

# The Publishing Process: FAQs For Authors

**FIRST-TIME AND SEASONED AUTHORS HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PUBLISHING PROCESS.** We hope this article helps you understand the publishing process. Please read this information carefully. If you have additional questions, let us know.

## Submitting Your Idea

**HARBOR HOUSE LAW PRESS** is happy to consider book proposals at any stage of development. If we receive your proposal early in the writing process, we can offer in-depth market research and advice, and help ensure that your manuscript addresses the questions and concerns of potential readers.

To consider a proposal, we need the following information:

- **A DETAILED TABLE OF CONTENTS** including a brief paragraph or annotation that describes the topics to be covered in each chapter.
- **TWO SAMPLE CHAPTERS.** Please ensure that your sample chapters are typical of your writing style. If illustrations, graphs, or charts are important components of your manuscript, please provide samples of these. Text in the sample chapters should be double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides.
- **CURRICULUM VITAE OR RESUME OF THE AUTHOR(S).** If your proposal is a contributed volume, please include resumes or full identifications of all chapter authors.
- **PROSPECTUS.** In the prospectus of your book, you should explain **why** you are writing this book and **for whom**. The prospectus should describe the logic behind the is project: the need this book will address and why this book should be published. In the prospectus, you are communicating your goals and the function of the book to the acquisitions editor. This information will help the acquisitions editor make an informed decision about the project and how the project should progress.

## The Prospectus

**THE PROSPECTUS SHOULD ANSWER SPECIFIC QUESTIONS.** Your answers to these questions will help us to make an informed, intelligent publishing decision. Please answer all questions that apply to your book and provide any additional information that you think may help us in our evaluation.

**DESCRIBE THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK.** What do you hope to accomplish with this book? What need does the book fill? (Be **very specific** on this point.) Why is this subject important?

**HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE BOOK?** Is this a practical how-to book? A reference book? Is this a practical tool that professionals will use? Will this book help parents? Advocates? How? Does the book shed new light on current controversies? Does the book include historical or analytical information? On what level is the book

written? Will readers need specialized knowledge to understand the book? **What is unique about this book?**

**WHAT TOPICS DOES YOUR BOOK COVER?** Provide as much detail as possible. Does this book include topics that have not been covered before? What? How?

List other books that have been published on this subject. (Include author, publisher, and date of publication.) Describe their strengths and weaknesses? How will your book differ in organization, level, approach, and content? How will your book relate to other books in the field?

What is the approximate page length of the final typed manuscript? (Assume 8-1/2-x-11 double-spaced pages, with one-inch margins, in Times New Roman 12 point font.)

What elements will your manuscript include? (i.e., charts, graphs, tables, photographs, glossary, index, bibliography, other elements). Please be as specific as possible.

Do you have any particular conception of the production, design, or marketing of the manuscript that we should know about?

Has your proposal (or manuscript) been read by anyone else whose opinions would be of value to us? Please suggest the names of three persons who would be competent to read and review your proposal or manuscript.

When will the manuscript be complete?

**WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?** Who is this book written for? Be as specific as possible. Identify both primary and secondary markets. For professional audiences, please give descriptive titles (for example, attorneys who represent parents, professional advocates, special educators).

Is this book likely to be used as a primary or supplemental text for college courses? If so, please provide course titles for which it would be appropriate. (If you know how many such courses are taught nationally or how many students they involve, please include this information.)

Will this book be of interest to activists? If so, list names of organizations and membership numbers. Provide names of newsletters or other publications that reach this audience.

Do you know of other groups or associations that may have a particular interest in this book? If you know about possibilities for bulk sales through organizations or conferences, include this information.

**CONTRIBUTED VOLUME.** If your proposal is a contributed volume, please discuss the origin of the project (for example, is it based on a conference?), how much of the material has been previously published (if any), and what you as editor will do to make the book cohere.

How will you work with the contributors? Will the contributors see other chapters? How much editing and/or rewriting will you do?

What level of consistency of style and quality do you plan to achieve?

## Manuscript Development

**MANUSCRIPT DEVELOPMENT** encompasses the writing, reviewing, and rewriting that is necessary to ensure publication of a well-organized, complete work that is attuned to the needs of its potential audience. Authors often have questions about these areas.

All proposals and manuscripts are carefully reviewed in-house. We often send manuscripts to several experts in the field for peer reviews. Reviews are important for two reasons. First, peer reviewers help to ensure that the book offers the most complete and current information on the subject. Second, reviewer comments, suggestions, and quotations will be used to market the book and will help us reach the greatest number of readers. In today's competitive marketplace, peer reviews help us reach a higher level of success.

Expert reviewers will critique the style, level of writing, organization, comprehensiveness, accuracy, and structure of the text. They evaluate the author's development of his or her argument and the thoroughness of research. They will cite strengths and weaknesses of the material and offer suggestions for changes. They offer advice about possible audiences for the book and how the book might best meet the needs of these audiences. Reviewer comments are used to help authors in manuscript revision. Reviewers help us know when a manuscript requires further work or if it is in acceptable final form, as discussed in the publishing agreement.

We understand that if you are preparing your manuscript in collaboration with an organization, you may be conducting your own reviews. In this case, we ask that you send us the names and addresses of reviewers, as well as copies of relevant correspondence. This information will help us in our marketing efforts as well as editorially.

During the review process, we keep our common goal in mind: to develop a book that meets the needs of its audience with cogent, well-presented information that makes a lasting contribution to special education literature.

## Production

**WHEN WE HAVE AN ACCEPTABLE DRAFT OF THE MANUSCRIPT** that includes all elements of the book, including artwork, glossaries, index, and introduction, the book is ready to go into production. The production process and schedule will vary for each book, depending on the format, number of pages, illustrations, complexity, and other considerations. Here is a brief overview of the production process.

**COPYEDITING** is the first step in the production process. The copyeditor edits the manuscript for grammar, typographical errors, style, consistency, and punctuation, and "marks up" the manuscript for the typesetter. The copyeditor frequently raises questions about ambiguities in content, points out or clears up discrepancies, and makes minor revisions as necessary.

As the author, you will see the copyedited manuscript for your final approval before it is typeset. We will ask you to review the entire copyedited manuscript to ensure that your

meaning has not been inadvertently altered in the copyediting process. This will be your last chance to make corrections.

**INDEXING** is usually done by the author who is generally the person who has the most intimate knowledge of information in the book and its relative importance. Harbor House can offer assistance with indexing as necessary

**INTERNAL TEXT AND COVER DESIGN** of books is done by professional designers who consider all elements of the text and illustrations, and the purpose and market of the book. The design process includes input from the editorial, production, and marketing staff.

**TYPESETTING.** After copyediting and design are completed, the book goes to the typesetter. The first set of proofs (page proofs or galleys) will come to you for review. Although a copy will also be sent to a professional proofreader, you are expected to ensure the accuracy of the proofs.

## Preparing the Manuscript

**HARBOR HOUSE LAW PRESS** requires that final manuscripts be submitted in duplicate, accompanied by a disk of the same material. All text, including references and extracts, should be double-spaced, and paragraphs should be indented, with no extra lines of space between them. Pages should be numbered consecutively from the first page to the last page.

Detailed instructions about how to prepare your disk, organize art material, and secure permission to use previously published material can be provided by Harbor House staff.

## Marketing Books

**PRODUCING A HIGH-QUALITY BOOK IS ONLY THE FIRST STEP** of a successful publication. Without proper marketing, the best work in the field may easily go unnoticed.

As an expert in the field, you are in an excellent position to contribute to the marketing effort. We encourage you to share your ideas. We will consider your suggestions and advice. After your proposal has been accepted for publication, you will be asked to help develop a marketing plan by filling out an author information sheet. The information you provide will be used in the marketing effort.

We design marketing plans to capitalize on the strengths and uniqueness of each book and its intended market. Because we have positioned ourselves as the publisher of books for the special education community, we have a specialized and in-depth understanding of the market for your book.

Our marketing program employs many strategies to ensure that the information we develop and distribute is available to the disparate groups that have an interest in special education issues.

- **DIRECT MAIL** through *The Special Ed Advocate Newsletter* and *Harbor House News* are the principal marketing mechanisms for our books and publications. *The Special Ed Advocate* is a unique resource, distributed three or four times a

month to more than 15,000 parents, educators, attorneys, advocates, health care providers, community leaders, college and university professors. Our publications are used by college professors for courses in special education, education law, and school psychology, and by advocacy training groups, educational professionals, and libraries.

- **TARGETED INFORMATION** is provided to specific segments of the special education market. Our direct-mail program ensures that Harbor House Law Press books reach advocacy groups, educational and legal professionals, and other decision-makers.
- **BOOK REVIEWS** are important sources of information for key audiences. Harbor House Law Press submits some publications for review by mainstream press, including *The New York Times*, *Library Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *Booklist*, and others, to ensure that professionals, librarians, and the public are aware of Harbor House Law Press books.
- **COURSE ADOPTION.** Promotions to professors are an important way to promote books published by Harbor House Law Press. This market is important because it ensures that our information is being used to train professionals and policymakers of the future.
- **BOOKSTORES.** Sales to bookstores have increased steadily, reflecting the public's interest in special education issues. During the past year, we have contracted with Ingram, Baker & Taylor, Barnes & Noble, Amazon.com, and Quality Books. Because of these relationships, our books are sold in retail bookstores throughout the United States, giving us the ability to reach interested individuals around the country.
- **CONFERENCE EXHIBITIONS.** During the past year, we have exhibited at conferences of several advocacy organizations, including the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA), the International Dyslexia Association, Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (ChADD), and other groups. Conference exhibits are a productive way to introduce new titles to targeted groups.
- **BULK SALES.** Selling books to organizations for distribution to their membership at a 50 percent discount through our "Advocacy Challenge Program" is an important distribution channel for Harbor House Law Press. This is an effective way to reach key market segments efficiently and quickly.
- **PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION.** In addition to providing authors with materials for speaking engagements, we may conduct publicity campaigns to generate media coverage. Publicity may include radio and television interviews, articles in magazines and newspapers, and coverage by organizational newsletters.

## Addresses

Please submit manuscripts to:

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P. O. Box 480  
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