Publishing Your Book with Cambridge University Press
How to get your book published

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Why publish a book?

• The subject needs it – there is a gap in the literature that needs to be filled.

• Students may need a textbook in the area, or material is needed to support a teaching course.

• You have an interest and passion for a subject and want to expand knowledge and reach new markets.

• You want to progress your career or establish your reputation – book authors are often considered leaders in the field.
Turning your thesis into a book

A thesis will need to undergo rigorous revision before publication. Top academic publishers may not accept a proposal without evidence of the differences in the book and thesis version.

**Rewrite for a different audience**
- A thesis is essentially an examination document, whereas a book typically addresses more general readers.
- Tailoring content to suit needs of audience, rather than the examiner, will make it more of a success.
- Ask yourself: what might this reader already know and what might they need further introduction on?
  - Are review chapters necessary? Is additional explanation necessary?

**‘Paint with a broader brush’**
- The topic of the book needs to be broad enough to read a large audience but not so broad that the market is inundated with publication.
- Consider adding topics that you might have considered beyond the scope of a thesis.
- Consider if the framework needs to be changed to make a strong narrative argument.

Consider these points *before* approaching a publisher.
How to decide on a publisher

Things to consider:

- **Relevant list** – read books on topics similar or related to your own and find out where they have been published.

- **Practical preferences** – are you most concerned with speed to publication, the quality of the printed book, or the types of audience the publisher is able to reach?

- **Market reach** – does the publisher specialise in targeting any specific audience that your book is aimed at? Does the publisher have a global reach?

- **Editorial** – does the publisher provide support from a knowledgeable editor? It may be a good idea to speak to editors from a shortlist of publishers, to get a sense of how well they would handle your book.

- **Reputation** – consider the reputation of a publisher within your discipline.

- **Digital offering** – can the publisher offer the platforms, formats and functionality that you would like for your book?
Submitting a book proposal to a publisher

• Find the names of the relevant editors – most publishers’ websites list editorial contacts.
• It is often possible to meet editors at major, international conferences.
• Write a personal email to editor to give basic details of the book project you would like to discuss.
• Ensure you give background on your specific research area – our editors know their disciplines well but will not always have deep expertise on individual topics.
• Attach a book proposal. Do not send the full manuscript.
• Decision (on sending for peer review) can take a few days to a few weeks, depending on schedule of the editor.
Seven tips for writing a strong book proposal

1. Title - Use a clear, succinct title.

An example of editorial input

Original:
A Probability Toolbox for Computer Science and Engineering

Final:
Probability Bootcamp.
For computer scientists, engineers and data scientists
Seven tips for writing a strong book proposal

1. Title – Use a clear, succinct title.

2. Market need – Include a short summary of the aims and scope of the book and why you think it makes an original and distinctive contribution to your field.
Seven tips for writing a strong book proposal

3. Audience – Include a brief description of your target readership.

Describing the readership – a good example

The book is aimed at researchers, system and chip designers, network planners and technical managers in the wireless communications area. The book can also be used for a post-graduate course dealing with advanced wireless communications technologies. Readers should have some basic knowledge of communication theory, information theory and network protocols.

Describing the readership – a bad example

The book is suitable for general readers, students and researchers interested in the role of IT in implementing business decisions. Readers should have some basic knowledge of programming, management science and operational research.
Seven tips for writing a strong book proposal

1. **Title** – Use a clear, descriptive title.

2. **Market need** – Include a short summary of the aims and scope of the book and why you think it makes an original and distinctive contribution to your field.

3. **Audience** – Include a brief description of your target readership.

4. **Approach and key features** – Include a detailed table of contents with chapter descriptions or abstracts to show how you will set out the content.
Seven tips for writing a strong book proposal

5. Competition – Give a brief analysis of some of the most closely related books to yours. How will your book add to this existing literature?

Describing the competition – an example

The following texts are often assigned in graduate courses in communication:

*Lee et al, Digital Communication. Springer.*

Neither of these books follows a lecture style of exposition, and they attempt to provide a comprehensive treatment that is overwhelming for the beginner. These are precisely the shortcomings that the proposed text would attempt to address.
Seven tips for writing a strong book proposal

1. **Title** – Use a clear, descriptive title.

2. **Market need** – Include a short summary of the aims and scope of the book and why you think it makes an original and distinctive contribution to your field.

3. **Audience** – Include a brief description of your target readership.

4. **Approach and key features** – Include a detailed table of contents with chapter descriptions or abstracts to show how you will set out the content.

5. **Competition** – Give a brief analysis of some of the most closely related books to yours. How will your book add to this existing literature?

6. **Details** – Propose a length, number/type of illustrations required, any digital features and an intended completion date.

7. **Authors** – Give a brief summary of your and any co-authors’ careers and work, showing why you are well-placed to write this book.
The assessment process for books

1. Book proposal
2. Editorial Assessment
3. Peer review
4. Revision/Response
5. Internal sales, marketing and editorial review
6. Unique to university presses
7. Contract
The assessment process for books

Peer review

- Typically external ‘single-blind’ review by international experts
- You can request who should not review if you have valid reasons
- Commissioning editor will review all referee reports to decide an outcome:
  - Recommend contract
  - Revise and resubmit
  - Decline

Takes around 8-12 weeks to get the reports
The assessment process for books

Peer review examples

“The sample chapters are beautifully written – humorous in part while getting the main points across effectively. Some of the book proposals I get sent are marginal. This is not one of those. It is a great proposal and I am looking forward to the book being completed. I certainly would like a copy in my library.”

“With no offence, I do not think the author is suitably qualified. The author is not a leader in quantum theory. To me, it rather looks like a recreational effort of a researcher not at the forefront of activity. Frankly, this book does not merit publication.”

“Please find our response to the comments and suggestions of the referees attached. We were at the same time surprised and delighted to see how intensely the referees have responded to your request. We are of course also highly satisfied that all four referees take a positive overall vote for publication.”
The assessment process for books

Peer review

Dealing with reviewers’ comments:
• Cover issues thematically or point by point.
• Make it easy for the editor by referring to line numbers and addressing comments in sequential order.

If you disagree with the comments:
• Respond objectively and professionally, supporting your argument with evidence.
• If you can’t meet all criticisms, explain why.
• Provide a detailed list of any changes made in response to the comments, and any changes not made.
The assessment process for books

Peer review – handling revisions

Reviewer: The book deals with turbo codes in a cursory fashion, almost as an afterthought. While it is fashionable to think of turbo codes as a subset of LDPC codes, the fact remains that turbo codes are far more ingrained into the modern digital communications infrastructure than LDPC codes.

Author: The book is certainly more focused on LDPC codes than any other iterative code. But reviewer A is completely right to point out that for historical reasons turbo codes are very important. Therefore, I have decided to add a chapter on turbo codes.
After acceptance

- Negotiate contract
- Agree and submit final manuscript
- Clearance reading of m/s (if required)
- Pre-production checks by Press
- Transmit to production
- Author’s engagement with copyediting/proofreading

Write manuscript (STM)

Takes about 8-12 months

Published!
What do book publishers do?

- Commissioning & peer review
- Editorial development
- Design
- Digital platform development
- Printing & distribution
- Copyediting & proofreading
- Global sales & marketing
- Rights & royalties
- Intellectual property protection
Publishing your research
Cambridge University Press

• The world’s oldest publisher, founded in 1534
• Integral part of the University of Cambridge
• Offices in over 50 countries, trading in over 200

1534
Cambridge is granted a letters patent to ‘print all manner of books’ by Henry VIII
Why Cambridge University Press?

• Respected and reputable, standing for excellence
• Mission to disseminate knowledge and support and innovate for academic communities, not deliver a profit to shareholders
• Dedicated and expert editorial team
• High-quality book and journal lists
• Global marketing and distribution
• Fair and competitive pricing
• Development of new technologies to find the best combination of print and digital formats for your work
Questions?

What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure.”

_Samuel Johnson_

“You know that I write slowly. This is chiefly because I am never satisfied until I have said as much as possible in a few words, and writing briefly takes far more time than writing at length.”

_Carl Friedrich Gauss_