



B L O O M S B U R Y

Demystifying Archaeology book publishing at Bloomsbury Academic

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Choosing a publisher – what to consider 1

You want to find a publisher that is a good fit for your book and a good fit for you:

Good fit for your book – look in your library and on publishers' websites to see what they publish e.g. if they focus on coffee-table books a denser monograph might be out of place, and vice versa. Do they have series or specialisms in particular areas?

Check the publishers of books which seem comparable to yours in subject or approach.

Good fit for you – talk to your colleagues about their experiences e.g. was the process fair and transparent? Was the communication good? What were the press' production values like and were subject-specialist copy-editors or proofreaders available?

Which publishers have a good scholarly reputation, particularly within your field?

Choosing a publisher – what to consider 2

It's worth thinking about the essential qualities you are looking for and where you might be prepared to compromise. Talk to publishers directly to gather information – things to consider might include:

- Production timeframes
- Market reach and distribution
- Marketing and publicity
- Print formats e.g. paperback, POD
- Electronic formats
- Cover design
- Image provision (number, colour, reproduction quality)
- Whether subventions are necessary for e.g. colour printing
- Open Access

Approaching a publisher

You can make an brief initial enquiry by email without having to include a full proposal – this can save both parties time by enabling a quick initial assessment before further discussion:

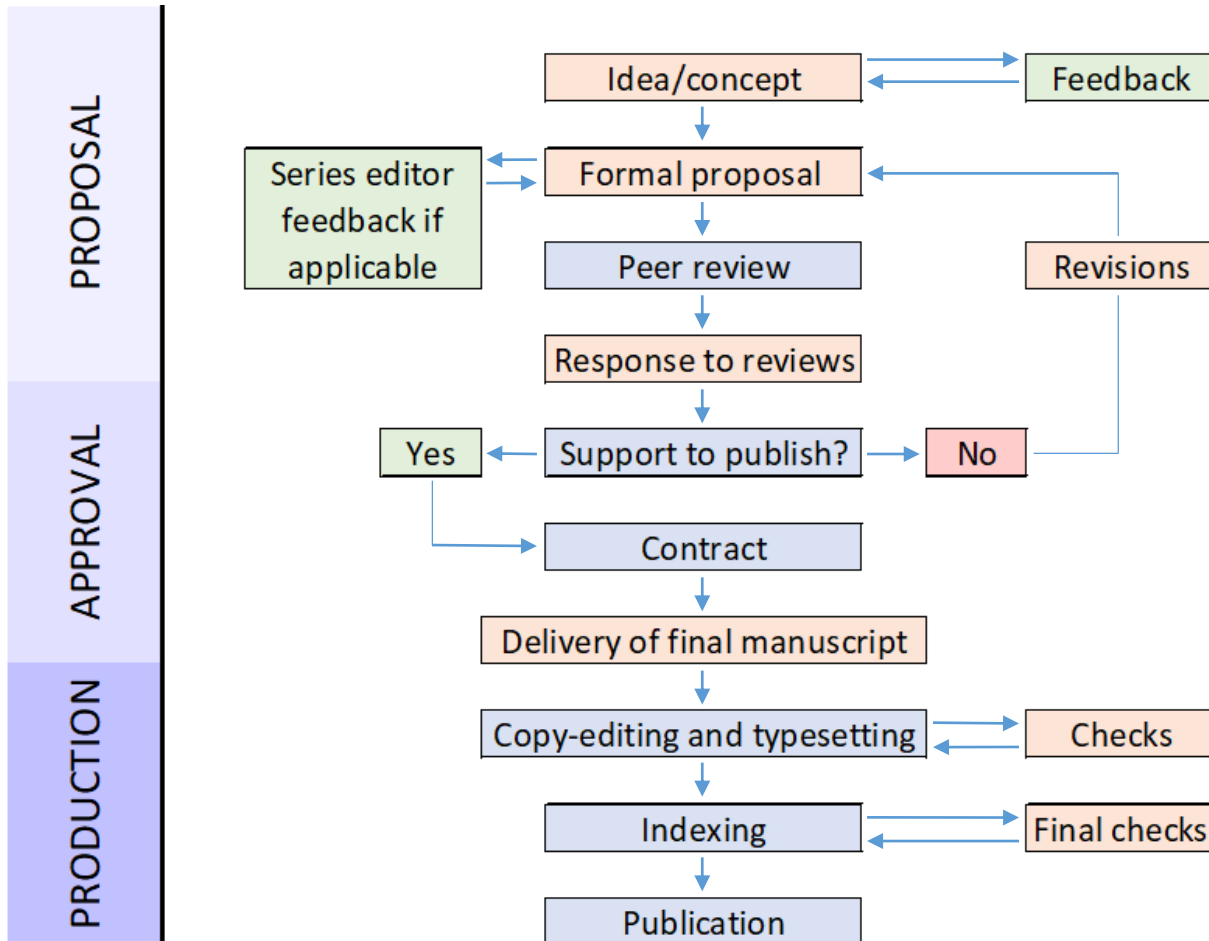
- Include your current role and affiliation, and details of any other book publications
- Outline the core aims and argument of your book concisely, emphasising what is original and important about the project and why it is of interest (the ‘so what’ question)
- Specify your envisaged readership by academic discipline and level (N.B. Be as realistic as possible about this – in particular, specialist research books don’t often find a general, non-scholarly readership)

The view from the other side

Aka how to impress a potential publisher, who is likely to be looking for:

- Knowledge of the basic list parameters, including which languages are accommodated (proposing a book for an existing series is helpful if you think there is a good fit but this is not essential as most publishers will consider standalone volumes outside of their series)
- Realistic expectations around e.g. timeframe and peer review
- Expertise (a demonstrable publication record can be helpful, so provide a couple of details of recent publications if you can)
- Reliability and responsive communication
- Clarity of expression in writing and care and attention to detail

Overview of the publishing process



This overview aims to cover the basic process common to most publishing houses. There are likely to be some additional stages which vary by publisher, such as an additional peer review of the final manuscript before acceptance into production, and post-publication marketing and promotional activities. Cover design may happen during production or in advance of delivery of the final manuscript.

Putting together a proposal 1

A formal proposal will usually cover three main elements: information about you, information about your book, and details of competition and market/readership.

- Use the publisher's own template form if there is one and provide as much detail as possible. Do also send extra relevant information as an appendix or separate document
- Read the questions carefully, observe word limits, and ask for guidance if you are unsure of what information to provide
- Sample material is helpful to send if available and some publishers will insist on it. Requirements vary, but an introduction covering scope and theoretical background is often appropriate, possibly alongside a chapter which demonstrates your argumentation and analysis in more detail. If you are providing sample material, ensure it is well-developed and fluently written, and not an unchecked draft

Putting together a proposal 2

Some pointers on different aspects of a proposal form to consider:

- Your title should indicate what the book is about – prioritize searchable keywords to make sure readers looking for material on the subject can find it easily
- Avoid subjective or overly emotive claims in descriptions e.g. ‘the best’, ‘revolutionary’
- If asked for chapter synopses, aim to include details of key arguments, methodologies, case-studies, findings, relevance, and connections between chapters
- Be as realistic as possible when estimating word and illustration counts and timeframes
- Even if there aren’t directly competing books, include related titles to provide a sense of the scholarly landscape e.g. is this a topic which is subject to active current debate?
- Be realistic about the envisaged readership
- Marketing connections and ideas or details of social media presence can also be helpful

Revised theses

- If your book will be based on a thesis, outline in detail how it will be adapted, even if you are providing sample material from the original thesis – given the radically different purposes and readerships of each form, revisions are likely to be thoroughgoing rather than superficial
- Write for your peers rather than your examiners: argue assertively rather than defensively, remove extensive signposting, and reference relevant literature throughout rather than in a dedicated review section
- There is a lot of guidance available out there – ask your colleagues who have been through the process and look for recommended reading on the subject e.g.
<https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/F/bo16835829.html>

Edited volumes

- These books need to be demonstrably more than the sum of their parts, especially where they arise from a conference – why do these chapters belong together in a book rather than as separate journal publications? How do they complement each other?
- Make sure the structure has a clear rationale and that any arrangement into parts or sections is appropriately balanced
- When outlining the book's content, make sure to include as much detail as possible on what the introduction will cover in order to demonstrate how it will bring the book together as a coherent whole. You may be asked to supply a draft alongside the proposal

Additional proposal do's and don't's

DO:

- Provide as much information as possible, and be accurate and realistic
- Suggest possible endorsers and/or provide details of possible marketing opportunities
- Be clear about your expectations and what you are looking for in a publisher
- Be absolutely transparent about other submissions at the outset and provide updates as needed
- Follow up tactfully after a couple of weeks if you were expecting a response to an initial enquiry

DON'T:

- Be put off if asked for more information or clarification
- Rely on the process being quick or linear – peer review timeframes can be unpredictable
- Chase a response within days – some publishers receive a large number of submissions
- Approach a publisher if you know you don't ultimately intend to accept an offer from them
- Be afraid of asking questions!

Peer review and response to reports

- Peer review is typically anonymous but not usually double blind for many book publishers
- Often reports will be solicited in a particular template from a minimum of two reviewers in different markets, but this may vary depending on the publisher and the type of book
- Timeframes vary depending on the volume of material at review and reader availability – schedules for feedback should generally be treated as estimates
- On receipt of the reports you may be asked to provide a formal response – this should outline in as much detail as possible how any suggested revisions or concerns will be addressed
- A useful format can be to address individual or related points in separate sections (after a brief thanks to the readers) – you don't have to just follow reviewers' suggestions, as it's most useful to think critically about the underlying issues raised and what the most effective solutions might be
- If the reports offer equivocal support for publication you may be asked to revise the proposal itself and/or the sample material or manuscript in order to repeat the peer review process

Publishing with Bloomsbury Academic

We publish:

- Single- and multi-authored books and edited volumes, including research monographs, textbooks, and reference works, though not usually trade books
- Series and standalone volumes, with both options open to first books
- Hardback initially, alongside two eBook formats and online publication in our academic platform Bloomsbury Collections; subsequent paperback after c. 18 months

We offer:

- Rigorous peer review and global publication with effective interdisciplinary marketing
- Open Access models with tiered Book Processing Charges
- No subventions as standard, only for manufacturing extras e.g. colour printing
- Distinctive cover designs, with internal budget for cover images
- Unfortunately we cannot accept manuscripts or chapters in languages other than English

Useful links

Bloomsbury:

- Academic proposal form: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/discover/bloomsbury-academic/authors/submitting-a-book-proposal/>
- Archaeology books: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/academic/archaeology/>
- Open Access: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/discover/bloomsbury-academic/open-access/>
- Academic series: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/series-types/academic-series/>
- Bloomsbury Collections: <https://www.bloomsburycollections.com/>

Other resources:

- The Essential Building Blocks of an Academic Book Proposal (Laura Portwood-Stacer, Manuscript Works Newsletter): <https://newsletter.manuscriptworks.com/p/building-blocks>

Contact us

If you have any questions or would like to find out more about publishing with the Archaeology list at Bloomsbury then please don't hesitate to be in touch:

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