

# Author Directions: Navigating your success in Book Reviews

Advice for securing a book review in a journal



# Introduction

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Getting your book published is just the beginning. Another important step is raising awareness of your book to a wider audience. What better way to do that than to get your book reviewed by academic journals?

Getting your book noticed by journals can seem like a daunting job – journals are bombarded with mass-mailed review copies that often remain sitting on shelves, so how can you make yourself and your work stand out?

You will make more of an impact on reviewers if you contact the journals you're interested in directly. According to Rebecca Guest, managing editor of *Life Writing* for Taylor & Francis Journals, "an author's direct contact would go down very well [with journal book review editors]". As an author, you know your title better than anyone and this can be used to your advantage when approaching journals to review your title.

This guide gives you tips that will be helpful when approaching journals, and includes advice from reviewers themselves! We also share a glimpse into the review process a journal takes to give you an idea of the hard work behind every review.

## Use this snapshot to offer insights into the following processes:

1. Getting your title reviewed
2. Researching journals
3. Approaching journals and publications to review your title
4. What happens after a journal has requested your title?

# Getting Your Title Reviewed

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*When it comes to finding the right journals to review your book, do your homework. What audiences does the journal target? Is the subject matter contained in your book relevant?*

Dr. Michael Jonik, Book Reviews and Special Issues Editor of *Textual Practice*, says that when he decides on books to review for his journal, he primarily looks for those most appropriate for the journal's readership.

Targeting journals that are relevant to your book's subject is important because it enables you to reach the right audience. However, finding the right journals that are relevant can be challenging. By researching publications, you can not only build a strong contact list, but you will also gain a good understanding of what your chosen journals are looking for. Also, it is recommended you do not approach more than five top-tiered journals in your field – try to be as targeted and specific as you can.

## Researching Journals

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*Not sure where to start? Guidance and good advice might be closer than you think.*

Utilise your network! Speak to your colleagues or relevant contacts in your network who are interested in your book's subject matter to find out what publications they read. Sometimes they may potentially know of a niche journal that would suit your title, or perhaps they even write for a journal themselves! If you co-authored or co-edited your book, you can coordinate the process of researching and contacting journals.

Make a list of the journals you read yourself, or perhaps those you admire. Wouldn't it be great to have your book reviewed by journals that are significant to you? Once you have your list, research each one to find out their process for reviewing titles. Some journals are quite selective before they review books and request copies of specific books relevant to the subject area, so it is best to find out, either by conducting research by viewing the journals' websites for information or by emailing directly.

## Approaching Journals And Publications To Review Your Title

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*When approaching journals, do not send a blanket email with all your book details to a whole group – make it personalised.*

Pitch your book – after all you wrote/edited the book and know its unique selling points! Be sure to mention the name of the journal you are contacting, and explain why you want your work to be reviewed by the journal.

Be sure you are making it easy to help the reviewer learn more about your book. Hyperlink your book's title to your publisher's book page, include a JPEG version of your book's cover, and always include your contact information so that you can address any questions the reviewer may have.

If you are a Routledge or CRC Press author, be sure to include a review copy request form link (<http://pages.email.taylorandfrancis.com/review-copy-request>) so the reviewer can request a copy of your book!

Reviewer and author of two Routledge titles, Laurence L. Delina, advises to stress the novelty of the title and explain what your book does that has not been done before. Titles, even those on a seemingly mundane or niche topic, draw the most attention if they offer something truly new or unique.

Dr. Rosemary Deller, Managing Editor of *LSE Review of Books* advises, "a clear pitch that really identifies the book's intervention with clarity is helpful. What kind of debates is the book engaging with? What is it about this particular text that offers a fresh mode of approaching an issue, whether in terms of its content, focus, argument or methodology? Communicating this in a succinct manner can help make a title stand out."

**Reviewers' tips:**

*"What I am really interested in featuring is scholarship that makes a specific contribution to a field or topic; in this regard, a title that provokes a seemingly minor 'nudge' in thinking is as valuable as one that is purported to radically overturn perspectives.*

*"I am always drawn to new books that reflect on methodological research and Higher Education issues as these speak widely to readers and also complement some of the aims of our sister blogs here at LSE, such as LSE Impact of the Social Sciences.*

*"Although a book from a 'big name' in a particular field is often appealing, I am also keen to feature work by emerging scholars and to cover a wide range of publishers, from the larger University presses to small, independent ones."*

– Dr. Rosemary Deller, Managing Editor, *LSE Review of Books*

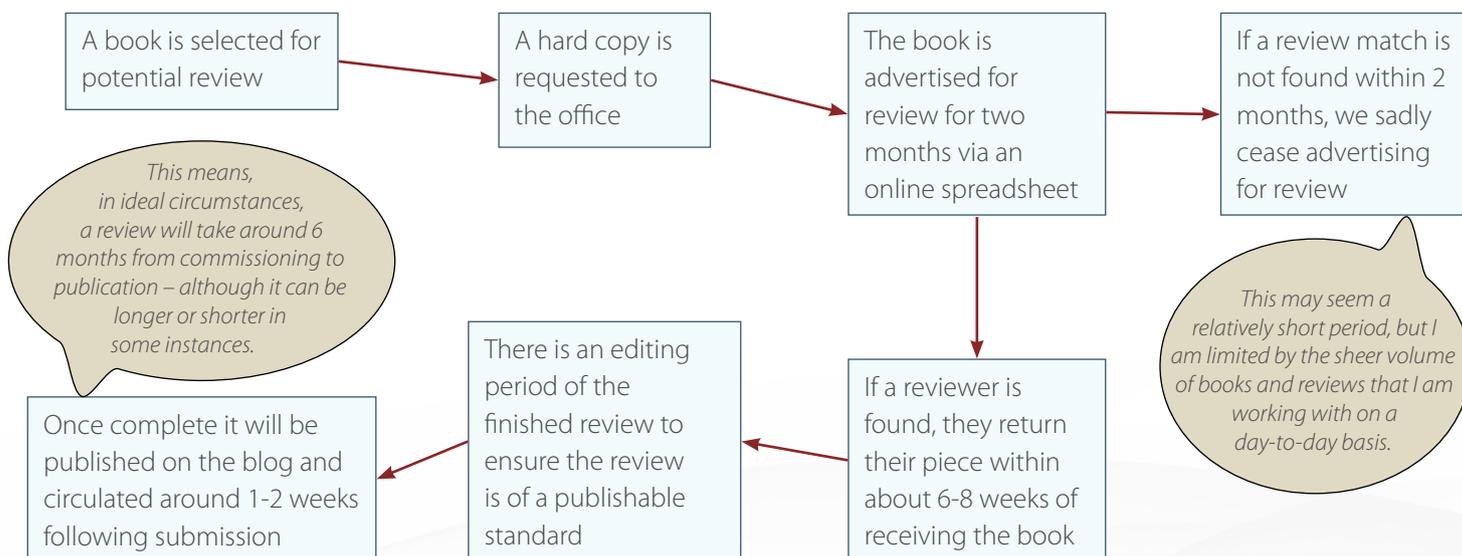
*"A crisp title, a crisp abstract, and cover image make it to my criteria."*

– Laurence L. Delina, author of *Accelerating Sustainable Energy Transition(s) in Developing Countries and Strategies for Rapid Climate Mitigation*

## What Happens After A Journal Has Requested Your Title?

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*Dr. Rosemary Deller, Managing Editor of LSE Review of Books, shares her process for reviewing books.*



*LSE Review of Books publishes around 250 reviews a year, publishing around 1-2 reviews each day from Monday to Friday, alongside other features such as recommended reading lists, bookshop guides, author interviews and other essays.*

The chart on the previous page aims to provide a snapshot of one journal's process and timeframe – all journals work slightly differently, so do your research and ask questions about the specific journal(s) you are working with. For example, Dr. Michael Jonik, of the journal *Textual Practice*, explained that his journal publishes 35-45 books per year, and he expects a typical book review to be around 1,000-1,500 words in length.

## CONCLUSION

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Putting the time and effort into researching a journal's audience is just as important as getting your book reviewed. By doing so, you will be in a better position to pitch your book to the 5 top tiered journals in your field.

As an author, you are empowered with the deep knowledge and passion on your book's subject area. Let that shine through when approaching journals: share how your work is different from other work within your field, and let journals know the true value to their readership that would be achieved in featuring your book in their reviews section.

Don't be disheartened if journals take a while to review your book – the review process varies from journal to journal. The important thing to remember is that the review is reaching the correct audience.

Once the hard work has paid off and a reviewer has sent you a published review of your book, be sure to share the review with your publishing contact to get it uploaded to the publisher's website.

## Acknowledgements

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While researching this snapshot's topic, we turned to Dr. Rosemary Deller of *LSE Review of Books*, Dr. Michael Jonik of *Textual Practice*, Rebecca Guest of Taylor & Francis Journals, and Routledge author Laurence L. Delina for advice and guidance based on their professional experience. We are grateful to these contributors for taking the time to be interviewed and for sharing their knowledge with our audience.

## Interviews

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Delina, L. (29 September 2017). Email Interview.

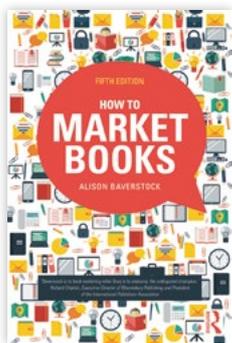
Deller, R. (12 October 2017). Email Interview.

Guest, R. (06 October 2017). Email Interview.

Jonik, M. (09 October 2017). Email Interview.

## References

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### How to Market Books

Alison Baverstock

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## Additional Resources

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LSE Review of Books: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/>

Textual Practice: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rtpr20>

Review copy request form (for Routledge & CRC Press authors):  
<http://pages.email.taylorandfrancis.com/review-copy-request>

*Accelerating Sustainable Energy Transition(s) in Developing Countries* by Laurence L. Delina:  
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