



Publishing Legal Scholarship: From Thesis to Monograph

IEL Collective workshop, 16 April 2024

Ben Booth

Publisher, Academic Law, Edward Elgar Publishing

ben@e-elgar.co.uk

What makes a good law book?

'The right tool for the job' – different types of books need different features
Interesting vs marketable
Well written – efficient but engaging
Not too long!

Writing a successful proposal

Ultimate aim: make a convincing case for publication to the publisher and peer-reviewers

Why is it needed and what does it add to the existing literature?

Who is it aimed at and how will it be used?

Do you really want to write a book?

A raw thesis is not a book

Written for a small but important audience

Typically long, demonstrates you can do analysis and know the subject (eg, methodology, literature reviews etc)

Can take a lot of work to convert a PhD into a book. Take a break. Get advice from your supervisor

What we look for in a PhD (i)

The book

International market

Fits with our list

Interesting subject, new material, makes an original contribution to the field

Not too long / dense / technical

A good proposal – demonstrates what is needed to create a good book

Practicalities: length, not available elsewhere

What we look for in a PhD (ii)

The author

Academically strong (future author?)

Journal articles

Recommendation

Good written English

Realistic expectations of the market....

eg, most PhDs cannot be turned into a textbook

Thesis to monograph: examples

Remove jargon

Focus on key take-home message and build stronger narrative around this

Remove chapters on methodology or literature review

Introduction and conclusion rewritten to be more engaging, stronger links to the rest of the book

Reduce repetition

Minimise signposting of theory

Remove appendices and references to these in the text

Tips to improve your chances

If you can, start thinking about the book structure before you write your thesis

Take a step back

Don't just send a raw thesis to a publisher

Speak with your supervisor first

Don't send simultaneously to several publishers

Books sell on name recognition. Foreword?

Lay the ground and test your ideas with some journal articles first

What happens next?

Sign a contract

Leave you in peace to write the book!

Production

Marketing

Choosing a publisher

Does the book fit well with this publisher's catalogue, and will it be 'in good company' alongside other high-quality monographs?

How long will it take for them to make a decision, and to publish the book?

Will they offer a good service, and invest in the book? (Have colleagues had a good experience?)

Does the publisher have an international reputation, and an ability to market the book?

What is their ebook strategy?

Relationship