

## Proposal Guidelines

The University Press of Florida and University of Florida Press publish books for scholars and general readers in archaeology, dance, Latin American and Caribbean studies, modernist studies, medieval literature, African American studies, southern US history, gardening, natural history and the environment, food and cooking, and the state of Florida. We do not publish original fiction, poetry outside of existing series, religious works, children's books, or unrevised dissertations. Publishing successfully requires finding an appropriate publisher for each project, so please bear in mind that a project that does not fit with Florida may find a welcome home at another press.

The first step to publishing with us is to submit a **Letter of Inquiry**. If we have invited a proposal in response to your inquiry, or we have asked specifically that you submit a proposal, please refer to these guidelines in preparing it. Your proposal should give our staff a clear description of your project. When preparing your proposal, consider the following questions:

- What key problems or questions does your project address?
- What previously unknown or forgotten story are you planning to tell?
- Why does this project matter? What contribution will your project make?
- Who is the audience for this project?

Potential audiences vary, so give careful consideration to the readers you are writing for:

- Is your project for scholars who are specialists in your field?
- Will it be of interest to students? What level of students?
- Is this a project professors might require in a course? If so, include course names, descriptions, and sample syllabi.
- Is this project accessible and of interest to more general readers who may not have specialized knowledge of your subject?

Whichever audience you are writing for should be reflected in your approach, terminology, and level of explanation.

### Suggested Proposal Format

Proposed title and subtitle: What are the current title and subtitle of your project? Keep in mind that titles often change before a book is published.

Description: In one to two pages, summarize the content of the project, your argument, methodological approach, sources, and purpose. What key questions does the project address? How does it engage with other works in the field? How does it contribute to our understanding of this subject?

Market and Audience: Describe who you are writing this project for, whether it be scholars in your field, students, or general readers. If you are writing for academics, scholars in what field(s) would be interested in this project? If your project is intended for students, how do you anticipate students utilizing this resource? If it would appeal to a general audience, what would readers find interesting about your project? Florida publishes books for different audiences, but no book can effectively address all of these audiences. Please provide an honest assessment of your work.

Other books: Please provide a list of books on this subject that appeal to the same audience as your project. For each book, include the title, author, publisher, and date of publication. Does your project engage in conversation with these works? How is your project similar to / different from these works? Noting similar books published by Florida is particularly helpful.

Schedule and specifications: Include information on the current status of the project and when you estimate you will complete the manuscript. What is the anticipated length of the project (total words, including notes and references)? Does this project have an illustration program? Are there any permissions issues that may arise (reproductions of illustrations or extended excerpts of poetry or musical lyrics, for example)? Is this project being submitted simultaneously to other publishers?

Author/editor information: Provide a brief biography, including institutional affiliation, previous publications, educational history, and any other information that might be helpful.

Annotated table of contents: Provide a list of the book's proposed structure and a brief paragraph describing each of the chapters' contents. Where relevant, please note if any material has been previously published. If the project is an edited collection, please provide an abstract for each essay.

Writing sample: Submit one or two chapters of the project as a writing sample. Please do not submit a full manuscript unless one is requested.

Additional materials: Include a CV/résumé for each author or editor. For an edited collection, provide the names and affiliations of the contributors.

### **Next Steps**

Proposals are reviewed by the acquisitions editor for your subject. You can expect a response from the editor in four to six weeks. If the project fits within the current publication priorities of the press, the acquisitions editor may ask you to submit a full manuscript for review or discuss the possibility of an advance contract.

Please note that Florida does not return proposals or materials when a project is declined.

## Dissertations

Before submitting your project to the press, your dissertation must be reenvisioned, restructured, and revised to transform your argument from a field-specific dissertation to a project that appeals to a substantial number of educated readers outside a narrow field of interest. We recommend consulting the following resources for more guidance on revising a dissertation to a book:

- *From Dissertation to Book* by William Germano
- *The Thesis and the Book: A Guide for First-Time Authors* by Eleanor Harman, Ian Montagnes, Siobhan McMenemy, and Chris Bucci

If you haven't done so, please make the following changes:

- Cut any acknowledgment of your dissertation committee. You can still acknowledge committee members as individual scholars rather than as part of your committee.
- Cut the review of literature. If you feel you must keep some of it, work parts of it into the text or in endnotes at relevant points. As a book author, you're writing for your colleagues who have done their homework and who will do you the courtesy of assuming that you have also.
- Cut the number of quotations, especially long ones. In general, your book needs more of your own voice and less of others' voices, so paraphrase and summarize wherever possible.
- Cut any repetition. Does the beginning of each chapter and major section announce what you are going to say—and then, at the end, do you announce that you have said it? You can eliminate this.
- Reduce your notes. While your committee expects you to footnote almost every statement, as an author of a book in an area of your expertise, you can break free from this requirement.
- Pare down the bibliography. As a student, you wanted to show your committee the depth and breadth of your research. As a book author, to keep from overwhelming your readers, give them just the most pertinent sources. (If you have referred to a source directly, however, you will need to keep it in the bibliography.)

## Additional Information

For more information on writing a proposal and the publication process, please consult:

- *The Book Proposal Book*, by Laura Portwood-Stacer
- *Getting It Published: A Guide for Scholars and Anyone Else Serious about Serious Books*, by William Germano
- *Thinking Like Your Editor: How to Write Great Serious Nonfiction—and Get It Published*, by Susan Rabiner and Alfred Fortunate
- Ask UP, <https://ask.up.hcommons.org/>