

CHOOSING A PUBLISHER



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Is it really such a big decision?



Once a researcher has chosen a format for their work, they need to think about approaching a publisher of that format. Sometimes a publisher will approach them but this is unusual until they are more established. Approaching a publisher with a manuscript is mainly done either as the result of a call for papers or by approaching them with an unsolicited submission. Publishers issue calls for papers when seeking specific content, for example articles for a themed issue. Setting up online alerts, joining mailing lists and following publishers on social media can all be good sources of information opportunities to publish.

There are many different publishing firms available and researchers are likely to need to approach more than one before they are successful. Remember that it is bad academic practice to submit something to more than one publisher at any one time so it pays for the researcher to put thought into the choice.

Different types of publisher

Changing publication models mean that there are a greater range of publishers available than ever before:

Academic - this is still the primary means of research communication and the number of legitimate academic publishers has hugely increased meaning that researchers have more choice than ever before

Popular press - these publishers work to target a non-academic audience and make research more accessible

Vanity - vanity publishers exist to produce copies of a work for a price, often because the work would not be commercially viable

Self-publishing - publishing online means that work is available quickly and easily but often lacks the prestige of using an established publisher

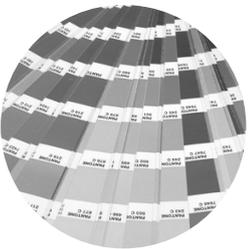


PUBLISHER CHOICE CHECKLIST



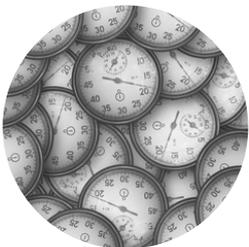
SCOPE

- Does the publisher actually publish research in that particular area?
- Do they produce a particular series which might fit the work?
- Look at other titles by the same publisher to see what type(s) of research are being covered



FORMAT

- Some publishers only produce print outputs, some ebooks and some both. Does having the work appear in a variety of formats matter?
- Does the discipline have a preferred format? For example, some disciplines highly value monographs over other formats



TIME FRAME

- How long is the average time from submission to publication? Some publishers have an extensive lead time and this may not always be suitable
- Does the work need to be published within a certain period, for example to ensure that funder requirements are met?



COST

- Are there any costs involved with choosing a particular publisher?
- Consider the cost of making a publication available via Open Access. Are there funder mandates to comply with? Are these costs factored in to any research grants?

PUBLISHER CHOICE CHECKLIST



DISCIPLINE

- Some disciplines have expectations about where researchers will publish their work
- Depending on career stage this may be a big factor in the choice of publisher



METRICS

- Does the publisher reach a particular level of impact?
- Metrics are often one of the most important factors in the decision of where to publish but remember that numbers only tell part of a wider story of impact



LOOK AT YOUR BOOKSHELF

- It is always a good idea for the researcher to take a look at their bookshelf and see which publishers are featured. If there are several from the same one then this may be a good indication

FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit our webpages: <http://www.osc.cam.ac.uk>

Read the further guidance on choosing a publisher here:
http://bit.ly/OSC_ChoosingAJournal

