

Preparing a Book Proposal for Bloomsbury Academic's The 'What is?' Research Methods Series

The 'What is?' series provides authoritative introductions to a range of research methods which are at the forefront of developments in the social sciences. Each volume sets out the key elements of the particular method and feature examples of its application, offering a consistent structure across the whole series. Written in an accessible style by leading experts in the field, this series is an innovative pedagogical and research resource.

Series editor: Graham Crow is Professor of Sociology and Methodology at the University of Edinburgh, Director of the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science, and Co-Investigator of the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods.

To find out about books already published in the series, please click [here](#).

Book Proposal

A book proposal is a document of 5-10 pages which describes the purpose and anticipated use of the text. It should offer specific details as to why the book is being written, the important features, the level for which the book is intended, the major theme or approach, the course in which the text will be adopted if applicable, the research project on which the text draws if applicable, a description of subject matter covered, and how the text will be different from - and better than - the competition.

A proposal is helpful to the author and publisher in a number of ways:

- It assists the author in further organizing and defining his/her views, ideas, coverage, and intent of the text
- It provides an overview of the material and its appropriate audience for the publisher
- It gives reviewers a more complete idea of the author's aims to evaluate the quality of the project fairly and accurately

In order for us to give your proposal the attention it deserves, include the information below, and consider the questions and comments provided.

Book Information

Book Title and Subtitle

Your title is how the world discovers your book. How will people search for it? Is there one key, critical phrase? Is your title already taken by a key competitor? Does your title clearly indicate what your book is about?

Summary

How would you describe your book in one line, summing up its scope and content?

Description and Rationale

Why is there a need for your book? Will the book have a particular point of view, emphasis or approach? What sets apart this approach from other books on the same topic or in a similar course market? Will your text serve as a core/required text or as a supplemental/recommended one and whether it is a single (or co-authored), an edited volume, reader/anthology, or a case studies book?

Short Non-technical Description

How would you describe your book to someone with only a basic knowledge of the field? Write a concise description of the book (up to 250 words) which is clear, informative and persuasive, suitable for use as the book's blurb (its marketing copy).

Key Features and Benefits

If you had to give three key benefits that your book offers to its readers what would they be? What are the features that differentiate your book from books of a similar nature?

Table of Contents

What will the table of contents look like? Think about table of contents as a whole: does it clearly guide the reader through the book? Is there a logical progression? If you are proposing an **adoptable text**, consider whether you are presenting a comprehensive view of the field you are focusing on. Follow the convention: Introduction / 1. First Chapter. For contributed volumes, include contributor names and their affiliations (including country).

Chapter Outlines

How would you describe each chapter? Include a summary of content, angle, purpose, relevance and the main references upon which the material is based. The more information you can provide here, the more substantive the feedback reviewers can provide. Provide a detailed table of contents including sub-headings.

Length

How many words long will your manuscript be, to the nearest 5,000 words (including notes and bibliography)? Be prepared to deliver your entire manuscript (including any illustrations or previously published material) electronically.

Illustrations

How many figures are required (if any), including tables, charts, line diagrams and photographs? Give a brief description of each and explanation of how they will be used to enhance your text. Be aware that all illustrations (excluding charts which can be provided in Word) will need to be delivered electronically and at a minimum of 600dpi at 100%.

Companion Website

Is a companion website needed to support the book? What material would be required (e.g. instructor's manual, PowerPoint presentations, student workbook, test bank)? If there should be an instructor's manual, what should it include (e.g. syllabi, quizzes and exams, answer manual, student work)? Would you be able to develop these materials in conjunction with the book? We have a range of full-featured Companion Websites that accompany key textbooks and Online Resources sites that feature alongside suitable research and reference projects. In addition, we can include relevant links and audio/video content on individual book pages if appropriate.

Delivery

What is your schedule for writing the book? How much have you already written? When do you estimate that you will have a complete first draft? Be realistic rather than optimistic.

Pedagogical Features

What plans do you have for features or pedagogical support (e.g. objectives, key terms/concepts, questions, problems, summaries, case studies, learning activities, bibliographies, glossary, appendices), if any? What competitive advantages will they offer?

Permissions

Will you be reusing any previously published material (figures, illustrations, text) of your own or others? If so, give full and specific details.

Market and Competition

Market and Readership

For whom is the book primarily written, in which discipline(s), at what level(s)? How will your book address their needs? What is its value as a reference book?

What specific module(s) is the book most appropriate, and at what level is this taught at? Include the name of the specific module that constitutes the primary audience for this text. What is the national enrolment in the course and number of schools that offer the module? How often is the module offered and how long does it last? Is the module required or elective? Are you aware of any trends in the market unfolding? What are the challenges or frustrations lecturers currently face in teaching the course? Would it be used as a core text, or as one of several reading assignments in a course?

International Markets

Where do you see the main markets for the book, e.g. UK, USA, Canada, Europe, Australasia, etc? Provide any information that would help us to promote the book in specific markets, e.g. countries featured in case studies, contributors, author profile, possible endorsements, etc. To date, sales of titles on our Education list has been predominantly to the UK market, with a growing number of sales in North America and elsewhere. However, we are looking at growing our international sales wherever appropriate (while being mindful that some texts need to remain UK-centric to meet the needs of our UK audience).

Competition

Which are the competing texts? Which texts will your book sit alongside in the bookshop or library? Provide details of four to six books (author, title, publisher, edition, copyright year, and number of pages) published in the last five years with which your book will compete and explain how your book is like, or unlike, the other books. If there is no direct competition, explain why.

List those texts that you think are the best sellers for the course where your book will be adopted, and those texts that you feel most closely resemble the text you are proposing. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the books yours would compete with or replace (including projects in development, if any)? How do major competitors meet the needs of your target audience, and how do they fail to meet those needs? How will your book differ from its major competitors? How will it be similar?

Author/Editor Information

Your Details

Title	Postal address (to which you'd be happy for all formal correspondence to be sent, such as contacts, books, etc)
Name	
Affiliation and Job Title	Work telephone number
Biographical note (up to 50 words)	Alternative telephone number
Email address	

Additional information

Is there anything else that it might be helpful to us know in making our decision, e.g. previous books, teaching/research experience, media contacts, etc? Please attach a copy of your CV.

Other Information

Sample Material

Prepare at least one, preferably two, sample chapters. While the proposal reveals the thinking behind the conception of the book, draft chapters demonstrate how you plan to realize this. The sample chapter(s) should be in sufficiently good condition to allow a valid assessment of your capability, but they need not be in final form. The sample chapter(s) should indicate all chapter elements that will be included in the final manuscript such as outlines, introductions, conclusions, pedagogical features, illustrations, case studies, etc. Any material you submit should comprise an integral and important part of your text and should accurately reflect the underlying approach.

Suggested Reviewers

Who would be well positioned to peer review this proposal? Include three or four suggestions, indicating their affiliation and providing their email address. We will use reviewers of our own choice, but also try to include some whose opinion you feel will be valuable. If the book has several distinct markets, try to recommend at least one reviewer for each. If your book will appeal to those based in different countries, try to reflect this in your suggestions.

These should be people teaching on the module(s) for which you'd anticipate the proposed text being essential or supplementary reading.

Finally

Thank you for taking the time to think about these points while completing your proposal. Above all, make sure that someone who may be unfamiliar with your work or the exact area in which you work has enough information to make informed comments on the project. With this material in hand, we can make a publishing decision on your proposal and both you and we can be certain that we are in agreement on the nature of the book contracted. Feel free to get in touch with us if you have any further questions. Good luck, and we look forward to receiving your material.

Rachel Shillington

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