

Lifecycle of a book: concept to production

Concept

The idea can come from a formal submission to the commissioning editor, via one of our programme areas or through informal conversations. This stage can take anything from a few days to several months and may involve potential partnership with another organisation. In each instance the idea under consideration needs to be evaluated against BRF's overall strategic priorities.

Proposal

The commissioning editor creates a publishing proposal using an outline of content and sample material supplied by the author. The proposal is taken to our fortnightly publishing meeting to explore how it might fit within the list as a whole, together with a print estimate to assess the return on investment. Sometimes there are simply more good ideas than we can realistically develop, or we have decided to scale back or expand a particular area.

Approval

Once the project has been approved by the publishing meeting, the commissioning editor confirms terms with the author and the Publishing Administrator creates the contract. Copies of this are sent to the author to sign.

Going live

Once the contract has been signed and returned, the Publishing Administrator sets up the title on our database and starts to publicise its existence through data feeds to physical and online bookshops and other outlets. A schedule is circulated to the commissioning editor, project editor and designer so that everyone knows their deadlines. The author is sent a style guide and permissions information and is asked to complete biographical details.

Editing

Once the author has sent the manuscript to the commissioning editor, the commissioning editor checks that the manuscript delivers on the publishing proposal, liaising with the author as necessary.

Cover briefing

In the meantime the commissioning editor and designer begin work on the cover, which is required by the sales team as advance material, together with sample inside pages, a few months before publication in order to generate interest in the book. Author input is sought and proposed visuals taken to the publishing meeting for approval.

Copy-editing

Meanwhile, the project editor takes over on the manuscript, liaising with the author regarding queries, checking the status of any permissions and copy-editing the text, checking grammar, punctuation and accuracy of references. Alterations are keyed into the Word document.

Coding

Finally, the project editor applies a series of codes to the document so that the different styles for headings, italic script, and so on can be identified once the text is transferred into an InDesign document for the designer to work on.

Design

The overall approach has been discussed at the initial stages of the project, and artwork commissioned from an illustrator or photographs selected from a picture library if needed.

Proofreading

Once the book has been designed, the book is sent out-of-house for proofreading, so that there is a 'fresh pair of eyes' on the text. The proofreader will check for any spelling and grammatical mistakes and also checks that the text works as it is laid out on the page.

Proofreader corrections

The file is amended by the project editor and queries from the proofreader collated to send to the author.

Author check

The author receives proofs of his/her book and is given two weeks to read through the designed pages, respond to queries and make any essential corrections.

Final corrections

The project editor takes in the author corrections and circulates the project for signout.

Signout

The commissioning editor does a final check and passes the project for press. The designer checks the files and the project editor sends the print-ready PDFs to the printer.

Typically the process takes nine months from receiving the manuscript to publication. Stock is delivered one month before publication.