

Developing Manuscripts and Moving Them into Production

This document provides advice about best practices for developing a manuscript and eventually moving it into production. The advice covers issues associated with each step of the publication process, from the initial submission of a book proposal or manuscript to its eventual publication in digital and print editions. A book that has completed this process will be:

- under contract,
- had favorable peer reviews,
- been revised appropriately in response to any requests by the editorial team for revisions, and
- been formatted according to the Clearinghouse [Manuscript Preparation Checklist](#).

Communication Practices Once Book Proposals or Manuscripts are Submitted

What is most important when a book proposal or manuscript has been submitted is to communicate regularly and clearly with the book author(s) and collection editor(s) regarding the status of their submission. At various points, noted below, you should also communicate with the Clearinghouse Publisher and Associate Publisher for Books. The key points for communication include:

Initial Submission

Authors and editors receive automated acknowledgment messages from the WAC Clearinghouse Submissions Portal at the time of submission. We recommend that you follow up on this initial message with a message informing the authors or editors about next steps, timelines, and your initial observations on the submission.

Initial Reviews

If you conduct a desk review, communicate the results of that review with the authors or editors as soon as possible. If you send the submission out for peer review, let the contributor(s) know that the proposal or manuscript has been sent for review and inform them of the likely timeline for sharing the results of the review. If the review takes longer than anticipated, reach back out to the authors or editors with new estimates on when they might receive the reviews. If reviewers suggest revisions, and if additional review is merited, communicate the reviewers' suggestions clearly, along with the timeline for revisions, the desired approach for carrying out the revisions, and process and requirements for resubmitting the revised manuscript.

Issuing Contracts

If you decide to issue a contract, send an email message to the publisher and associate publisher for books requesting that a contract be issued. (Approval is routinely given, but this step in the publication process is a key part of our review process.) While the publisher and associate publisher have access to the materials on the Submissions Portal, we recommend attaching the copies of the reviews, your review letter (if you have created one), and the proposal materials (proposal, CV, writing sample) and/or the complete manuscript. Once you have received approval for issuing the contract from the publisher and associate publisher for books, share the news with the contributor(s). Should you wish to view sample letters and email messages, you can find them on the Submissions Portal.

Reviewing the Manuscript

A manuscript submitted for publication will go through at least one round of anonymous peer review. Many manuscripts will go through additional rounds of review. Each round of review should be followed by feedback to the author(s) or editor(s).

As you conduct the peer review process, consider the following areas.

- **Publication Ethics.** You can find the Clearinghouse statement on publication ethics at <https://wac.colostate.edu/about/pub-ethics/>.
- **Antiracist Citation Practices.** You can find resources on this at <https://tinyurl.com/reviewheuristic>. While it focuses largely on reviewing, the principles are useful for considering whether the manuscript reflects the suggestions in the heuristic.

Approving the Manuscript for Publication

When you have determined that the manuscript has been approved for publication, inform the author(s) or editor(s) about your decision. Copy the publisher and associate publisher on your message so they are aware that a manuscript will be arriving in their inboxes at some point in the near future. In your message, share information about the steps that must be taken before the manuscript is deemed ready for publication (see below for details).

Moving a Manuscript into Production

You should consider each of the following areas before sending the final manuscript to the publisher.

Permissions

- **Please ensure that written permission** for the use of work produced by others has been provided. This includes published work and work produced by students for academic purposes. See the permission request forms in the [WAC Clearinghouse Guide for Authors and Editors](#).

Manuscript Length, File Type, Formatting, and Common Elements

- **Manuscript Length.** Ideally, manuscripts should be no longer than 110,000 words; in some cases, we can deal with longer manuscripts (some authors/editors will submit manuscripts that are quite long, but hopefully not more than 125,000 words.) If you think a manuscript will exceed 125,000 words, please contact the [publisher of the Clearinghouse](#) before sending the manuscript to production.
- **File format.** Please ensure that the document is provided in a single file in Word format (.docx) or “Rich Text Format” (RTF).
- **Use of Word-Processing Styles.** Please make sure authors have formatted their document using styles (e.g., normal, heading 1, heading 2, heading 3). See Manuscript Preparation and Use of Word-Processing Styles in the [Guide](#).
- **Author Affiliations.** Chapters in edited collections and in some authored books may list authors. Please ensure that institutional affiliations have been provided. Formatting should follow the example set by other books in the series.
- **Abstracts, Chapter Numbers, Keywords, and Other Elements.** Some series use elements such as abstracts and keywords, particularly in edited collections. Please ensure that the manuscript follows the series conventions.

Documentation Systems

- **Citation System.** We support MLA and APA styles. The chapters in an edited collection should use the same style across the book. The citations should conform to the most recent edition of the MLA and APA style guides.
- **DOIs.** We expect to see DOIs in reference lists and works cited lists (when they are available).
- **Links.** All URLs and DOIs should be live links. If you see a manuscript where URLs are not live, please ask the authors/editors to [make them live](#).
- **House Style.** Please note that we have house styles that override some MLA and APA guidelines. For example, reference lists and works cited lists do not start on a new page, and we ask that authors’ full names are provided on first mention in the body of a chapter.

Illustrations

- **Figures, Images, and Other Illustrations.** Images should be provided as separate files in high-resolution format (e.g., at least 2400 pixels wide for images intended to run the full width of a page). Some figures, such as charts and diagrams built with tools within a word processing or spreadsheet program, can be left in the text or provided in separate files.
- **ALT Tags for Figures and Images.** Please ensure that ALT tags are provided for each figure or image. Ideally, ALT text will be provided below the caption and labels as “ALT Text:”.
- **Figure Captions.** Please ensure that figure captions are placed below the figure. Figure numbering should follow series guidelines (typically Chapter Number.Figure Number – e.g., Figure 3.1, Figure 5.3, etc.).
- **Tables.** Please ensure that tables will reproduce well in a 5-inch width.

- **Table Titles.** Please ensure that table titles appear above the table. Table numbering should follow series guidelines (typically Chapter Number.Table Number – Table 1.2, Table 3.3, etc.).