



Scholarly Book Proposal Guidelines

April 2015

At HSRC Press, we publish high-quality evidence-based books in, on and about Africa, and within the broad ambit of the social sciences and humanities. Our books are distinctive, relevant and have global impact.

Consistent with best international practice in scholarly publishing, our new book proposals are subject to publishing consideration by an independent editorial board. Manuscripts for accepted proposals are subject to double blind peer review.

Some of the general criteria we consider when evaluating new proposals, and the subsequent manuscripts, for scholarly books are:

- The soundness of the social science scholarship
- The importance of the subject matter and the originality of the work
- The consistency and credibility of the underpinning research methodology/ies
- The strength, coherence and relevance of the argument
- The clarity and quality of the writing
- The relevance of the topics to current social science and research priorities
- The sound structure or organisation of the work

The following additional guidelines should also be considered when formulating your scholarly book proposal:

- The proposal should show that there will be an authoritative intervention in significant arguments and debates
- It is ideal to show engaged scholarship – so, in addition to academic debate, a proposal should evince some orientation to socially engaged scholarship
- If scholarship is engaged, a proposal should demonstrate how the book will have a grounding in the relevant literature and current scholarship (so not evangelical)
- In considering proposals, the independent editorial board will take seriously the ethical dimensions of the research
- Sound scholarship both in terms of social data as well as in terms of humanities and analysis is essential
- The proposal should make it clear: What do you wish to illuminate in your book and for whom?

Edited volumes can be particularly challenging to put together and often suffer from unevenness in writing or incoherent conceptualisation and lack of cohesion.

The following are some of the criteria that we consider when considering proposals for edited volumes for publication:

- Clear conceptualisation of the project, with thematic cohesion, consistency of writing style and “voice” across the chapters
- A strong introductory chapter that is analytical in approach and that does not paraphrase content
- A strong selection of key chapters that provide analytical nuance around the same topic or issue, and that build on previous chapters around that topic or issue

The following information is requested in all book proposals:

Provisional Book Title

Author/s Information

- Name
- Address, telephone number and email
- Current position
- Brief bio including previous publications
- First time author for HSRC Press?
- If you have written for HSRC Press before please list publications

Guidelines for the proposal synopsis

- What is the book about; how is it original and what makes it important?
- What is the key argument of your book? How does it fit into the larger landscape? In the larger contestation of ideas, where does the argument of the book fit?
- What area of studies would you suggest this book falls into (e.g. development studies, gender studies, international relations etc)

Outline

- A brief synopsis (approx 200-400 words)
- A table of contents
- Brief description of the contents of each chapter
- If possible, or where a manuscript already exists, include one to two sample chapters. Authors should submit most interesting and/or most controversial chapter as opposed to automatically submitting chapter 1 or the literature review or introductory chapter
- What is the estimated length? (please supply in number of words)
- Number of tables, figures, illustrations and/or photographs
- Provisional manuscript submission date
- Details of any deadlines we should be aware of (for e.g. key events, conferences or meetings, donor requirements)

Readership and Marketing

As the author of the book you have key insight into the readership and audience for the work. In order to promote your book as widely as possible please provide us with as much information into the markets for this book.

- For whom is this book intended? (e.g. postgraduate students, an undergraduate university textbook, policymakers and activists)
- Who is the primary readership, and if applicable, the secondary readership.
- Will this book be eligible for prescribed reading?
- Why will they buy your book?
- List three possible competing (or complementary) titles to your book – include their prices, year of publication, number of pages, and use of artwork
- What makes your book different to the competition?
- How can you assist in the marketing and promotion of your book?
- Please provide details of appropriate journals where we could submit the publication for review
- Are there any important figures/organisations that would be willing to endorse the publication?
- Are you aware of any media person/s that would be interested in profiling the work?

Additional information

- Have any sections of the book been published before? (E.g. in a set of conference proceedings, a book chapter or as journal article. If so, please provide details)
- Who holds the copyright of the work?
- Have you submitted this to another publisher for consideration?
- If your book proposal is successful, you will be invited to send the complete manuscript to us, which will be submitted for peer review. Please suggest a few expert readers in the area of the manuscript's focus who would be suitable reviewers. Please note that there should be no conflict of interest in your recommendations. It is the responsibility of the Editorial Board to appoint reviewers. Your suggestions will be taken into consideration.

Funding/Financial support

- Is there any institutional financial support for this publication or any opportunities for discounted bulk purchases?

General requirements:

- Authors /editors should proofread proposals and sample chapter/s for errors
- Proposals and sample chapters must be readable
- The HSRC Press does not publish text books, user manuals, or theses

