

University Library: Skills for Researchers

Preparing for publication: books

Turning your finished thesis into a book is an excellent way of disseminating your research, and having a published monograph or book contract can be a key criterion that panels look for in recruiting to academic posts in some disciplines. There will likely be many changes that you will need to make in adapting your thesis into book form, but first you will need to secure a publisher.

Finding a publisher:

Try to determine which publishers would be best to approach for your subject area. Some publishers will not consider revised theses; this should be clearly stated on their webpages regarding proposals, but if you are in doubt it is best to email to check first. Ask your supervisors, examiners or colleagues where they would recommend publishing, and look at key texts that you have used in your own research. Where are others publishing on similar topics?

Preparing your proposal:

Look at the book proposal process for different publishers; each will have slightly different formats requiring more or less detail and the kind of information you will often be asked to provide is listed below. Make sure you address all aspects of the proposal that are requested, and send any additional files such as sample chapters or a CV. If you are sending sample chapters, make sure they adhere to the publisher's rules on presentation and referencing – you want your manuscript to appear as ready for publication with them as possible.

You may also wish to consider which chapter(s) will give the best representation of your work; an introductory chapter and one discussion chapter might be helpful to give them a sense of the project and what you are adding to the field. It is similarly important that any sample text reads like a book and not a thesis. Look at other published texts in your area and ensure your writing style and approach is broadly similar.

Essential information	Commonly required information	Other information often asked for
Proposed title & author names	Statement of scope and intent, including how the work meets audience needs	Table of contents
	The market	Synopses - chapter by chapter
	Any competing titles?	Sample chapter / material
	Author CV / author info	Pedagogical features?
	Timetable for writing and completion	Any Digital Resources?
	Physical specifications / word length	Information regarding reviewers / referees
	Any other features to be included e.g. will there be graphs, illustrations etc.?	

Submitting your proposal:

Send your prepared proposal and documents off to your chosen publisher. Remember, you must only approach one publisher at a time and wait to hear their response before contacting another one. Sometimes you may get an initial response and then not hear back for some time; it is fine to follow up politely with the relevant editorial assistant for an answer. Once a publisher has decided that they are interested in your proposal and sample materials, they will request a copy of the full manuscript to send to reviewers. As with any sample chapters, this must be carefully revised before submission. Many doctoral theses do not take the form of a traditional academic book, so fairly substantial re-writing or re-structuring may be needed. As a bare minimum, all referencing and formatting conventions need to be in line with the publisher's requirements, and any mention of the text being a thesis should be removed!

The next steps:

Once reviewers have been found, there will often be a lengthy period where you wait to hear whether the returned reviews are favourable and whether the publisher would like to progress with publishing your manuscript. If so, you will receive the reviewers' written reports and will be asked to make changes in line with their recommendations. From this point on you will move towards formalising your book contract and progressing with publication.

Further reading:-

Johnson, N.F. (2011) [*Publishing from your PhD: negotiating a crowded jungle*](#). Farnham: Gower.

Help and Advice

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