

Getting Published: The Basics

Supplemental Information

Finding a Publisher

Your article or book manuscript needs to fit within the editorial scope of the press to which you submit it.

A robust list of Classics journals with notes on scope and submission requirements can be found here: [Classics Journals: Descriptions and Guidelines](#)

The Association of University Presses compiles a list of the subject area specialties of all its member presses. This tool can help you find a press that publishes in your area of research: [AUPresses Subject Area Grid](#)

You should also review the press's editorial scope or policy to help determine "fit." For example, see the [AJA's editorial policy](#), which outlines the topics and publication formats that they publish. For journal articles, in addition to looking at the topics a journal publishes, consider word limit, image allowances, and publication timelines to help you identify the best venue for a particular study.

Types of presses

- Commercial: Bloomsbury and Bloomsbury Academic, Brill/deGruyter, Palgrave/Macmillan, Routledge
- Scholarly/university: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Duke University Press, University of California Press, University of Michigan Press (almost always with a school's name in the title)
- European: mostly freestanding presses (not connected to a university)

Questions to ask a book editor

- How would you see my book fitting with the press's publishing program?
- How does the press's review process work, and what is the typical timeline?
- At what point in the process would the press issue a contract? Would the press consider an advance contract on a proposal/partial manuscript, or would it need the full manuscript for review before offering a contract?
- In what formats would the press plan to publish my book (hardcover, paperback, eBook)? What are the typical price points?
- What is the press's ideal length and number of images for a manuscript?
- Once the final, production-ready manuscript is submitted, how long will it take for my book to be published?
- Does the press offer open access publishing options, and what are the fees?
- Is the author responsible for any other costs (e.g., indexing, color printing, etc.)?
- What degree of input would I have on design decisions, including cover design?
- How would the press plan to promote my book?

Writing and Crafting Your Submission

The style and structure of a publication is different from that which you are used to when preparing a seminar paper, thesis, or dissertation. It is a new mode of writing to master, and it will become easier with experience. A few key pieces of advice:

- Update your research if time has passed since you first wrote the dissertation or paper. Editors and reviewers check if the reference list is up to date and if it contains sources outside of those presented in English. You want your reference list to reflect the diversity of past and current scholarship on your topic.
- Cut (or heavily reduce) your literature review. If you must keep some references, work these parts (briefly) into your text where relevant.
- If your work is an extension of a conference paper or other orally delivered piece, be sure that it does not read that way. Look for casual language, issues of flow, and omission of citations. If not carefully recrafted for publication, such manuscripts may be turned away before review. As onerous as it sounds, you may want to write a new manuscript from an outline of your delivered paper.

Recommended resources on academic writing for publication

Belcher, W. L. 2019. *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

(Excellent advice for how to start crafting a successful journal article, including how writing for publication differs from writing for graduate work.)

Bielstein, S. M. 2006. *Permissions, A Survival Guide: Blunt Talk About Art as Intellectual Property*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

(Accessible guide to the basics of acquiring permissions to publish illustrations.)

Germano, W. 2013. *From Dissertation to Book*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 2016. *Getting It Published: A Guide for Scholars and Anyone Else Serious About Serious Books*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

(Provides valuable insight on the publication process from a veteran academic editor.)

———. 2021. *On Revision: The Only Writing That Counts*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ginna, P., ed. 2017. *What Editors Do: The Art, Craft, and Business of Book Editing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

(Includes chapters by academic acquisitions editors that explain what they look for in a proposal and submission.)

Knox, K. E., and A. Van Deventer. 2023. *The Dissertation-to-Book Workbook: Exercises for Developing and Revising Your Book Manuscript*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Luey, B., ed. 2008. *Revising Your Dissertation: Advice from Leading Editors*. Updated ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 2022. *Handbook for Academic Authors: How to Navigate the Publishing Process*. 6th ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

(Covers journal articles, multiauthor volumes, traditional monographs, and revising a dissertation, among other topics.)

Portwood-Stacer, L. 2021. *The Book Proposal Book: A Guide for Scholarly Authors*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 2025. *Make Your Manuscript Work: A Guide to Developmental Editing for Scholarly Writers*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
(Discusses the publication process and how and when to improve your text.)
Sword, H. 2012. *Stylish Academic Writing*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Recommended online resources

AUPresses' AskUP: <https://ask.up.hcommons.org/>

Rebecca Colesworthy's *Chronicle of Higher Education* advice column:
<https://www.chronicle.com/author/rebecca-colesworthy>

H-Net's Feeding the Elephant: A Forum for Scholarly Communications:
<https://networks.h-net.org/feeding-the-elephant>

Katelyn Knox and Allison Van Deventer's Academic Book Central:
<https://dissertationtobook.com/about/>

Laura Portwood-Stacer's Manuscript Works: <https://manuscriptworks.com/>

Preparation of Materials

Review the Author Guidelines of the journal/press (usually on their website).

- Examples: [AJA](#), [ASCSA](#), [University of Michigan](#)

Conform to word count limits, required components, and basic formatting instructions.

- For example, follow acceptable file formats, image size/resolution, and whether certain components need to be submitted separately (e.g., tables).

Start gathering your image permissions as soon as possible following acceptance.

- Identify the rightsholders, which may include one or more of: publisher, author, artist, excavation authority, museum/government entity.
- To file a permissions request you may need information from the journal/press about the print run, distribution, and/or nonprofit status.
- It can take *months* for some rightsholders to reply, so have a backup plan for alternate images.
- Permissions can cost money; usually this expense is the author's responsibility.

Start finalizing your artwork files as early as possible.

- Review the press's artwork guidelines and ensure that file size, format, and modes all conform to the requirements.
- For a detailed explanation of artwork file preparation and tips, consult the University of Chicago Press's [Artwork Guidelines](#).

Scholars working with material from excavations or museum collections should review provenance/ethics policies for their objects and geographical regions.

- Examples of provenance policies: [AJA](#), [ASCSA](#)
- Editors will ask authors to cut pieces from their manuscript that violate the policy, so you should consider any issues as soon as possible.
- If you're concerned about something, ask the editor what policies are in place.

Journal article submission

Contact with an editor is not needed prior to submission but do reach out if you have questions after reviewing the guidelines posted on the journal's website. Be sure to include all requested materials, which may entail a cover letter, list of individuals who have read the manuscript, and preparation checklists.

Book proposal/prospectus

A book proposal generally consists of the following:

- Brief description/statement of aims (the "elevator pitch")
- Table of contents, including brief chapter overviews
- Description of intended readership
- Comparable/related titles (published within the last five years)
- Apparatus/features: word count for text, notes, and bibliography; number of tables and illustrations
- Current status (complete; will be completed by X date)
- Author bio and current CV

For a detailed overview of the book proposal process and requirements, see the University of California Press's [Book Proposal Guidelines](#).

Review Process

Typical reviewer guidelines (books and journals)

- Does the manuscript make a significant contribution to scholarship on the subject? Please explain. If not, what might you recommend that would strengthen the manuscript?
- Who is the intended audience for this book and will the project reach that audience in its current form? What disciplines and subfields will find this work valuable? What other readers might find it useful?
- Is the scholarship sound? Is the reference list complete and up to date? Please note any striking omissions. Is the author in dialogue with a diverse group of scholars and perspectives?
- Could the organization of the text and/or catalogue be improved? If so, how? Is the manuscript well written? Is the length justified?
- Do the illustrations support the thesis adequately? Would you recommend more or fewer illustrations be included? If so, please specify.
- Does any discussion of objects in the manuscript, whether in the main text or in the notes, appear to contravene the publisher's ethics policy? Are there any concerns regarding object provenance?

As a key takeaway, the organization, clarity of expression, and quality of thinking (methodology, evidence, interpretation) in a submission are together what determine whether it makes a valuable contribution to scholarship.

Typical review decisions (books and journals)

- Accept: Manuscript is accepted for publication without requiring any significant revisions. (Very uncommon)
- Accept pending revisions: Manuscript is accepted for publication provided the author makes the reviewers' (and editor's) recommended revisions.
- Reject: Manuscript is rejected for publication.
- Reject urging resubmission: Manuscript is rejected for publication in its current state, but the author is encouraged to resubmit the manuscript for review following reworking of the manuscript based on reviewers' recommendations. Some presses may allow only one attempt at successful revision while others may offer multiple rounds.

Contracts (books and journals)

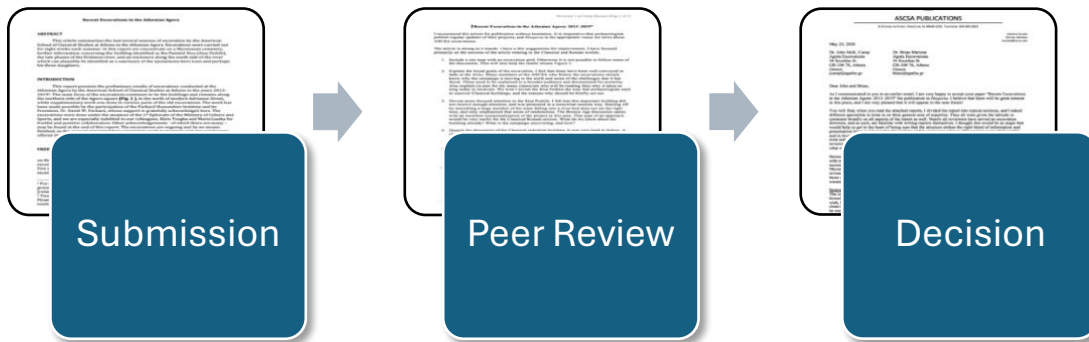
- Once you are under contract, you may refer to your work as "forthcoming." Note that the use of "in press" has a very specific definition, meaning that the work is actively in its final stages of being printed and bound.
- Review the language of your contract and be sure to understand what rights you retain and what rights will be assigned to the press. The rightsholder is especially important for illustrations.

- Note who is responsible (you or the press) for supplying copies of the publication to any parties that need to receive them as a condition of permission or acknowledgment of contribution.
- Note any mention of how you might be allowed to share and disseminate electronic copies of your work, especially regarding posting it online. Many journals have contracts with their hosting platforms that require an embargo period of a few years. This situation does not mean you may not share your work at all, but sharing may only be allowed in certain ways (e.g., peer-to-peer, deposit in a university repository). If you have questions about how you might be allowed to share your work, contact your editor or publisher.

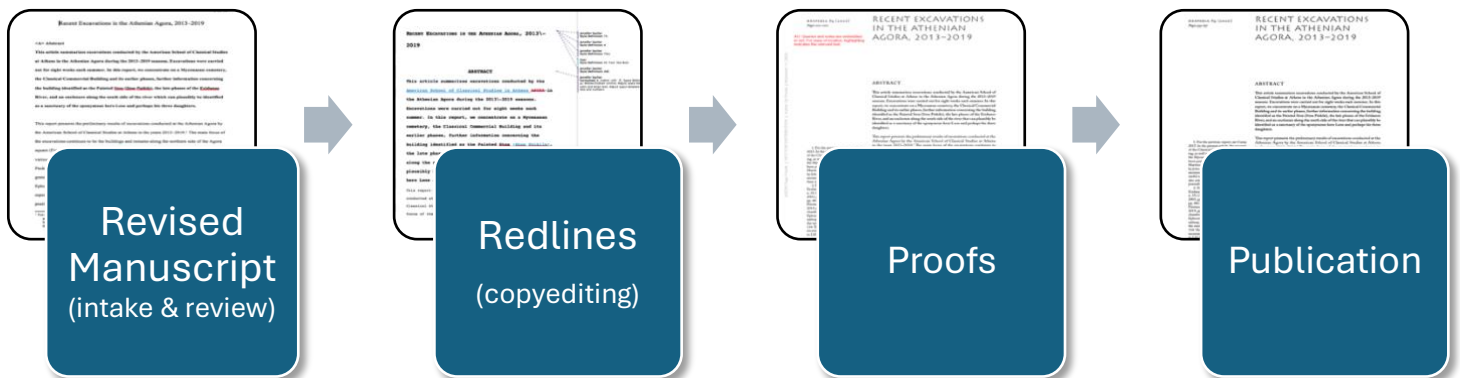
Typical contracts (books)

- Standard: A complete manuscript is approved by the press's editorial board.
- Advance: Issued for a partial manuscript or a proposal on a timely subject (e.g., contemporary politics). Upon completion, the entire manuscript is reviewed, and the advance contract is converted to a standard contract.
- Conditional: Issued when the editorial board requests additional elements to the manuscript (e.g., an introduction by another person, inclusion of a specific body of material, significant revisions required by a reviewer). Upon completion of required revisions, the manuscript is reviewed by the editor or an external referee.

Journal Production Flowchart

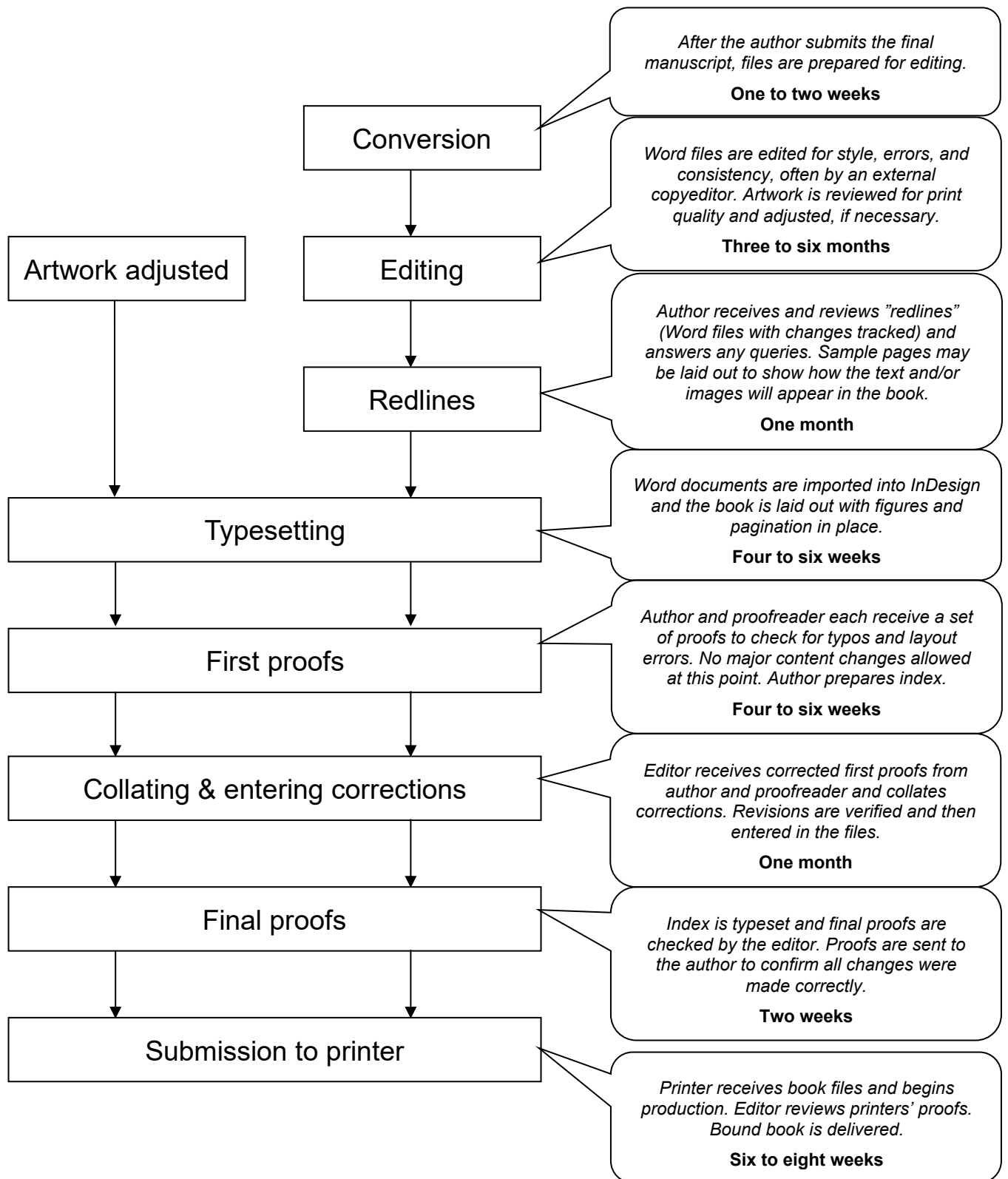


SUBMISSION & REVIEW



PRODUCTION

Sample Monograph Production Schedule



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University of California Press FirstGen Program

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