



Australian Society of Authors

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ASA Mentorships 2008: Frequently Asked Questions

How many applications do you receive?

We received 509 applications in 2007, the first year in which we offered 20 mentorship places. Of the 509 applications received in 2007, 226 were fiction (44.4%), 54 non-fiction (10.6%), 34 poetry (6.7%), 64 Young Adult (12.6%), 109 children's writing (21.4%) and 22 picture book writing and illustration (4.3%). Of the successful applications last year, 7 were fiction, 4 non-fiction, 2 poetry, 3 children's and 4 picture book illustrators. None of the YA applications were successful.

I've had more than two books published but only two were trade books. The rest were education books. Am I eligible?

Sorry, but it's no more than two books published full stop. It doesn't matter if they're education books, or you're switching from picture book illustration to children's writing or from economics textbooks to literary fiction, if you've published more than two books you're not eligible.

What about co-authored books?

Co-authored books are counted the same as sole-authored books.

How do you define book?

A book is a print or digital publication that has an International Standard Book Number (ISBN).

How do you define published?

Published means printed or produced for distribution and sale, whether one copy or thousands, self-published or commercially published. If a work is under consideration by a publisher or contracted to a publisher but not actually published, it is considered unpublished.

What you do mean by a substantial work-in-progress?

A substantial work-in-progress is one that could eventually be published in book form – a novel, novella or collection of short stories; a history, biography, autobiography/memoir or collection of essays; a collection of poetry; a Young Adult work; a children’s novel, chapter book or the text for a children’s picture book; or the pictures and text for a children’s picture book. This list is not exhaustive.

Should I put my name on each page of my application, including the sample of my work?

You can include your name on the sample of your work, but it doesn’t matter if you don’t. The judges will receive your full application – your entry form, literary CV, the description of writing project and what you want to achieve from the mentorship program, and the sample of your work-in-progress.

Does the 3000-word sample of my work in progress need to be one continuous piece?

The sample doesn’t have to be one continuous piece, but the judges will be interested in seeing how you develop themes and ideas – so try to avoid putting in more than two extracts.

Does fiction include fantasy, sci-fi, romance, crime and so on?

Yes, it does!

Do you accept applications from comic writers/illustrators and graphic novelists?

Yes, we do!

I’m not sure whether my picture book should be classed as children’s writing or picture book illustration or adult fiction.

If you’re a writer and someone else will illustrate your story when it’s published, then you should apply in a writing category. If your work is a graphic novel for adults, apply in the fiction category. If your work is for children, apply in the children’s writing category. Children’s writing also includes chapter books and novels for

children. If you're writing and illustrating the story, you should apply in the picture book illustration category.

I'm an illustrator – can I submit just pictures?

You need to submit a story to go with the pictures as well. It can be a draft, an outline or just an idea, but it has to be a story. The mentorship program aims to assist illustrators to develop a publishable picture book – text and illustrations - rather than just a portfolio of illustrations.

What should I include on my literary CV?

You should include a list of your publications, any prizes, awards or fellowships you've received, any writing courses or seminars you've attended and relevant professional memberships. If you've nothing to put on your literary CV then just write "Nil".

How do the judges assess literary merit?

The judges used the Australia Council's definition: "an assessment of the applicant's writing ability, focusing on style, appropriateness of form, skilled use of language, clarity of expression and sustained development of themes or ideas".

Should I ask a mentor from your list if they would like to work with me before I nominate them?

No, please don't approach mentors from our list unless you know them personally. If your application is successful we'll contact you to discuss your mentor preferences and then contact your first choice.

I want to nominate a mentor who isn't on your list. Should I approach them first to see if they'd like to work with me?

You could mention it if you know them personally, otherwise best not to. First, the mentorship program is very competitive and your application may not be successful. Second, for whatever reason, the mentor may just not relate to your work and it puts them in a difficult position if you've approached them directly and they later decide that they're not the best mentor for you.

What happens next if my application is successful?

We'll contact you to check your mentor preferences and then contact your first choice. If they are available, we'll send them a copy of your application – the description of your writing project and what you would like to achieve from the mentorship, the sample of your work and your literary CV. We don't send them a

copy of your entry form. If they're interested, we'll arrange for the two of you to have a preliminary discussion about the mentorship – what you want to achieve, what they see as their role, and how the two of you would work together. After that discussion either of you can opt out. If you're both happy to proceed, we'll send out the paperwork and the mentorship can start.

If my application is unsuccessful, can you help me arrange a private mentorship with one of the mentors on your list?

Sorry, but we don't arrange or facilitate private mentorships. The NSW Writers Centre offers a "user-pays" mentorship program. Alternatively you could consider getting a manuscript appraisal. Go to the following web address:

<http://austlitagentsassoc.com.au/contacts.html>

for manuscript assessment services listed on the Australian Literary Agents Association website.

Thank you for your interest in the ASA's Mentorship Program.