

Being a Book Editor

How to propose an edited collection;
and then how to edit it

Consider the following when preparing your proposal

Why are you editing a book on this topic? What new contributions do you plan for the book to make to the field? What's your elevator pitch?

Considering this early on will help you with attracting contributors and with having the proposal approved by the publisher (and Series Editor if applicable).

Be quite sure why a book is the best forum for the collection and not, for instance, a journal special issue.

Think about a title for the book that clearly describes the subject matter to aid discoverability for other researchers. Chapter titles should also be clear and descriptive to help readers.

Be clear about the market positioning of the volume – what this book does that others don't, but also what literature/research the volume builds on.

How many chapters do you plan on including?

We advise that your final volume should be between 70,000 and 100,000 words - although some collections may be longer. You need to be as clear as possible with your contributors on how long their chapters should be.

You will need to supply a list of contributors and chapter abstracts in your proposal, even if this is subject to change as the book develops post-contract.

How will you source submissions?

You may want to directly approach other scholars in the field whose work you think will fit your volume's theme. You could also consider doing an open call for submissions, or speaking to colleagues at a relevant conference. Try utilising Listservs or social media to reach out to relevant and engaged scholars in your field.

Think about attracting a global spread of contributors where possible and relevant to the project, as this will help maximise international sales.

It's good to have a mix of early career/ established scholars contributing to the volume. You might want to consider asking a well-known scholar to contribute a preface.

Editor(s) should write the introduction to the volume and also consider adding a concluding chapter to help pull it together.

Remember to be realistic around submission dates you give to contributors, and also to your in house editor. It would also help us to know if you had any conferences or events that you would like to promote your book at.

Manuscript preparation

Once your proposal has been reviewed and you've accepted the Publisher's offer, you can get on with bringing together the contributions and preparing the final manuscript. Some things to consider during this period:

- Remember to share the **Author Guidelines** provided by the Publisher with your contributors, and to give them a clear indication of any additional information or forms they will need to supply prior to submission. For instance, consideration to permissions that might need to be cleared; or ensuring a consistent reference style throughout the volume.
- Set **realistic deadlines**. Make sure you give your contributors deadlines that allow you plenty of time for editing and pulling together the complete manuscript – we'd suggest allowing an extra 6-8 weeks for your own final checks and edits. You will need to factor in time for review and feedback to contributors.

- Try to think about potential **marketing opportunities** throughout. Is there a conference you'd like to see your published book at? Are you consulting with your contributors to make sure that all marketing and promotion opportunities are utilised? Be sure to let us know so we can make sure they fit with the publication timeline.

Submitting your manuscript

- The **Author Guidelines** that we send you with the contract will contain all the information you need for submitting the manuscript. However, we'll also check in periodically to see how you're getting on, and to remind you of the various forms that need to be submitted with the manuscript.
- One you submit your book, it will be **reviewed** by your Editor and Editorial Assistant, before being passed on to our production team. For more information about what happens once you submit your manuscript, see our helpful infographic.

Finally

An edited collection can make a valuable contribution to a field, setting out the agenda for an emerging subject area, or pointing the way to new directions in established subject areas.

Being a book editor can be challenging, but will also be very rewarding: allowing you to contribute to research beyond your own work, and to make a wider impact. In addition it can be an excellent opportunity to raise your profile and extend your own networks.

Contact us

For any enquiries about our databases, content or services, please contact us at:
Emerald Publishing Limited, Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley, United Kingdom BD16 1WA
T + 44 (0) 1274 777700 F + 44 (0) 1274 785201 E emerald@emeraldgroup.com

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