



GWASG PRIFYSGOL CYMRU UNIVERSITY OF WALES PRESS

UNIVERSITY OF WALES PRESS – COMMISSIONING PROCEDURES

UWP books are based on academic research; it is imperative that they are positively peer reviewed prior to subsequent publication, for the benefit of the scholarly establishment, and more broadly, to the benefit of wider society. In the UK, academia and publishing the fruit of research are inextricably linked to meet requirements such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF), whereby university departments are obliged to publish research outputs for evaluation to produce robust UK-wide indicators of research excellence for all disciplines, and to provide a basis for distributing funding primarily by reference to research excellence.

UWP also publishes a modest number of books written by non-academics intended for general readership; these are also subject to the same processes as academic books, as it is imperative that they are accurate and coherent, although the peer review questions differ from those for academic research.

Commissioning Processes and Procedures map and record the initial idea from the early discussion stage through to development and “finessing” of the proposal, formal approval, contract and handover of manuscript, while adhering to best practice in accordance with standard academic commissioning procedures.

It is during the Commissioning stage that proposals and manuscripts are peer reviewed. **The peer review process is central to academic publishing**, testing the validity and soundness of scholarship and thus maintains high standards for academic publication. Rigorous and stringent peer review (together with other functions which form the academic publishing process, such as high editorial and production values, and marketing and worldwide distribution) add value to scholarly work, thus providing it with a clear mark of quality as is appropriate for its intended market.

Evaluation of Proposal

Upon receipt of a proposal for a new title, whether formal in the form of a completed Proposal Questionnaire, or in the form of an informal discussion, there are a number of fundamental questions which shape and determine the proposal's success or otherwise in its being translated into a published entity:

1. Is the proposal suitable for UWP as an academic press in the area of the humanities and social sciences?
2. If so, does the proposal meet the requirements of UWP's business plan and commissioning strategy?

All proposals are thus presented at the monthly Commissioning Meeting.

Commissioning Meeting

- Instigated by Commissioning Department
- Primarily attended by the Commissioning Department, Sales and Marketing Department, and UWP Director
- Commissioning Department presents an agenda of potential titles
- The Commissioning Department presents the proposal, which is discussed with colleagues, resulting in reasons for/against publishing it
- If it is a viable proposal, various matters discussed are: the sales potential of subject area, proposed format (hb or pb), retail price, and subsidiary rights
- Sales and Marketing Department may undertake market research into a given publishing area as a result of queries from this meeting
- Discussions about potential backlist regeneration are raised in this forum
- Decisions are made at this forum whether to go to the next stage by seeking peer review of the proposal, whether to seek further information before making a decision, or whether the title should be rejected. If the latter, the prospective author is contacted and informed of the decision, with the reasons underlying the decision.

Assessment of Proposal

- If it is decided that a proposal should be submitted for peer review, the author/Series Editors are contacted and informed. The identity of the reader is not revealed in order to ensure that the report is objective and fair. An “arm’s length” approach is taken to ensure fairness and lack of bias: for example, a proposal will not be sent to a reader in the same university as the proposed author.
- A peer review is commissioned from a respected authority in the given subject area. The reader is asked to provide a report based on the following questions:
 - *Does the proposal have an intellectual coherence and is the balance between chapters reasonable?*
 - *Are there any gaps in the proposed coverage?*
 - *Does the proposal break new ground?*
 - *Are there any competing texts?*
 - *Is the proposal suitable for publication by a university press?*
 - *Any thoughts you may have about the market for such a book?*

The reader is then requested to make a clear and unequivocal recommendation about the proposal:

- *I strongly recommend publication of this proposal by UWP.*
 - *I believe this proposal should be published following incorporation of amendments/subject to further consideration.*
 - *I do not believe this proposal should be published by UWP.*
- If the proposal is not recommended for publication, the proposal is rejected. The Commissioning Department contacts the author with a copy of the review with reasons why it has been rejected.
 - If the proposal is recommended for publication, the report is sent to the author who is informed that formal approval will be sought to publish the title from UWP’s Executive.
 - If the proposal is recommended for publication subject to the incorporation of amendments/subject to further consideration, a copy of the report is sent to the author who is asked if he/she is willing/able to make the proposed changes; if so, the author is requested to respond to the report and set out clearly what revisions will be made and how

they will be made and incorporated. The author's response is then sent to the reader who is asked if he/she can make an unequivocal recommendation to publish, based on the author's response. If so, the reader is then informed that formal approval will be sought to publish the title from UWP's Executive. If not, the proposal is withdrawn at this stage.

Executive Approval

i) Editorial Panel

- Once a proposal has been recommended for publication, the Commissioning Department prepares a Proposal Narrative and Budget for each proposal. If funding is required, the author will be asked to secure funding from his/her department (e.g re-allocated HEFCW funds where available/other sources)
- A budget (provided by the Production Department) is prepared on the basis of the requisite UWP financial criteria, i.e. although UWP is a not-for-profit press, publication costs should ensure at least a break-even outcome
- The sales projections contained in the Budget are based on sales of similar titles. Budgets are subsequently agreed with the Director on the basis of their assessment of sales over a two-year print run.
- Each Proposal Narrative is sent to the Chairperson of the Editorial Panel and to two individual members of the Editorial Panel; Editorial Panel Members receive Proposal Narratives which as far as possible match their academic interests. No Editorial Panel member receives a Proposal from a member of their Department or a Proposal for a series of which the Editorial Panel Member is a Series Editor.
- The Editorial Panel is requested to make a recommendation from the following:
 - **I recommend this proposal for publication.** Further comments (if any); or
 - **I require further information before making a decision.**
The information I require is as follows; or
 - **I do not recommend this proposal for publication.** Please state reason(s)
- If a Proposal is not recommended for publication, the author is informed by the Commissioning Department for discussion with the author.
- If further information is requested before making a decision, the Commissioning Department will liaise with the author and Editorial Panel Member concerning the

information required. The Editorial Panel member will then make a decision based on the information received.

ii) UWP Proposal Approval Meeting

- Proposals recommended by the Editorial Panel are formally presented, together with the Budget, at UWP's Proposal Approval Meeting which sits regularly. The aim of this meeting is to seek formal approval to publish the book
- If approved, the author is contacted after the meeting and informed
- A contract is drafted and signed by the author and Director; the contract sets out the particulars of the manuscript as regards title, number of words, delivery date etc.
- UWP's style guide is submitted with the contract to the author who is required to submit the manuscript in house style

Submission of Manuscript

- The manuscript is sent to the reader who reported on the Proposal for a report on manuscript. The manuscript also undergoes an **Editorial Review** to ensure that the manuscript is in house style; if the manuscript fundamentally differs from house style, the author will be requested to make the necessary adjustments prior to the final version being submitted. The author is requested at this stage to supply **written confirmation of any permissions** required to reproduce images/textual extracts in the book.

The reader is asked to provide a report based on the following questions:

- *Does the manuscript have an intellectual coherence and is the balance between chapters reasonable?*
 - *Are there any gaps in the coverage?*
 - *Does the manuscript break new ground?*
 - *Are there any competing texts?*
 - *Is the manuscript suitable for publication by a university press?*
 - *Any thoughts you may have about the market for such a book?*
- The reader is then requested to make a clear and unequivocal recommendation about the proposal:

- *I strongly recommend publication of this manuscript by UWP.*
 - *I believe this manuscript should be published following incorporation of amendments/subject to further consideration.*
 - *I do not believe this manuscript should be published by UWP.*
- If recommended for publication, the author is sent a copy of the report and requested to make final checks to the manuscript. prior to submitting it. On receipt, the manuscript is checked to ensure that it meets with the contract specifications as regards extent, number of illustrations, permissions etc. It is re-budgeted to finalise the price, format and print run
 - If recommended for publication following incorporation of amendments/subject to further consideration, the author is sent a copy of the report and asked if they are willing/able to incorporate the reader's suggestions. If the author responds positively, the revised manuscript is re-submitted to the reader with a request to re-assess the manuscript and make a recommendation as set out above
 - If the manuscript is not recommended for publication, the author will be formally advised of this and sent a copy of the reader's report. The matter will then be reported to the Press Advisory Board to be discussed and minuted.

Handover of Manuscript: Handover Meeting

- Instigated by Commissioning Department when manuscripts are formally handed-over to Production Department
- Attended by Sales and Marketing, Production and Commissioning departments
- A production schedule is agreed
- Sales and Marketing Department then send a Marketing Questionnaire to the author, triggering the publicity and sales cycle for the book (ISBNs allocated/bibliographic data disseminated to bibliographic agencies, library suppliers etc./AIs, catalogues, flyers prepared)

Pre-press

- The manuscript is budgeted again pre-press based on an estimate provided by the Production Department; once approved by the Director, the book is sent to press, copies

are delivered to UWP and checked by the Production Manager; the Publication Memo is signed by the Production Manager and Director, and the book is released to UWP's distributors; formal publication occurs.