize

The Folio Prize is the first major English language book prize open to writers from around the world. Its aim is simple: to celebrate the best fiction of our time, regardless of form or genre, and to bring it to the attention of as many readers as possible.

Two principal characteristics define it. First, it is a global prize for fiction written in English; any work of fiction published in the UK in a given year is eligible, regardless of the author's country of origin. Second, the process by which books are selected, considered and finally rewarded is governed by an Academy of writers and critics, who are independent from the founders, sponsors and administrators of the Prize.

The Prize has been designed in this way to allow a breadth of writing and opinion to be represented, while encouraging a consistent focus on excellence.

### 2. The Parties

A prize of this kind demands the advocacy and engagement of a large number of people in a range of capacities. The supporters of the Prize are organised into different groups, each with particular responsibilities and rights which are described here.

#### *i. The Literature Prize Foundation*

The Literature Prize Foundation is a charity registered in the jurisdiction of England and Wales.

The Foundation is a body that incorporates the original vision and founding principles of the Prize. It aims to promote the reading and appreciation of literature for the public benefit by selecting and raising the profile of the very best works of fiction published each year. Through its website and other media, as well as, in the fullness of time, community outreach programmes, the Foundation will seek to engage readers and writers throughout the English-speaking world in cultural debate and in the celebration, sustainment and furtherance of the art of literature.

The Foundation is governed by a board of trustees, who meet twice a year to review the operational, financial and commercial performance of the Prize and to ensure it is fulfilling its duty of public benefit.

#### *ii. The Sponsor*

A representative from the Sponsor will sit on the Foundation's board of trustees.

The Sponsor is committed to funding the prize for the foreseeable future.

### *iii. The Administration*

The Administration manages the day-to-day running of the Prize. It includes one permanent employee, the Executive Director. The Executive Director reports to the board of the Foundation and works in collaboration with the Prize Management Committee, consisting of three representatives from the Sponsor, two members of the Foundation, an appointed public relations consultant and the Prize Executive Director herself.

### *iv. The Advisory Committee*

The Advisory Committee is made up of members of the Prize Management Committee as well as a group of experienced professionals from the publishing and media industries. Members of the Committee are appointed by the Foundation.

The Committee meets four times a year to discuss strategic initiatives for the Prize, particularly those focused on engagement with readers and the publishing industry.

Members of the Committee are also entitled and encouraged to nominate qualified persons for membership of the Academy. Nominations will be considered by the Foundation, who will issue invitations accordingly.

### *v. The Academy*

The Academy is a group of individuals drawn from the world of books who have demonstrated commitment to excellence in fiction. Members will mainly be writers or critics. Many will have strong connections to the UK, as the home of the Prize, but a large component will be international.

The Academy plays a critical role in selecting titles to be considered by the Prize judges, who are drawn from its number.

Academy members can be nominated by the Advisory Committee, by existing members or by the Foundation. Invitations are then issued by the Foundation.

There is no fixed size for the Academy. At the launch of the Prize, its membership is in excess of one hundred. As the prize evolves, its membership will grow organically and members may resign from the Academy at any time.

Members for whom there is a perceived conflict of interest in any given year will be recused from taking part in the nomination or judging process.

## **3 How the Prize is Awarded**

The award process consists of three distinct components.

- Judges are selected from the Academy.
- 60 books are nominated by the Academy for consideration by the judges.

- An additional 20 books are called in by the judges, subsequent to advocacy by publishers, who may write in on behalf of five titles per imprint.
- The judges read the 80 books and produce a shortlist of eight, from which they choose a winner, who will receive a cheque for £40,000.

*i. Selecting the judges.*

A panel of five prospective judges will be drawn by lots from the Academy. The panel must include three members based in the UK, and two members from outside the UK. There must be no more than three members of the same gender.

To ensure these criteria are met, the members' names will be divided into two groups, UK and International, depending on their country of residence. Names will be randomly drawn from the two groups alternately, starting with those from the UK. If at the end of this process there are too many women or too many men, the appropriate number of most recently chosen names will be discarded and new names drawn from the appropriate groups until the right balance is achieved.

These five will be invited to act as judges. If any should decline the invitation, a replacement will be drawn by lots, again according to the system outlined above.

Once the five judges have been confirmed, a chairperson will be appointed by the administration. The chairperson must be based in the UK. If the judge selected does not want to act as chairperson, then another name will be drawn.

Once a member has acted as a judge, his or her name will be removed from future selections until all Academy members' names have been drawn.

*ii. Selecting books for consideration*

*a. Nominations of books by the Academy.*

Each year, members of the Academy (excluding the five judges) will be invited to nominate up to three books they believe merit consideration for the prize, and to rank their nominations. Points will be awarded as follows: 3 points for their first selection; 2 points for their second selection; 1 point for their third selection. These scores are confidential and will be known only to the administrators of the prize. They will not be passed on to the judges.

The 60 books with the highest number of points will be submitted to the judges for consideration. The relevant publishers will be informed and reading copies requested.

If the total number of books nominated is smaller than 60 – an unlikely eventuality – only that number will be submitted to the judges, who for that year will have fewer books to consider.

If two or more books are tied for the last place or places on the list of 60, the book with the highest number of first-place rankings will be preferred. If there

is still a tie amongst the remaining books, those with the highest number of third-place rankings will be eliminated. If a tie still results, then all remaining books will be submitted for consideration, and the number of books called in by the judges in that year will be reduced by the corresponding amount.

b. Books to be called in by the judges.

The final 20 books to be considered will be called in by the judges. In October of each year, publishers will be invited to fill in an online form – up to a maximum of five per publishing imprint – in support of books that have not been chosen by the Academy, and judges will take these into account. They will also be mindful of any notable books published late in the calendar year. The online form will be made available on the prize website toward the end of September and well in advance of the deadline. Dates will vary from year to year but will be clearly stated on the prize website.

*iii. Judges choose a shortlist and a winner.*

Each year the judges will have 80 titles to consider. Each judge will be expected to read all 80 books – and to consider the text before them purely on its own merit.

The judges will meet in person or, where required, via digital conferencing, but all judges shall be physically present for the meeting in which the winner is selected, which shall take place on the same day as the prize ceremony.

### **3. The Prize Calendar**

Each year the Prize will adhere to an approximate schedule, as follows:

late June/early July:	Judges announced
early September:	Academy nominations
October/November:	Deadline for publishers on-line letters of support
Early November:	Judges call-in 20 titles
early February:	Shortlist announced
mid March:	Prize ceremony

### **4. The Prize Rules**

*i. Eligibility*

- a. Any work of prose fiction written in English and published in the United Kingdom is eligible for the prize.
- b. The prize shall be awarded each spring for a book whose first UK publication took place in the previous calendar year (1 January through 31 December).
- c. All forms and all genres of book-length fiction are eligible.
- d. Short story collections are eligible on the condition that all the stories within the collection are appearing in 'book form' for the first time. ('Book form' does not apply to stories that have previously appeared in group anthologies, and their appearance therein shall not constitute grounds for disqualification).
- e. A unified work of fiction that has been created by the collaborative efforts of more than one author is eligible. Books written by one author on behalf of another (i.e. 'ghosted' titles) will not be eligible.
- f. Books written primarily for children are not eligible.
- g. Books that have been translated into English are not eligible.
- h. Eligible books must be published in the United Kingdom.
- i. Both print and digital first format publications are eligible.
- j. The writer must be alive or have been alive during the run up to first UK publication to be eligible for consideration.
- k. The Prize Foundation has final say in questions of eligibility, and its decision is final.

ii. *Letters of support from publishers*

Three-quarters of the books submitted to the judges for consideration in any given year will be determined by the Academy, as above. For the remaining 20, publishers may write in on behalf of up to five titles per publishing imprint. Applications, which may be in support of books published at any time in the relevant calendar year, should be made via an online form and submitted by the deadline shown on the prize website. The Administrator will distribute them to the judges for their consideration.

iii. *Shortlisted books*

In the event of a book being shortlisted for the prize, the publisher in question will be asked to make a contribution of £5,000 towards marketing and promotional costs. However, this stipulation is subject to appeal by a publisher for whom such expenditure would prove prohibitive and may be adjusted or waived at the discretion of the Foundation.

It is requested that all shortlisted authors make every effort to attend the awards ceremony and make themselves available for PR in the lead-up to the winner

announcement. Shortlisted authors will be called upon to participate in events in the weeks before the winner is announced, notably the prize's Fiction Festival at the British Library.

iv. *The Winner*

The winner will be required to be available for a full PR schedule following the winner announcement and when possible to participate in Folio Prize events tied to the international calendar throughout the year.

v. *Additional Considerations*

The Sponsor of the Prize may request additional undertakings by publishers or by the shortlisted authors and/or winning author, which will be outlined in an appendix to this constitution.

Amendments and additions to these rules can be made only by the Foundation.