

SUBMITTING A TEXTBOOK PROPOSAL TO OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

We are very pleased that you are considering writing for Oxford University Press. What follows is a brief description of what the editors in the Higher Education Department might expect of a proposal for a new textbook and how they will consider it for publication. These notes are full but not exhaustive, since many projects will be presented and evaluated in rather different ways and possibly at different stages. Do feel free to contact any of the editors for advice or information at any stage. We will always be pleased to hear from you.

THE OUTLINE PROPOSAL

The first thing you as an author should do is to prepare an outline proposal for your new book and send it to the appropriate commissioning editor. The outline proposal should be as full as possible to enable the most effective evaluation and feedback on the project. Ideally this would include the following:

1 Provisional title of proposed textbook

2 Brief synopsis of the book

This should be about 500 words long and summarize the topic, your aims, scope, general approach, and intended audience.

Topic: Subject of proposed book and level within the undergraduate curriculum

Aims: Why is a new book needed? What do you think the readers will gain from it? Also, why do you wish to write the book?

General approach: What is the purpose of the book and how will this book achieve its aim? How would you summarize your approach to the subject?

Scope: What is included? What is left out, and why? What prior knowledge will the book assume?

Please also give your estimate of the total number of words/printed pages, and the total number and type of illustrations.

Ancillary material:

Please summarise any ancillary material (web site, CD-ROM etc.) that you think should be provided alongside the book to increase its educational value.

(We offer companion web sites with many of our textbooks. To see the scope of material offered on these sites then feel to browse for yourself at www.oup.com/uk/booksites)

3 The Market

Please summarise what you consider to be the market for your proposed book:

- What is the primary readership? (for example, 'undergraduate computing students', 'students taking an optional third year module in cognitive neuroscience')
- What are the secondary readership groups? (for example, 'postgraduates in ecology', '3rd year engineering students taking an introductory biotechnology option')
- Other readership (for example, 'professionals', 'research scientists')

For which courses will your book be appropriate? Suggest courses where:

- the book could be the sole or principal required text
- the book could be one of several required texts
- the book could be supplementary reading

Please give an indication of where, to your knowledge, such courses are and how many people take them. If you believe that there are few applicable courses at this time, but that the text will fit an *emerging* market (i.e. where courses are likely to start appearing in considerable numbers over the next few years) then please indicate this.

Where do you see the principal markets for the book (e.g. UK, USA, Canada, Europe, Australasia and/or other) and where are the secondary markets?

Where possible, please provide names, positions, work addresses and e-mail addresses of people currently teaching courses for which this book would be appropriate.

4 Information on competing books

Please give a list of books (with as much information on length, date of publication, publisher, price, etc. as possible) that might be considered as 'competing' with your proposed book.

- What are their strengths, weaknesses and availabilities?
- How will your book differ from each?
- What are the advantages of the proposed book over these titles?
- If you had to come up with three unique selling points for your book, what would they be?

5 Full outline

Content

Please provide a list of chapters including the main subheadings of each, a short paragraph for each chapter summarising its contents, and an estimate of the number of words or printed pages in each chapter.

Artwork

Assuming illustrations are a major feature of your proposal, please specify the types (photographs/diagrams/tables) and approximate number in each chapter.

Pedagogical features

Please summarise the main pedagogical features that you anticipate including (for example, chapter summary, problems, glossary, further reading, web links etc.)

It is also useful to see some sample material which illustrates the writing style and the features within the text [not essential, but if you have already drafted material it would be interesting to see this].

Ancillary material

Please provide details of any ancillary material that should be provided alongside the book, together with an explanation of why these materials would add to the educational value of the book. For example, do you think it would be useful for the book to be supported with a companion web site? If so, what material would you envisage including on the site? How would this be integrated with the book itself?

Please also give an indication of the extent to which you would be involved in the development of this material. (Please note that we don't expect our authors to get involved with the technical aspects of producing supplementary material. For example, in the case of material presented via our companion web sites, we have a web editor whose job it is to construct the individual web pages based on the basic content supplied by the author(s) or other individuals. Generally, this content need not be submitted in a form that is any more complex than the manuscript itself – i.e. as Word documents, or similar.)

Likely schedule

Please indicate your expectation of the time required from the present stage to delivery of final typescript. Also, how quickly will the book date? How often would a new edition be required?

6 Curriculum Vitae

Please send a brief CV including:

- Full name and qualifications of authors
- Work address, telephone fax and e-mail
- Present appointments
- Career to date

EVALUATING THE PROPOSAL

Evaluating the proposal is a two-step process:

1. The OUP editor will invite comments on your outline from a number of academic advisers teaching in the area. These referees will remain anonymous, unless they wish otherwise.
This process will usually take from six to eight weeks. Your editor will be in touch summarizing the referees' comments as soon as they are complete and you will be asked for your reaction to these comments and whether you wish to amend your outline in response to them.

It is also possible that, at this stage, you will be informed that OUP cannot publish your book.

2. If reviews are broadly positive then costings for the proposed book (examining likely production and manufacturing costs, likely sales, and predicted revenue) will be drawn

up. The proposal and associated estimated costs will then be presented at a departmental **New Book Proposals** meeting. At this meeting the success of the proposed text as a financially viable proposition will be assessed.

It is possible, at this stage, that the editor will come back to you with queries relating to the costings before the proposal can be approved by the department's Directors.

PUTTING THE PROPOSAL TO THE DELEGATES OF THE PRESS

If your editor, with the support of their Directors at the New Proposals Meeting, feels that the proposal is likely to make a successful OUP publication, it will be submitted to **the Delegates of the Press** for consideration at their next meeting (the 'Delegates Meeting').

(Oxford University Press remains a Department of the university, and all proposals must be approved by the Board of Delegates [a panel of academics from the university] before a contract can formally be offered. The Delegates meet every two weeks during University term time. If a decision is needed outside term time a 'vacation decision' can sometimes be arranged.)

Your editor will let you know the Delegates' decision about your proposal as soon as possible after their meeting.

THE CONTRACT

If the Delegates encourage publication, your editor will send you a draft contract. You should check that all the details of the contract (for example, details of authors, addresses, delivery date, division of royalties, payment for contributors) are correct and discuss them with your editor if necessary before returning it to OUP so a final version can be drawn up for your signature. At this stage, your editor will discuss the development of the typescript and illustrations with you.

THE WRITING PROCESS

We appreciate being kept informed of your progress and will be happy to give advice at any stage. As chapters are written we are keen to read them and gain feedback from lecturers which we hope will be useful to you as you progress further with the project. We advise that authors also have the material reviewed by colleagues and peers. Your editor will probably arrange meetings with you periodically to discuss progress, and answer any queries that may arise during manuscript preparation.

SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL

Please send your proposal to the following postal address:

**Commissioning Editor - [SUBJECT e.g. Business, Science]
Higher Education Department
Oxford University Press
Great Clarendon Street
Oxford OX2 6DP**

Email: HigherEducation.Europe@oup.com

Even if you have yet to produce a proposal we would be delighted to hear from you to discuss the ideas that you have on an informal basis.

We look forward to the prospect of working with you!
