

Book Proposals

Our Mission

Our mission is to encourage, sponsor, and publish serious, faithful, gospel-related materials.

Submitting a Book Proposal

The Religious Studies Center welcomes book proposals on projects that fit the RSC mission. We are committed to publishing well-researched, well-written books aimed at informed Latter-day Saint readers as well as a more academic audience. Submit your materials to joan_pinegar@byu.edu. Contact Joany if she has not acknowledged receipt of your proposal within two weeks.

For proposals to be considered, a prospectus is required. In your prospectus, please provide the following basic information so we can make an informed decision about your project:

1. A copy of your curriculum vitae or résumé, including your contact information, occupation, education, book publications (listing publisher and publication date), and journal articles.
2. A summary of your proposed work:
 - a. Describe the content and theme in about three hundred words.
 - b. Tell us how your work adds to existing scholarship. Please include the author, title, publisher, and date of publication of significant comparable books.
 - c. Tell us the primary and secondary audiences for your book.
 - d. Tell us why you think the RSC is a good fit for your project.
3. The specifications of the work:
 - a. Approximate page count in Microsoft Word, including notes and bibliography.
 - b. Number and type of illustrations you want to include. Please specify color or black-and-white photographs, line drawings, maps, charts, graphs, and tables.
 - c. Projected completion date of the manuscript, if it is not yet fully written.
4. Table of contents with a brief summary of the content of each chapter.
5. One or two representative chapters (if not submitting the complete manuscript).
6. Indication of any portions that have been published previously and by whom.
7. Names and addresses of three experts in your field of study who might be willing to objectively review your manuscript if it is accepted for peer review.

We presume your manuscript is not under review by other publishers. Please explain if this is not the case.

Submitting a Complete Book Manuscript

If we find your project of interest, we will ask to see the complete manuscript, or, if the manuscript is yet to be completed, we will discuss with you how we might go forward.

Because we are a university press, the books we publish go through a peer-review process and are sent to two anonymous reviewers. This process may take another three months.

For further ideas as you prepare your manuscript for review, please see **Preparing Your Manuscript** below. Completed manuscripts need to comply with the [Religious Studies Center Style Guide](#) and **Permissions Policy**.

Preparing Your Manuscript

Whether you're preparing a book-length manuscript or a journal article, we encourage you to keep the following guidelines in mind:

Accessibility. Write direct, clear English in a style that is accessible to the broadest possible audience for your work.

Thesis statement. Include a thesis statement that clearly identifies the purpose and scope of your manuscript.

Quotations. Integrate quotations into your narrative as logical, grammatical parts of the text. Usually quotations require further explanation to function productively within your text. We caution against excessive use of block quotes.

Style. We generally follow *The Chicago Manual of Style* for journal articles and book manuscripts. For details, see the [Religious Studies Center Style Guide](#). If another style (MLA, APA, etc.) is more appropriate to your discipline, check with us about using it.

Note Placement. You may use footnotes or endnotes. Link notes (attached to the text they refer to).

Terminology. Avoid jargon as much as possible. Define specialized terms if they need to be used.

Sensitivity. Use language that is free of bias (gender, race, religion, and so forth). Consult *Guidelines for Bias-Free Writing*, by Marilyn Schwartz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). In some historical contexts, gender-specific terms may be appropriate.

Illustrations. Begin thinking now about possible illustrations, where you can find high-quality versions, and who holds the reproduction rights. Once your manuscript is accepted, provide photocopies or printouts of illustrations you would like to include, keeping track of the sources. The number and types of illustrations to be reproduced are subject to approval by the press. Don't pay for illustrations or their permissions until the publications director has confirmed that the illustrations will be used and that the rights granted in the permission are adequate for our needs.

Permissions Policy

Proper citation of *all* previously published material is imperative. Additional permission may be required for the following resources:

Quotations from books, articles, poetry, or song lyrics. *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition, 4.86 offers this guidance on quoting from other works: “Fair use is use that is fair— simply that. Uses that differ in purpose from the original, and uses that transform the copied material by changing its context or the way it is perceived, will always be judged more leniently than those that merely parallel or parrot the original. For example, substantial quotation of the original is acceptable in the context of a critique but may well not be acceptable if one is simply using the first author’s words to reiterate the same argument or embellish one’s own prose. Use of any literary work in its entirety—a poem, an essay, an article from a journal—is hardly ever acceptable. Use of less than the whole will be judged by whether the second author appears to be taking a free ride on the first author’s labor. As a general rule, one should never quote more than a few contiguous paragraphs of prose or lines of poetry at a time or let the quotations, even if scattered, begin to overshadow the quoter’s own material. Quotations or graphic reproductions should not be so substantial that they substitute for, or diminish the value of, the copyright owner’s own publication. Proportion is more important than the absolute length of a quotation: quoting five hundred words from an essay of five thousand is likely to be riskier than quoting that amount from a work of fifty thousand. But an even smaller percentage can be an infringement if it constitutes the heart of the work being quoted.”

Diagrams, charts, illustrations, photos, cartoons, and other visuals. For details, see *Images, Permissions, Captions, and Credits*.

Oral and written interviews. A signed permission form from the source person is required.

Permission is not required for *paraphrased or adapted material*; however, the source must be acknowledged.

It is the responsibility of the author, editor, or (in the case of collections) the contributor to pay for permissions.