ASA Guide to Appearing at Literary Festivals
Minimum Practice Guidelines
ASA Guide to Appearing at Literary Festivals

Minimum Practice Guidelines

Festivals are wonderful literary showcases which the public can enjoy live, online or both. Many authors seek to be involved in festivals to promote their work, contribute to the literary community and interact with readers. These events are also ways they can supplement their income, boost sales and raise their public profile.

This document outlines the ASA’s view on minimum practice guidelines when appearing at a festival. Following these guidelines and ASA recommended rates of pay will support authors and alleviate some of the concerns that arise from a lack of understanding or clarity from the beginning.

As an author appearing at festivals there are 4 main considerations to be aware of – details of the event, fees, granting rights and book sales.

1) CONFIRMING DETAILS

The ASA recommends authors are told in advance:

When

- the date of the event
- the time of the event
- the parallel events/sessions taking place

What

- the purpose/intention of the event
- title of the event
- the length of the event
- the nature of the event (reading, talk, panel discussion) and how long should the author’s presentation or Q&A session be
Who

• if there will be a chairperson and, if so, who they are
• who else is taking part in the event
• the expected profile of the audience
• the event organiser and the sponsor (if any)
• a named contact person who will be meeting you on the day and their number

How much

• what fee is being offered (see fees and expenses below)

Other Requirements

• if you are required to have public liability insurance
• if you have any requirements in relation to a disability

Well before the event ensure you have information on:

• how you will be introduced/described (in both the event itself and any promotion). We encourage authors to write their own introduction and provide this to the festival
• the programme’s description of the event
• the nature of the venue (staging, lighting, etc.)
• the availability of technical equipment and assistance in its use - and how long beforehand any presentation is required
• what you will be required to bring
• where you can relax or prepare before and after the event
• what information the festival requires from you in advance. Website address and social media handles, details of latest and forthcoming books

2) FEES and EXPENSES

Fees

• The negotiation of fees is a matter for individuals. However, all festivals - especially those with commercial sponsors, government funding and any festival where the public pays for tickets - should pay ASA rates at a minimum. Depending on their profile and experience, some authors will be able to achieve higher rates.
Our minimum recommended rates can be found on the ASA website. Authors need festivals to value their essential contribution by paying fairly.
• The offer of payment ought to be unconditional. It is unacceptable that a festival accompanies an offer of payment with the suggestion that the author waive the fee for the benefit of the festival. It is not up to authors to subsidise festivals.
• Payment terms are usually within 30 days of the event.
Expenses

- The author’s travel and subsistence expenses must be paid, preferably in advance. The festival should have a clear expenses policy and provide overnight accommodation where necessary.

GST

- Authors who are registered for GST are to add GST to the ASA’s recommended rates.

Invoice

The festival must clarify:

- If the author needs to supply an invoice and to whom the invoice should be sent.
- If so, does it need a reference number or other identifier?
- Does the author need to supply receipts?

Cancellation

If the event is cancelled, the author is to be paid in full unless the booking is conditional. This must be stated at the outset and any cancellation fees and timings are to be made clear. We suggest:

- The author is to be paid in full if the event is cancelled within four weeks of the event date.
- The author must be paid 50% of the fee if the event is cancelled more than four weeks of the event date.
- Any out-of-pocket expenses already incurred must be reimbursed whenever the event is cancelled.

3) RIGHTS

Recording Events

- If there is a recording (or printed or podcast version) of the event, the author’s permission must be obtained from the outset.
- Generally, a recording should attract a fee and be given under limited licence terms, e.g. an exclusive licence for two months - twelve months for promotional purposes only. If the recording promotes your book, you may be happy to grant a lengthy licence. If the recording is of a workshop that you will repeat, you may wish to set a much shorter licence.

Exclusion Areas

Requesting that an author does not appear at another festival or event within a specified distance and time period should be avoided as these restrictions may prevent an author from undertaking a tour. If festivals wish to impose an exclusion clause then their fee should compensate the author in full for the lost opportunities.
4) BOOK SALES

The festival should ensure they have your books on sale at the event and you are advised on:

- who will be in control of the bookselling arrangements and supplying books
- if you can bring your own books to sell
- what arrangements are made for book signings (where and when)

Authors should not be expected to donate free books to festivals.

These are minimum practice guidelines which can be used as a checklist to ensure you have everything you need to prepare for a festival appearance and are being briefed fairly. Working with the festival team collaboratively and transparently will ensure the event is a positive experience for all and will go a long way to creating the best possible conditions for a successful event.
Advocacy . Support . Advice