

## 2024 Short Story Competition Rules

### General

1. The start date for the Short Story Competition will be 1st May 2024.
2. All entries must be received by midnight on 31st October 2024.
3. Entries can be from anywhere in the world.
4. UK entries may be submitted online or by post. Overseas entries must be submitted online.
5. Postal entries can only be accepted from within the UK.
6. Postal entries must be accompanied by an entry form and the appropriate entry fee and addressed to The Administrator, The Bedford Competition, 28 Miller Road, Bedford, MK42 9NZ.
7. One entry form, whether submitted online or posted, may cover up to three stories. Multiple entry forms may be submitted.
8. Online entries will generate an automatic confirmation of receipt at the time of submission.
9. A confirmation of receipt of a postal entry will be sent to the email address, if supplied, otherwise the entrant should enclose a stamped addressed envelope/postcard.
10. There is no limit to the number of entries an individual may submit.

### Eligibility

11. The competition is open to anyone aged 17 years and over.
12. If your story has been long-listed or shortlisted in other competitions, and provided it has not won a prize or been published, it is eligible.
13. Simultaneous submissions are allowed but will become ineligible should the story win a prize elsewhere or be published prior to it being judged.
14. You must inform us immediately should your story be published or win a prize elsewhere.
15. The members of the organising committee, patrons, the panel of readers and judges are not eligible to enter the competition.

### Entry Fees

16. The standard entry fee is £8.50 per story; three stories entered on the same form £17.00.
17. For full time students, the entry fee is £6.00 per story; three stories entered on the same form £12.00.
18. Cheques must be made payable to Bedford Writing Competition.

### Story format (all stories)

19. Stories must not have been published, self-published, published on a website, broadcast, been placed first, second or third, or been awarded a prize in any other competition.
20. Stories must be no more than 3000 words. Title not included in the word count.
21. Stories must be written in English.
22. All stories must have a title.
23. Stories must be typed, double-spaced and in a readable, 12 point font.
24. Nothing must appear on any page which would identify the author.
25. Stories will not be returned, so please retain a copy.
26. Stories cannot be altered once entered.

### Story format

27. **(online entries)** The following are acceptable electronic file formats: .doc, .docx, .rtf, .odt, .txt.
28. **(postal entries)** Stories must be on single-sided sheets.
29. **(postal entries)** Each sheet must have a page number.
30. **(postal entries)** The title of the story must appear at the top of each sheet.
31. **(postal entries)** The complete set of sheets must be held together with a paperclip.

### Judging

32. All entries will be considered anonymously by a panel of readers and the relevant judge.
33. Judging is fair and unbiased. The judges' decision is final and no individual correspondence can be entered into.
34. The Bedford Competition reserves the right to change the judges without notice.

### Disqualification

35. If a story does not comply with the formatting rules, it will be disqualified.
36. If, before a story has been judged, it is published or wins a prize in another competition, it will be disqualified.
37. Any plagiarised work will be disqualified along with any other work submitted by the entrant.
38. Any story created with the aid of any AI tool will be disqualified.
39. Entry fees will not be returned in the event that a story is disqualified.

### Competitions and Prizes

40. Short Story Competition
  - Open to all eligible entrants
  - The Short Story Competition winners will receive, first prize £1500, second prize £300 and third prize £200.
41. Bedford Short Story Prize

41. Cygnature Short Story Prize
  - Open to eligible entrants who are aged 25 years or less on the date the competition opens for entries, 1st May 2024.
  - The winner of the Cygnature Short Story Prize will receive £200.
42. A story can only win one of the above prizes.
43. The prizewinning and shortlisted stories from each competition will be published in an anthology as a downloadable e-book and a hardcopy paperback, after the results have been announced.
44. The copyright of the story belongs to the author.
45. The competition organisers reserve the right not to award prizes if, in the judge's opinion, such an action is justified.

#### **Announcement of results**

46. A timetable for the announcement of results will be made public once the date of closure for entries has been passed.
47. A long list for the Short Story Competition will be drawn up and posted on the competition website when it is available.
48. A shortlist for the Short Story Competition will be drawn up and posted on the competition website when it is available and eligibility has been verified.
49. If a story is shortlisted or has won the Bedford Short Story Prize or the Cygnature Short Story Prize then, once this has been made public, it cannot be withdrawn and its publication will take precedence over the requirement of any other competitions the story may have been entered in.
50. The results of all the competitions will be announced at an Awards Presentation Event.