

BOOK PUBLISHING SERIES

Demystifying the
Publication Process



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

Centre for Research
& Innovation Support

<https://cris.utoronto.ca>

Alejandra Mejía
Assistant Editor,
Duke University
Press

- 1. What do researchers need to know about working with Duke University Press (DUP)?**
- 2. As an editor, what am I looking for in a successful book proposal?**
- 3. When is the best time to approach an editor? E.g., When the manuscript is near completion? During ideation, etc.?**
- 4. What is the best way to approach an editor? What questions do you ask? What questions should you be prepared to answer?**

1. What do researchers need to know about working with Duke University Press (DUP)?

- Know which press is the “right” press for your book/discipline
- Understand that writing a dissertation is different than writing a book
- Look on a press’ website for general submissions guidelines
- Do not be afraid to reach out to editors!

DUP-specific submissions guidelines (from our website)

Your proposal should include:

- A cover letter describing the project and noting its anticipated length and completion date
- A prospectus with detailed chapter outlines
- A CV or résumé
- One or two sample chapters
- Essay abstracts (for edited collections)

DUP's Peer Review Process

- Single-blind peer review process
- Contract offered depending on peer review assessment of either the full manuscript or proposal
- Average of 2-3 rounds of peer review

2. As an editor, what am I looking for in a successful book proposal?

- Bold argument
- Chapter breakdown makes sense/builds up to tell a story
- Timeline for completion
- Optional: List of comparable titles (Who is your book in conversation with? What other DUP titles can we compare it to?)

3. When is the best time to approach an editor? E.g., When the manuscript is near completion? During ideation, etc.?

It depends– some editors like being approached at the ideation stage if you have a promising idea; others, when you have something that they're ready to send out for review (i.e. proposal or, preferably, full manuscript).

4. What is the best way to approach an editor? What questions do you ask? What questions should you be prepared to answer?

- Reach out in anticipation of academic conferences!
- Have mentors or published friends connect you via email
- Cold-email editors (or even their assistants) asking to chat

Sample questions to ask an editor:

- Review process (What is it like?)
- Contract (At what stage is it offered?)
- Production timeline/process (How long is it? What does it entail?)
- Editorial Advisory Board (What is the editorial board review process like?)
- Cost (What, if anything, will it cost me?)
- Marketing (How will my book be marketed and publicized?)

Be prepared to talk about the following with an editor:

- Your career (i.e. Are you applying to jobs? Up for tenure? etc.)
- Your main argument/intervention and any other details about your project
- How your project has evolved from the dissertation stage
- Timeline and plan for completion of the manuscript
- Whether you've been talking to other presses

Thanks!

Feel free to reach out via email:
alejandra.mejia@duke.edu