

What should a proposal include?

Presses in the humanities will each have their preferences, but all proposals usually include three basic kinds of information, which we require:

1. A letter of inquiry
2. Brief project description
3. CV

These documents should be kept separate, but should form a single package.

What should a letter of inquiry include?

1. Identify yourself and your credentials
2. Describe the project: its title, nature, audience, and state of completion
3. Mention any special features: e.g., the need for many illustrations, tables, or musical examples
4. Mention whether the proposal is under consideration elsewhere
5. Express interest in publishing the work with us

This letter should be addressed to a particular editor by name; it should be written simply and directly, it should be clearly organized, and it should be no more than 2 pages in length.

If you have a job, use your university's or company's letterhead, or the equivalent in an e-mail.

What should a project description include?

The description ideally needs to be accessible and interesting to (educated) non-specialists without over-simplifying the content. Many scholars, however, have difficulty translating specialized, disciplinary-specific language, terms, and concepts.

Presses will expect different things from the description; for example, some will expect chapter summaries, some will not.

We ask for the following: a few pages (no more than 5) that address the substance and argument of the book, that places the study in the context of existing scholarship, and that includes a brief bibliography.

Please also submit a sample chapter or introduction, and short chapter summaries when the project is a collection of essays by several hands.

The following are a few simple, important principles to observe:

1. Keep the project description clear and accessible
2. Avoid jargon or specialized language; if you absolutely need such language, explain its use briefly
3. Do not confuse an outline with a description, which is a critical, narrative account

4. Do not overstate your achievement – grandiose claims to originality or universal interest are usually met with skepticism
5. Limit the project description to no more than 5 pages

Neither the project description nor the letter should be argumentative, or prosecute the argument of the book by other means. The chapter summaries usually engage in a more specialized discourse.

What should a CV include?

Some cvs are very long and unnecessarily detailed for the purposes of approaching a press. The cv you send should contain the following information, and not much more.

1. Your name, address and contact information
2. Current position
3. Employment history
4. Undergraduate and graduate degrees
5. Publication history, clearly sub divided and professionally organized. In particular, if you have had a book published, state place, publisher, and date clearly. Note if it has also been published in paper or electronic format. Note if it has been nominated for or won a prize. Note if it has been reviewed (giving venue, date, and pagination clearly)

Make sure your cv is up to date; and date your cv.

How should the proposal be sent?

Please send your proposal as Word documents and as emails attachments.

Bibliography

Germano, William. *Getting it Published: A Guide for Scholars and Anyone Else Serious about Serious Books*. 2nd edn. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Website

Association of University Presses (formerly AAUP). <http://www.aaupnet.org/>