

Writing for the Geographical Association Information for submitting a proposal

The Geographical Association publishes a large and varied range of resources on many aspects of geography and geographical education. Ideas for new publications are always welcomed from individuals or groups.

This document explains how you can turn your ideas into print, and describes the process to expect and the support the GA will offer. We would like to give as many members as possible the opportunity to write, and particularly to encourage new authors. Please note that the guidance in this pack applies only to publications for sale - information on submitting articles for the journals is available to download from our website.

From first ideas...

Initial idea

The first step is to contact the Publications Manager to discuss your idea. The Publications Manager can give you an initial reaction. The kinds of questions you are likely to be asked are:

Will your idea...

- fit the publications strategy?
- add to an existing GA series?
- fill a gap in the market?
- appeal to a worthwhile market?

Have you...

- got the time, energy and motivation to complete it?
- got co-authors/editors to help complete it?

The Publications Manager should be able to make positive suggestions, put you in contact with potential collaborators if appropriate, let you know if a similar proposal has already been received, or if a similar title already exists. If the initial response is favourable, the next step is to make a formal publication proposal.

Formal proposal

Guidance on how to put together a book proposal follows below. For guidelines on house style, please download **Writing for Publications** from our website. Once complete, your proposal, with some sample material if possible, should be sent to the Publications Manager.

Reviewing the proposal

Your proposal may also be sent out to one or more external referees who are qualified to assess your ideas and proposal. After their reviews are received, you may be asked to modify your proposal.

Approving the proposal

Your idea will then be taken to the Publications Board who will approve or reject the proposal in principle. The Board meets twice each year, in autumn and in the summer term. It is helpful if your proposal is submitted for April or for August. However, please feel free to submit your ideas as soon as you are ready; in certain circumstances, a publications proposal may be given the go-ahead between meetings. The Publications Manager will try to keep you informed of the progress of your proposal.

Confirming the proposal

If the Publications Board approves the proposal in principle, GA editorial staff will contact you to determine the details of the publication, allocate it a slot in the publishing programme, and issue an authors' royalty agreement.

How to prepare your book proposal

These notes should help you to include in your proposal all the items Publications Board will need to make a decision whether or not to publish your work. They are pretty exhaustive: not every point will apply to every proposal. Three sides of A4 are usually sufficient; four sides are ample.

1. It is useful to summarise the book in a few lines at the start, including a working title.
2. Outline the contents. It is often useful to do this chapter-by-chapter.
3. Say how long the book will be, to the nearest 5000 words.
4. Estimate the number and type of illustrations it will need (photographs, black and white or colour, maps, diagrams).
5. Identify the intended market:
 - Avoid 'Uncle Tom Cobleigh' descriptions ('this book is intended for classroom teachers, middle management, senior management, ITT students and their tutors and mentors, researchers, lecturers, advisers, administrators, policy-makers...'). It may be that your book would appeal to more than one group, but it would be helpful to distinguish between main and subsidiary audiences
 - Quantify the market as far as possible. For example, if your book is aimed at geography PGCE students, how many courses are there and how many students on each?
 - Identify courses for which your book might make recommended or essential reading
 - Most of our books aim to support the National Curriculum for England. It will help us assess your proposal, and eventually market your book, if you can make clear links between your text and the National Curriculum. Please indicate which elements of your book will support which elements from the Programme of Study
 - If the content of your book will have application outside our traditional market - geography teaching in England, Wales and Northern Ireland - explain its appeal to different markets.
6. Analyse the competition
 - What comparable books are there? How will your book compare/contrast?
 - If there isn't a comparable book, suggest why.
7. Yourself as author/editor
 - Give the title, institution and relevant qualification of yourself (if sole author or editor) plus any co-authors, co -editors, contributors, etc.
 - Give a brief bibliography of your relevant publications, annotated to identify the kind of audience if this is not obvious.
 - Mention any relevant networks you belong to, e.g. conferences you attend, associations you belong to, your involvement therein.
8. When could you submit your manuscript by? Avoid good intentions here, and be realistic.
9. Put at the end your name, address where you can be contacted, phone and e-mail.
10. Finally, it is useful to summarise the benefits the book offers to the reader. Many of these will be implicit in much of the above, but it is worth spelling out what's in it for the readers.

NB Please note that the acceptance of a proposal by the Geographical Association does not mean that the final manuscript will be automatically accepted for publication. The manuscript will be reviewed in the context of whether it corresponds to the accepted proposal and fulfils the needs of the audience for whom it is written, and you may be asked to make amendments to this end. In exceptional circumstances, the Geographical Association may decide against publication.