STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY PRESS

# The Peer-Review process – Who, What and Why?

Quality assurance of academic texts is something that can be done on several fronts. Supervisors and colleagues are discussing and checking texts, there are editing services available, publishers hire editors to improve the quality or some people make their texts openly available for commenting before final publication. The practices vary between disciplines, but not all of them are standardised according to proven best practice.

The peer-review process for books at Stockholm University Press is designed with a basis in the COPE guidelines (Committee of Publication Ethics, 2016) originally created for the review of journal articles. As their existing recommendations were not ideal for larger projects like monographs or anthologies and included a lot of journal-specific vocabulary, we adjusted it slightly. The recommendations are now posted on the Stockholm University Press website (Stockholm University Press, 2015).

The workflow for quality assessment and production of books at Stockholm University Press can be described in 10 easy steps, as follows:

1. *Book Proposal Submission*
   The author is asked to describe the outline of the book and the intended audience. The book project is then planned based on this proposal, which is submitted online with a secure login.
2. *Editorial Checkpoint*
   As with most processes, there's a quality check needed. Has the author followed the submission guidelines? The Stockholm University Press staff checks all submitted proposals and assign them to an Editorial Board of a suitable topic.
3. *1st Peer-Review Cycle*
   Two independent reviewers are invited to quality check the book proposal in terms of aims & scope and if it is relevant for the intended readership. What does this book add to the current plethora of literature within the subject area?
4. *Publishing Committee Decision*
   The Publishing Committee members are elected from senior faculty along with representatives from the Press. Their task is to add a quality assessment of the peer-review process based on the reviewer comments and a recommendation from the Editorial Board of each subject area. This is also where the process is checked against the guidelines for ethical editing.
5. *Contract & Full Manuscript Submission*
   If the Publishing Committee approves a recommendation to accept a book proposal, this leads to a written agreement between the publisher and the author to publish the book. The author is now encouraged to submit their full manuscript, taking into account the comments collected during the first peer-review round.
6. *2nd Peer-Review Cycle*
   Once submitted through the online system, the full manuscript is peer-reviewed in detail, again by two independent experts on the subject; By chapter (anthologies) or as a whole (monographs). The same procedure with an invitation to review (sometimes sent to the same persons as the first round) and a recommendation from the Editorial Board recommendation lead to final approval.

7. *Editorial Quality Control*
   Have the authors followed the recommendations from the reviewers and the Editorial Board? Can the Publishing Committee approve of the recommendation to publish from the Editorial Board? Have all content been uploaded properly?

---------- End of editorial process, this is where the production phase starts ------

8. *Layout & Design*
   The approved manuscript is sent for digital typesetting and copy-editing. The workflow has been adjusted to run as smooth as possible, and the book is typeset according to a template. This process takes about 12 weeks to complete, including proof checking by authors and editors.
9. *Indexing & Metadata*
   The online dissemination is depending on a thorough work with metadata for indexing in databases and search engines. Subject-specific database indexing is important as well as general approval through lists such as DOAJ and The Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers, among others. This stage also includes a strategy for marketing through online channels such as popular social media.
10. *E-book*
    The end result is an e-book with a print-on-demand option for online book stores, which allows limitless distribution through Open Access licence and digital channels. The final online version is available in pdf, xml and mobile-optimised formats to ensure accessibility across platforms to suit most needs.

## References

Committee of Publication Ethics. (2016). *Guidelines | Committee on Publication Ethics: COPE.* Retrieved 25 April 2016, from http://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines

Stockholm University Press. (2015). *Ethical Guidelines for Stockholm University Press*. Retrieved 25 April 2016, from https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/ubiquity-partner-network/sup/Ethical+Guidelines_Working+routines_SUP.pdf

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