BOOK PROPOSAL

DOS AND DON’TS

Before submitting a book proposal...

- **DO** research publishers to decide which are most suitable to consider your proposal and look for what proposal materials they require.
- **DO** proof-read your proposal.
- **DON’T** propose your PhD thesis – there needs to be evidence of reworking.
- **DON’T** submit your proposal to numerous editors – target the most appropriate.

Title/subtitle

- **DO** be clear – focus on the keywords that will increase discoverability and search optimisation.
- **DON’T** be abstract or obtuse.
- **DON’T** expect to be able to change your title at the last minute - bibliographic information about your book will be fed out to the market well in advance of publication.

Brief description

- **DO** aim to grab the reader’s attention.
- **DO** focus on the following questions: What is the book about? How is it distinctive? What does it offer that other books don’t? What needs does it satisfy?
- **DON’T** assume specialist subject knowledge on the part of the editor – most editors work across a broad list.
**Market and competition**

- **DO** look at the market from the publisher’s perspective.
- **DO** make clear how your proposal relates to each competing book – how it differs and how it will extend the debate.
- **DO** provide evidence of the interest in your field and include academic and professional associations.
- **DO** include existing books from the publisher to demonstrate awareness of its programme.

- **DON’T** write ‘there is no competition’ – this can be translated as ‘there is no market.’
- **DON’T** assume that ‘a general audience’ will be interested in your proposed book; most monographs are for an academic audience and that is appropriate.
- **DON’T** write disparagingly about competing books.

**Additional information**

- **DO** be realistic about the submission date and expected word count: Do you have a timetable for completing the book? What portion of the manuscript is already completed?
- **DO** show awareness about copyright and permissions – think carefully about whether you really need to include third-party material.
- **DO** suggest peer reviewers who know your subject and anticipated markets, particularly if your research is likely to appeal to a specific geographical region.

- **DON’T** suggest close colleagues or PhD supervisors/examiners as peer reviewers.

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