

What do we need in a book proposal?

To consider offering a contract for a book, we do not need to see a complete manuscript. We do need enough information to understand accurately what's being proposed. So we ask for a prospectus of the following kind and, when appropriate, draft or indicative material (such as sample chapters, or lecture notes, or perhaps a survey paper on the same subject as the book) that shows the style in which the book will be written.

Include as much information as you yourself would require to offer a meaningful evaluation. There is no prescribed length.

Prospectuses should in all cases include the following information:

- *Working book title*: If you'd like to raise alternatives for comment, please do.
- *Rationale and scope*: What's motivating you to prepare this book? What will your book equip readers to do? Describe the unifying theme(s) and why you've chosen to include/exclude the things you have.
- *Readership*: What is your intended core readership? What are the essential prerequisites that you are assuming of readers? Is there further knowledge that is helpful but not essential?
- *Competing/related books*: How does your book relate to other books on the topic currently in use? What will your book offer that isn't available elsewhere?
- *Contents, authored books*: Describe the contents of each chapter, e.g. section headings or a short summary of what each chapter will cover. Will there be exercises? Paper-and-pencil? Data-based?
- *Contents, edited books*: List the contributors' names and affiliations, chapter titles and, ideally, short abstracts of each chapter in the order in which they will appear in the book. Have all the contributors been approached and/or agreed at least in principle that they will contribute?
- *Special features*: For example, will any of your figures require color in order to be understood? If so, please estimate how many will need to be in color.
- *Description of any ancillary material*: Will you provide computer code (what language/package), data sets, solutions to exercises, etc.?
- *Proposed length of the book and its proposed completion date*. These needn't be set in stone, but please make them as realistic as you can.
- *Review for edited books*: How will you ensure that the resulting chapters are of a consistent standard and level? You might want to consider whether external peer-review will be necessary for the individual chapters. Please also indicate a timetable for contributors to submit first drafts to you, and an estimate of when you think the volume will be in final form and ready to send to the Press for production (the proposed completion date, above).
- *Brief credentials of the author(s) or editor(s)* (N.B. a full curriculum vitae is not required).

How does our initial editorial review work?

I (and the other Press editors) can give the 'nod' to a book but I can't make a formal offer all by myself. Cambridge University Press is a department of the University of Cambridge, with the same aims and objectives as the University. We have charitable status, and are therefore not-for-profit. We exist to promote scholarship and the dissemination of knowledge. Approval for all our publications has to be given by the University, and this is done through a board of senior academics, known as the Press Syndicate.

The way that a contract is authorized is for the editor (me) to present a publishing proposal to the Syndicate, along with supportive peer reviews and marketing projections; the proposal is then discussed and a decision reached.

If the book is being proposed for a series, we also consult the relevant series editors.

The reviewing process involves both internal and external (peer) review. External reviewers are typically experts in the area of the book and, for textbooks, we look for opinions from experienced instructors. They are asked to comment on the aims of the book and on the author's plan to achieve those aims as evidenced in the prospectus. They are also asked to comment on any sample material.

The evaluation procedure can result in a range of opinion, falling somewhere between the extremes of 'unconditional acceptance', on one hand, and 'unpublishable under any circumstances', on the other. We aim to make the process constructive, so there are often suggestions which the reviewers think will improve the book. These are passed to you, and we expect you to react to constructive comments, but we are always aware that it's your book, and we will not ask you to write to a prescription or to write someone else's book.

After the reviewing, we make our decision. If the decision is favorable, we discuss contract terms with you and, once agreed, we issue a contract. Contract arrangements can be discussed at any time, however.

If you'd like to talk through your ideas before putting together a formal proposal, or have questions about the publishing process, don't hesitate to contact us at any time.

Diana Gillooly, Senior Editor
Los Angeles, CA 90024
Telephone 646-202-3247
Email dgillooly@cambridge.org
Skype [gilloolycambridge](https://www.skype.com/en/contacts/gilloolycambridge)

New York City office
1 Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor
New York, NY 10013
www.cambridge.org