

ADVICE FOR VOLUME EDITORS February 2007

If you are the editor of a collection of articles then you should be aware of the special role you play in the quality assurance and production process of a book publication. If carried out diligently, the work of an editor is time consuming and – at times – unrewarding. However, your own reputation as editor, as well as that of the organisation and the authors themselves, depend on the editor taking an active role in preparing the manuscript for publication. This advice note summarises the usual roles and responsibilities of editors at different stages of the production process.

Before handover to the publisher

Selecting (or administering the process of selecting) suitable contributions for inclusion. The publisher may have reviewed the general nature, scope and authorship of contributions in order to assess the commercial viability of the publication but will not usually play any role in ensuring the academic integrity of final contributions. That is your job as editor and whatever process (e.g. peer review) you might employ to help you.

Preparing editorial guidelines for authors

The publisher can provide guidelines for production, but it is up to the editor to provide clear guidelines to authors as to length, focus, structure of contributions etc. You must also ensure authors are aware of their responsibility to obtain any copyright permission required to reproduce material in their article and to adhere to the profession's ethical guidelines for good practice in relation to reporting research results. You not only set the editorial policy, but must also ensure that authors conform to it and submit their contributions in a form suitable for publication. Contributions must be of the required length, contain all the required elements (eg references, abstracts and biographical notes if required, tables, artwork), and conform to the format described in the guidelines for production. The editor is responsible for checking and, if necessary, chasing authors for any missing material *before* handover to the publisher. Any copyright permissions must be obtained before handover of the manuscript to the publisher.

Carrying out any academic or content-level editing required

The quality of the published work often relies on the editor closely reading each article and remedying faults such as inaccuracy, inconsistency, grammatical errors and obscure writing. (Remember, if *you* don't understand something then neither the copyeditor nor other readers are likely to do so). You may have to alter a contribution structurally and severely edit for length. Usually, you will have to liaise with the author for this. Some will be happy to receive suggestions and recast their article. Others will prefer you to do the work and pass it back to them for approval and amendment. You need to ensure you have time in your publication schedule for this stage of the preparation cycle.

Preparing the handover

You should prepare an accurate table of contents, clearly showing the order in which articles or chapters are to be published. Make sure titles of articles and authors' names are correct and shown exactly as in the articles themselves.

You will need to prepare any related texts required for marketing and cover artwork. This usually includes a brief description of the volume. Take special care over this material as it is likely to be used immediately (before the book has been fully copyedited) in leaflets, webpages, advertisements placed in other publications and so on. The quality and accuracy of such material will play an important role in the successful marketing of the book and in obtaining favourable reviews.

Finally, you need to prepare a complete manuscript for handover to the publisher. This should be done electronically (e.g. emailing the contributions as attachments, or sending a CD containing the word processor files) and, if requested, in matching hard copy. Please do not send anything to the publisher before a complete handover can be made unless you have been specially asked to do so. Partial or incomplete handovers cause many headaches and delays in production and increase costs. In any case, production will not begin until the final elements of a project have been received.

You are responsible for ensuring that each author has prepared a final version of their ms which conforms to the guidelines for submission. Please take especial care to ensure that the requirements for artwork, tables and setting of special text such as examples, transcript data etc have been met by authors. Return any material which is not ready to go forward for production to the author for remediation, or make sure yourself that it conforms.

Proofs

The publisher's production department will provide proofs of the book in pdf format (see the detailed advice on the 'Production Process'). You are responsible for determining the proofreading cycle and must make the decision as to whether to involve authors or not. As editor, you are the one who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all proofs have been carefully checked and corrected.

Do not ask authors to send corrected proofs direct to the publisher unless that has been specially agreed. You are responsible for their content and so need to deal with them yourself. Only one set of proofs should be returned to the publisher, containing all necessary corrections – including both those made by yourself and by the author. In cases where alternative suggestions for changes are made by author and yourself, you are responsible for reconciling these and passing back a single version to the publisher. The copyeditor may have raised queries on a particular article, identifying problematic or missing material. You are responsible for ensuring that these queries have been satisfactorily dealt with – by removal of problematic material if necessary.

When checking proofs, take special care to check such things as running heads, page numbers, contents pages etc. Mistakes on these often get missed, yet will appear glaringly obvious when the book is published. Proofs are NOT an opportunity for authors to make a final drafting improvements. It is your responsibility when checking incoming proofs from authors to weed out unnecessary 'author's corrections'. Corrections should be limited to those strictly required for accuracy and consistency. If any new matter is inserted, or material is deleted, which has an impact on pagination, there may be severe cost and time implications in production. We will also check the proofs, but our focus will be mainly on such matters as page layout, typography and technical issues.

When corrections to proofs have been made, you will be sent a second set of proofs of the whole book. You should not normally make the second set of proofs available to individual authors, who are likely to find new revisions they wish to make, thus delaying the project substantially. Undertake the necessary review yourself, referring back to the original list of corrections submitted after the first set of proofs to make sure all important corrections have been done. Occasionally, we will have declined to make certain corrections corrected by authors. If they are significant, we will alert you when sending the revised proofs and explain why. You should normally use this set of proofs to prepare the index. You will need to decide whether a single index is required, or whether separate indices (e.g. names, linguistic examples etc.) are required. Use character styles (e.g. bold, italic, small caps) if you want to indicate references to main entries, figures, linguistic examples etc in a single comprehensive index.

When you have supplied the index and it has been set, we will normally provide you with a final set of proofs showing you how the book will go to the press. You will be asked to confirm that the book is ready for publication.

In practice, you will find the production department is flexible and supportive in ensuring that your volume is produced to a high standard and published in a timely manner. Often, short cuts (such as direct contact with an author) may be pragmatically accepted on occasion. But it is our experience that any substantial deviation from the guidelines set out here does have an impact on the final quality, cost or schedule of a publication and so should be avoided wherever possible.