

Information sheet for writers

Key objective:

To assist writers who have completed part or all of a manuscript by providing them with a professional appraisal of their work.

General purpose:

The Appraisal Service is a cost-effective way of getting initial feedback on a work. It is not meant to be a substitute for a full manuscript assessment but rather a critical response to the work with comments on the technical ability of the writer and some advice on the next step. The process is similar to what a publisher's reader would do when reading a manuscript for potential publication.

The report should be taken as an indication of areas the writer is successful in and areas where they could improve either their skills or the content of the work.

What the service provides:

The service will provide writers with a professional overview of their writing by an experienced writer. It will outline this in a 2 page report commenting on:

- The technical ability (strengths and weaknesses) of the writing, which may include main and subsidiary characters, use of dialogue, action and language
- The content of the work
- A brief response to, up to three, questions that the writer may submit with the manuscript

It will also provide recommendations for the next step which could include but not be limited to:

- Attending a specific writing course
- Doing more reading or research
- Getting the full ms assessed or edited
- Applying for the mentor programme

What the service will not provide:

- Line by line editing
- Analysis and suggestions for improvement of major defects in the work
- Advice on publishing

Who can use the service:

- The service is open to anyone, however members of the NZSA will have their costs subsidised
- The service is based on a first come first served basis. We have enough funds to subsidise a total of 28 requests during 2011.

What to send and where to send it:

- Synopsis – a brief (up to two page double spaced) summary of the major plot shifts, its theme, characters, readership etc. For non-fiction work it is important to indicate the angle or aim of the work. The synopsis is a road map of your book showing the reader how it gets from A to Z. Think of it as a back cover blurb with a few more details. Also let the reader know where exactly the sample of writing fits within the overall structure of the work.
- Sample chapters – 3,000 to 6,000 words. We recommend the first two or more chapters because these will give the reader a good idea of your writing style and also introduce you to the main characters, plot and theme. These are the most important chapters in a work. You may also send in a specific section you feel is not working well. Note, though, that sample chapters should be continuous. It is hard for the reader to judge your writing if you send bits pulled from all over the ms.
- Up to three specific questions you would like answered.
- Two copies of the application form.
- Send the material to NZSA office with the applicable fee (see table below). Please make cheques out to NZSA.

Guidelines for presentation:

- The text must be typed in a readable font such as Arial, Times New Roman, Verdana.
- The text should be 1.5 to double spaced on a single side of an A-4 sheet.
- Please do not fold, staple or bind sheets.
- Your name and the number of words in the manuscript must appear on the cover page. We suggest you also number each page and put the title of the work plus your name in the footer
- Manuscripts submitted on disc, via email or fax will not be considered.
- Please send a stamped, self addressed envelope of sufficient size for the return of your work.
- Manuscripts should be returned in approximately four to six weeks.
- Always keep a copy of your manuscript for your files.
- Please indicate what stage the full ms is at – first chapter, part of first draft, first draft, and so on.
- Provide a brief (half to one page) writing CV which will include courses attended, publications, competitions won etc.

Please send your material and payment to:

Manuscript Appraisal Service

NZ Society of Authors,
PO Box 7701
Wellesley St
AUCKLAND 1141

For more information please phone Tina Shaw: 09 379 4801, or email: programmes@nzauthors.org.nz

Schedule of Fees

Genre - Prose	Charge to NZSA Member	Charge to Non member
sample chapter under 3000 words + synopsis	30	85
3000 to 6000 words (recommended) + synopsis	40	110
Genre - Poetry	Charge to NZSA Member	Charge to Non member
ms up to 24 pages	40	110
Genre - Children	Charge to NZSA Member	Charge to Non member
under 3000 words + synopsis	30	85
3000 to 6000 words + synopsis	40	110