



McFARLAND

Peer Review at McFarland

Founded in 1979, McFarland is an independent publisher of scholarly and general interest books. With more than 6500 titles in print across a broad range of subjects, we are best known as a leader in the academic treatment of popular culture, with a strong presence in the areas of film and television, comics and graphic novels, genre fiction, sports and game studies, among others. Other well-established lines include American and world history, military history, medieval studies, African American culture, dance, theater, literature, gender studies, and several others, largely in the humanities. McFarland is committed to publishing books that make a lasting contribution in their subject areas, and peer review is an important part of our program for academic books.

This list below provides answers to the most frequently asked questions about our approach to the peer-review process.

When does peer review take place?

Peer review is initiated after McFarland has conducted an internal review of either a complete draft or, in certain circumstances, a full proposal (to include a project summary, annotated outline or table of contents, projected word count, and at least two sample chapters).

How long does the peer review process take?

In many instances, McFarland is able to obtain qualified readers within two weeks and share reader reports within eight to ten. The schedule can vary depending on the nature and length of the manuscript, and on reader availability, but we work hard to complete the process in a timely manner.

How many readers will review the manuscript?

The manuscript will be sent simultaneously to two reviewers in your field, who will read and comment on your work. If their evaluations disagree or raise issues that need a further look, we reserve the right to engage a third reader.

Who will the readers be?

Authors are often uniquely placed to identify prospective readers in their subject area, and we request that a list of candidates, generally specialists within the field, be included with your proposal. Our priority, however, is to assure that your manuscript is reviewed by the most appropriate and best-qualified readers available, none of whom should have any personal or professional connection to you. We may therefore commission readers from outside of your list.

Should I contact readers ahead of time to gauge their availability?

No. Peer review at McFarland is of the double-blind variety, which means that readers' names, like those of the authors they review, are held in confidence by the publisher. We are not able to enlist readers with whom you have already made contact.

What will the readers look for in their review?

Readers consider many questions as they review a manuscript, but one overrides the others: Does it make an original and significant contribution to the field? They assess the overall quality of the manuscript, from the depth and breadth of the research to the soundness of its arguments and writing. They also try to establish whether an author has made appropriate use of the relevant (and recent) literature, documented fully and consistently, and demonstrated attention to detail, accuracy, and tone. Readers are encouraged to elaborate on the strengths and especially the weaknesses they identify, and to make their comments constructive, with an eye toward helping McFarland and the author publish the best possible version of the book.

Do you offer advance contracts?

McFarland does offer contracts based on the strength of an early draft or full proposal, with the understanding that publication hinges on delivery of a satisfactory final manuscript. What qualifies as satisfactory may be determined in part by the reader reports and any revisions that you and McFarland agree to in response to them.

If you need a contract in place in advance of peer review — so that you can apply for sabbatical leave or grant funding, for instance — discuss it with an editor early.

Are simultaneous submissions considered?

The costs and administrative burdens borne by the peer-reviewing publisher are substantial, and honoraria provide only modest compensation for the time that academic readers invest; for those reasons, we prefer to have an exclusive offering of a manuscript.

If your proposal is under consideration by another publisher, we ask that you tell us at the time of submission and keep us updated on its status.

What do I need to send when the manuscript is ready for review?

When the manuscript is complete, and you have a draft as close to final as possible, send the following to peer_review@mcfarlandpub.com:

- 1) An electronic copy of your manuscript in Microsoft Word, scrubbed free of bylines or other elements that might reasonably be expected to give away your identity.
- 2) A detailed abstract.
- 3) A list of five potential readers in the field who have no personal or professional connection to you.

What if my manuscript is an edited collection of essays?

You will need to remove the identities of all authors from the manuscript, including yourself as volume editor. We suggest using Author A, Author B, etc., rather than redacting names. Please also be sure to supply us with a copy of the table of contents that does include the names of all authors, for our eyes only.

What if my manuscript includes illustrations? How do I send a review-ready copy?

If illustrations are essential to your manuscript, they should be embedded, complete with caption and credit information. The manuscript should then be sent as a PDF instead of a Word document.

What happens after the review is complete?

After the review is completed, McFarland will share the readers' comments and our thoughts on them, asking that you respond in detail to the points raised. We'll then work with you to create a plan for revision and a timeline for submission of the final draft.

If you have further questions about the peer-review process at McFarland, please email peer_review@mcfarlandpub.com