

Guide for Editorial Boards

Brepols engages Editorial Boards as an independent body, selected for expertise, whose scholarly opinion and evaluation is needed to maintain the high standards of the series. One or more General Editors (explicit or implicit) may be a helpful position to create in order to conclude discussions, liaise with the publisher, and so on.

Expectations of the Editorial Board

1. **Promotion.** Board members are supposed to help in promoting the series to colleagues, students, and other interested parties, especially in terms of inviting new proposals. Brepols encourages board members to be proactive in suggesting that suitable projects are submitted to the series. The publishing manager at Brepols and the Editorial Board can both work on new acquisitions for the series. In this way board members can steer the direction of research.

2. **Review of proposals.** When a new proposal is submitted to the series, it is the Board's task to comment on its academic merit and suitability for the series, and to decide if the proposal would be a good fit for the series and is academically sound. It should always be made clear to authors/editors that if a proposal is progressed, this is nonetheless not a guarantee of publication in the series. Final decision should always be dependent on peer review.

3. **Peer review.** Boards are responsible for the academic quality of publications in the series, mainly through independent peer review. All books must undergo a full peer review of the complete typescript (the file that, in the author's eyes, is 'definitive and publishable'). The peer reviewer can be a member of the Editorial Board or an external specialist. A key role of the Board here is to suggest suitable peer reviewers, drawing on their expert knowledge of the field. Peer reviews should describe the strengths and weaknesses of the work submitted and whether it is suitable for publication. Constructive feedback to the author, regarding, for example, structure, content, style, or organization of the material, is particularly welcomed. Peer review reports are fully anonymous, so that the referees can speak as freely as they like.

Brepols does not interfere in this quality-control process, other than offering material support and advice. However, Brepols may work with the Board to advise on how books could best be framed for our reputation and market (mainly, university libraries worldwide), as that affects the impact of books in the series on the scholarly world. Brepols therefore is indirectly responsible for the academic quality of its publications. It is directly responsible for everything beyond this quality-control process, namely legal and administrative support, professional copyediting, typesetting, and printing.

Contracts

The point at which a contract may be issued can vary from volume to volume. Sometimes a contract can be issued at a relatively early stage, while in other cases the Board will want to see the final typescript



reviewed before a decision about a contract can be made. However, it is acceptable and reasonable to issue a contract at some stage in the middle of the process described above. If, for example, submitted sample chapters are of a very high quality and the Board agrees the volume can be accepted on the basis of that, common sense should prevail and a contract can be requested.

4. Shepherding the manuscript. This is the process by which the Editorial Board confirms that the finalized, corrected manuscript is ready to go into production — the publisher cannot begin work on a volume until it has been ‘passed for press’ by the Board. Normally the role of ‘Shepherd’ or ‘Guide’ is undertaken by a member of the Board whose research interests align most closely with the manuscript. The Shepherd will develop a relationship with the author/editor of the proposed volume. He or she will work with the author/editor on behalf of the Board and is available to answer occasional questions and queries from the author/editors when they are making their corrections and revisions. The Shepherd also checks the complete, revised manuscript to ensure that recommended changes/revisions have been made in a satisfactory manner. This does not need to be a full read-through, but rather a check of the manuscript alongside the peer review. Shepherding can be a very rewarding role. It does not have to take up too much time, just common sense and a good eye. A conscientious Shepherd will realise that they offer a very important link between the author/editor of the proposed volume and the Board.

5. Communication with the Publisher. The General Editor is responsible for informing Brepols in a timely manner about projects that are in preparation by sending through the project pro forma containing all relevant details regarding the work, especially the foreseen submission date of the manuscript, as well as author details. This information will allow Brepols to organize the production process and marketing actions in an efficient way.

At any time, members of the Board can contact the responsible publishing manager of the series at Brepols for help and advice.

6. Post publication. Board members are invited to promote new publications in the series, if they feel this is appropriate, e.g. through Twitter posts, Facebook pages, on reading lists and bibliographies, or simply in conversation with students and colleagues.

What is not expected from the Board?

The Board is not a copyeditor. However, the Board — and external reader — should be alert to any serious deficiencies in the volume. These might include errors and major inconsistencies in the presentation of citations, errors in the spelling of foreign languages (where applicable). Where possible, the Board should direct authors to the Brepols style sheet for guidance; in the case of serious deficiencies, the Board must alert the publisher, who may suggest external, professional editing prior to copyediting.

Likewise, the Board is not expected to correct the language in a proposal or volume. It is the author’s responsibility to contact a native speaker to proofread and/or revise the text before submitting the final manuscript for publication. Yet the Board — and external reader — should also spot-check that articles/manuscripts, particularly by non-native speakers, are sufficiently idiomatic. The Brepols copyediting team will be work throughout the file and check everything is harmonized and adhere to the style sheet, but cannot provide an in-depth polishing and correction of language. Therefore, problems with the idiom of the volume should be highlighted and addressed before copyediting starts. If there is any doubt about this, please contact the responsible publishing manager at Brepols.