Proposal Guidelines: Handbooks

The proposal you submit will be the basis on which we judge the book's suitability for publication. Therefore it needs to be organized in a way that provides the right information to us and to referees.

The following notes are designed to help you prepare your proposal; your cooperation in following our recommendations will allow the evaluation process to proceed smoothly. We emphasize that these are intended as guidelines: some of the sections may be inappropriate to your particular project so don’t worry if you feel unable to provide information on all the points.

A proposal should generally be three to six pages, although it may be supplemented by other documents as noted herein. If you've completed a draft manuscript, please indicate this in your proposal. Please do not, however, send in an unsolicited draft manuscript as your initial correspondence. After reviewing your proposal, a commissioning editor will determine whether you should submit a full manuscript. If possible, please send your proposal and any accompanying material by email.

Major features of our handbooks are presented here, followed by specific proposal guidelines.

General aims and market
The aim of Routledge Handbooks is to publish a comprehensive, must-have survey of a core sub-discipline aimed at the library market. Most are published in hardback first, with a new-in-paperback for students and individual purchase 18 to 24 months later. The main goal of each handbook is to survey a topic, explaining why the issue or area is important, and critically discussing the leading views in the area. The market is truly global, with strong sales expected in the UK and Europe, the US and Asia, in particular, and Routledge Handbooks Online now provides access at a chapter-level, making content more discoverable than ever.

Level
Handbooks are primarily aimed at researchers, graduate students, and upper-level undergraduates.

Structure
Handbooks cover the major sub-disciplines of an area. We envisage each handbook having a general introduction as well as 35-40 chapters of approximately 8,000 words each, generally divided into sections, such as “Historical Perspectives,” “Core issues and Topics,” “New Debates,” and so on. The handbooks will provide a thorough overview of both the fundamentals and new directions of a sub-discipline.

Additional features
Handbooks have no general bibliography and a detailed index will be key. There will be no footnotes, but endnotes can be accommodated. There will be minimal use of illustrations and no inclusion of copyrighted material.

Contributors
Editor(s) are strongly encouraged to commission an international line-up of contributors, including, where possible, authors from the UK, continental Europe, Asia, and the US.
Putting together a proposal

Proposals will need to include: A rationale for the book; close analysis of expected readership, including details of relevant courses where possible; detailed competition analysis; draft list of potential contributors; editor curriculum vitae; production details such as number of illustrations (if any), and a schedule for delivery.

Proposal Outline

1. 3-4 paragraphs outlining the rationale behind the handbook – discuss its main themes and objectives in relation to the sub-discipline. What are its leading ideas, debates, approaches and methodologies? What direction is the sub-discipline taking, and how quickly is it moving?

2. A description of the target market/expected readership

   • Is the handbook aimed at an undergraduate or graduate student audience? Or is it aimed at researchers or professionals? Or both?
   • Is the subject area widely taught or researched? Is it a new or trending area?
   • For what courses could the handbook be used? Please provide specific course titles and the department or program name in which the course can be found. Please also include details on the course level (1st year, 2nd year, etc.) and frequency (every semester, every Fall or Spring, once every few years). Please note the courses where the book could be used as a core/main text.
   • Would this subject have international appeal? If so, in which countries or regions?

3. Table of contents – Please provide a list of topics, organized into sections, with potential contributors.

4. A list of the main competing books – Please provide an analysis of the leading competitive texts. What are their strengths and weaknesses? What distinguishes your book from the existing competition?

5. Production details – Number of illustrations (if any) and a schedule for delivery.

Please also include:

A Curriculum Vitae

Please list the academic and relevant professional posts that you have held and your main academic qualifications and publications. If there is more than one author, please supply a curriculum vitae for each author. Please list any books or chapters of books you have written for us and other publishers.

Details of Academic Referees

List three to five people who would make qualified reviewers for the manuscript. Be sure to include affiliations and email. Though we do not always use these suggestions, they help give us an idea of where you think your ideas fit into current debates.

How We Evaluate Your Proposal or Manuscript

Evaluation by commissioning editor(s). The proposal will be considered carefully by the most suitable editor. The editor will ask several questions: Firstly, does the book fit with our publishing strategy? Is the content of this book of a high academic standard? Is there a market for a high quality book on this
subject? What evidence is there for this market? If there is a gap in the market, is this the right book to fill it? What is the need for the book internationally? If the editor is satisfied at this stage, the proposal will then be evaluated by academic experts.

**Evaluation by independent referees.** We ask respected academic specialists in the field to give us independent advice on the content, quality, and potential market for a finished book based on your proposal or manuscript. This process should take four to six weeks, but may take longer depending on individual circumstances. We invite editors to pencil in potential contributors beside each entry, but when sending the proposal out for review, we would delete the names of contributors’ names so the process is done “blind” and to encourage reviewers to express their own preferences for contributors. The Editor(s) of each Handbook will be responsible for reading each entry in first draft, making suggestions for revision, and delivery of the final manuscript.

**Editorial Board meeting.** If the reviews are positive, then the editor puts together a written publishing plan and strategy, which includes your proposal, the referees’ reports, projected costs and revenues, and market analyses. These circulate to all members of the Editorial Board in advance of a regular meeting, where each proposal is discussed and either approved, declined, or provisionally passed, subject to certain revisions. The Editorial Board consists of editors, a publisher (who manages a team of editors), and a team of marketers who will establish a preliminary plan for the book.

**Contract and publication.** If your proposal is approved, we will then issue you a draft contract that includes an agreed date for the delivery of the manuscript. See our Editorial Process Infographic for more on the editorial process.

If you would like to submit a proposal, or have any queries or concerns, please contact the relevant editor. The full list of contacts by subject area is available here: [www.routledge.com/contacts/editorial](http://www.routledge.com/contacts/editorial)