Managing a Book Project
A Guide for Editors Working With the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition

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These guidelines are designed to help you produce a multi-authored book that is integrated, coherent, timely, and definitive. You will also need Writing an Effective Book Chapter: A Guide for Authors, which contains editorial and stylistic instructions that are not repeated here.

**Tips for Selecting and Working With Contributors**

As the content editor for a multi-author book, it is your responsibility to establish the theme, emphasis, and overall organization of the book. You will have articulated these in your book proposal and refined them in your conversations with the publications staff at the National Resource Center. While you do not need to have confirmed all of your contributors at the time your proposal is submitted, you should have a good idea of who you might invite to make contributions. We encourage you to recruit authors who are well-versed in the topics included in the book, have some experience with writing for publication, and who are conscientious about meeting deadlines. Once the proposal is approved, you can begin your individual work with contributors.

1. Share the plan for the book with your contributors, including important deadlines (e.g., date first draft is due, date revisions are due). Be explicit and thorough. Clear communication of expectations (in particular, what topics are to be covered in which chapter) will reduce redundancy, and hence your work as editor. To enhance consistency, consider sharing with contributors the introductory chapter and definitions of terms that are likely to be used throughout the book.
2. Explain to contributors that their chapters may have to be revised to achieve balance among all chapters and to maintain the overall theme of the book. Be clear that you and the National Resource Center editor reserve the right to eliminate chapters that do not meet expectations or are not delivered by the established deadlines.
3. Allow time to edit the chapters to ensure that coherence is achieved and duplication is avoided. Consult with contributors as they revise their chapters so that the chapters fit into the overall scheme for the book.

**Information for Contributors**

The National Resource Center recommends that you use the items listed below to communicate the plan of the book and administrative details to contributors. Using this packet of materials will help you manage the book effectively and avert confusion and extra work. The National Resource Center editor will review drafts of these items before you send them to contributors. He or she can often suggest changes that will save work and time later in the publication process. Each packet should contain the following items:
1. **Cover Letter**, modified as appropriate for each contributor, describing the scope of the book and how each specific chapter fits into the overall plan. It should also explain the enclosures (items below).

2. **Preface-like Statement** that clearly states the aims of the volume, its audience, the level of writing contributors should strive for, and so on.

3. **Table of Contents**, with section titles (if appropriate) and annotated chapter titles (topic, aim, part in overall scheme).

4. **List of Contributors** (potential or final), including titles, affiliations, and contact information.

5. **Model Chapter Outline** that indicates in general terms the main sections to appear in each chapter and an approximate length for each; include references as the final section. Specify a minimum-maximum length for chapters. For example, “20 to 25 double-spaced pages of 250 words each.” This length does not include references. Also, note specific text preparation and word processing guidelines (e.g., margins, typefaces, software preferences) that will facilitate your editing and the manuscript production process.

6. **Production Schedule**, outlining primary deadlines for contributors and projected publication date. The National Resource Center editor will work with you to develop the production schedule.

7. **Copyright Release Form** for each contributor to sign. To properly protect the copyright on the book, the National Resource Center editor must receive signed forms from all contributors along with the first draft. No book will proceed into production until all release forms are received.

**Typical Manuscript Outline**

Though the specific components of books may vary based on the topic and whether it is an edited collection or work by one or two authors, here are the typical components of a scholarly practice book in the order you are likely to see them.

- **Title page.** Includes title and subtitle and names of primary authors or editors in the order they should appear on the book cover and marketing.

- **Copyright page.** Includes sample citation(s) for the work, copyright, and cataloging data; prepared by the National Resource Center editor.

- **Table of contents.** Includes chapter number (if applicable), title, and subtitle for each contribution in the book; includes contributors names in the order they should appear on the chapter byline and in all references to the work.

- **List of tables/figures.** Includes table and figure numbers and titles arranged in order of appearance in the work.

- **Foreword.** A brief introductory essay written by someone other than the primary author(s) or editor(s); the author of the foreword is typically someone who is well-known in the field and/or who has special knowledge of the topic. The foreword usually offers some discussion of how the current work contributes to the larger
conversation on this topic and/or its value to scholars, practitioners, researchers, or others. In other words, the foreword speaks to the significance or relevance of a particular work at a given moment in time.

- **Preface.** A brief introductory essay written by the primary author(s) or editor(s) describing how the book came into being or how the idea for the book was developed, its scope, and purpose; it may also include notes of thanks or acknowledgment to people who were helpful during the time of writing.

- **Editor’s Notes or Introduction.** Describes the organization and content of the book; it will also define terms or concepts that are unique to the topic or to this particular treatment of the topic and provide readers with necessary background information on the topic.

- **Chapters.** Most books include 10 to 12 chapters, including the concluding chapter written by the editor(s). Chapters should be organized in such a way as to build logically on one another. At times, it may be helpful to group the chapters into thematically organized sections.

- **Conclusion.** Summary of the highlights of the chapters and implications and recommendations for action; the concluding chapter should be written after contributors’ chapters are received.

- **Appendices.** An optional section containing materials that support the larger discussion in the book or individual chapters.

- **References.** For edited books, references for each chapter will typically appear at the end of that chapter. In the case of single-author works, references for all chapters will typically appear in a single section at the end of the book. If you are in doubt as to which course to follow, consult with the National Resource Center editor.

- **Index.** Alphabetical listing of topics, concepts, works, and authors referenced in the work; prepared by a professional indexer once the book is in layout.

- **About the Authors/Contributors.** Collection of brief professional biographies for each contributing author generally arranged in alphabetical order for edited collections.

**The Editor’s Role in Managing the Manuscript Process**

In putting together a multi-authored work, do not assume that contributors will submit their outlines or chapters on the dates specified without periodic follow-ups. We recommend that you check with contributors at least once a month to make sure they are on schedule. Be sure contributors keep you informed of any address changes.

To help you plan ahead, the critical points in the manuscript process are listed below, along with the notes on your role at each one.
Abstracts and Outlines

Each contributor will produce an abstract (not to exceed 250 words) and a detailed outline of his/her chapter prior to drafting. In conjunction with the National Resource Center editor, you will review the outlines of the chapters to see whether you need to redirect contributors’ efforts before the project gets too far along. Each outline should be based on your model chapter outline and contain a detailed listing of main topics and subtopics. Check to be sure all important topics are listed and ordered logically. Watch for repetitions between chapters; decide where repeated material best fits. You will synthesize your feedback with that from the National Resource Center editor and provide the contributors with a detailed, written analysis of what should be added or changed in their particular chapter.

Initial Draft Chapters for Editorial Review

As with the outlines, your contributors will appreciate your candid, explicit, detailed guidance in revising their chapters. Check the chapters for the following points:

• **Purpose or Focus**
  o Title accurately reflects chapter purpose
  o Introduction provides statement of purpose or organizing frame for chapter

• **Content**
  o Consistent with chapter purpose
  o Adequate scope of coverage
  o Adequate depth of coverage
  o Assertions adequately supported with reference to literature or practice, or by example
  o No obvious errors of fact or logic

• **Theory-Practice Balance**
  o Discussion of practice grounded in relevant theory or research
  o Implications for practice drawn from discussion of theory or research

• **Readability**
  o Language appropriate for knowledge, skill, and experience of readership
  o Information presented clearly and efficiently
  o Presence of vague language, inconsistencies, or contradictions

• **Organization**
  o Content organized in a coherent fashion
  o Ideas developed and related in a logical fashion
  o Presence of transitions and headers

• **Importance**
  o Presence of new, innovative, or important ideas contributing to the literature on this topic
• Currency
  o Content reflects current information on the topic
  o Reference to classic research/theory balanced by more current references

You will work with individual chapter contributors to address the issues you identify during your review before preparing the complete manuscript to the National Resource Center editor.

Revisions and Final Chapters
After submitting the first draft to the National Resource Center editor, you will receive copies of the reviewers’ suggestions for revisions, typically on a chapter-by-chapter basis. You will also receive suggestions from the National Resource Center editor. Use the reviews and your own evaluations to revise the chapters. You can complete the revisions yourself or send them to the authors. However, in either case, the deadline must be met.

Completing the Manuscript
While you are revising and polishing chapters, you should be revising your introduction and conclusion. By the time you complete the final chapter drafts, you should be ready to attend to the following:

1. Revise the front matter (e.g., title page, preface, table of contents) as specified.
2. Collect individual contributor bios into a single section to be included at the end of the manuscript.
3. Number the manuscript pages consecutively. (Note that page 1 of the main text begins with the introduction.)
4. Check to be sure that you have all copyright release forms and that the contributors’ names appear accurately and in the correct order in the table of contents, list of authors, and on chapter opening pages.

Copyediting and Production Procedures
The National Resource Center editor will manage the manuscript review and copyediting process electronically, embedding queries and making changes using the Microsoft Word Track Changes features. Because some formatting to create consistency of header and text styles across the manuscript will likely be done during the initial review and/or copyediting phase, you are asked to work from the file copy forwarded to you by the National Resource Center editor. When responding to track changes,

• Accept those text edits with which you agree.
• Make additional changes to edits that may be inaccurate or that may have altered the author’s meaning.
• Insert comments connected to text edits with which you disagree, explaining why the original wording needs to stand.
• Respond to all queries by making the necessary insertion, deletions, or changes in
the text; if you do not agree with a change suggested by a query write a note back to
the editor detailing why the change has not been made.

After you submit the revised draft, the entire copyedited manuscript (i.e., first proof) will
be sent to you for review. You may need to ask contributors for missing data or for
clarification of some material, but avoid returning the copyedited chapters to them. If you
cannot handle matters over the phone or e-mail, scan, fax, or photocopy the page(s) in
question and send only that material. In any event, all edits must be entered electronically
into the file provided by the National Resource Center editor. Give each contributor a firm
deadline for supplying answers to queries and follow up as necessary to obtain the
information in a timely manner.

Because the National Resource Center manages multiple book and periodical projects each
year, deadlines are extremely important in the editorial and production stages. If a book
project does not come in on time at any point during the process, it may result in
significant delays.

These are the steps your manuscript will go through after you have incorporated the
copyeditor's changes and returned final copy to the National Resource Center editor:

1. You must return the copyedited manuscript with your changes indicated to the
National Resource Center editor.
2. The National Resource Center editor will complete a final proof of the manuscript
to ensure that all queries have been addressed before sending it on for design and
layout. You may be asked to review the manuscript at this stage.
3. The manuscript will be forwarded to the National Resource Center graphic artists
for design and layout.
4. Once the book is in layout, it will be sent to a professional indexer who will
develop an index for the book.
5. The National Resource Center editor will complete an in-house proof (i.e., galley
proof) of the book. A copy of the galley will also be forwarded to you for review.
Only minor proofing changes (e.g., punctuation, spelling, grammar, date
corrections) can be made at this time.
6. The book will be printed from camera-ready copy.
7. Individual chapter contributors will receive one complimentary copy of the book.
   Editors will receive three copies according to the National Resource Center Policies
   and Procedures.

It is National Resource Center policy not to deal directly with contributors to edited
collections because of the delays and complications that would result. Plan to act for
contributors at all times during the editorial and production process.