It is often good to think about publishing your dissertation as a book, but recognize that you’ll need to revise it extensively to appeal to a wider audience and to compete in the literary marketplace. Here are some guidelines to help you in this process.

**Timeline**

- Allow plenty of time!
- The review process can easily take up to a year, as it entails a peer review of your manuscript, potential revisions, further peer review, and then approval.
- The editing process can easily take a year to a year and a half; it entails copy editing, design, typesetting and proofreading, preparation of the index, printing, and binding.

**Dissertations differ from books in several ways**

- Dissertations are highly specialized, while books are geared to educated general readers.
- Dissertation audiences are usually under 100—books about 500 or more, in general.
- In a dissertation, the author’s authority must be proven; in books, it is assumed.
- Dissertations contain extensive documentation (to prove authority) while books document to credit sources and help the reader.
- Dissertations can run long; books are often far shorter.

**Elements that make a good book**

- A title that is concise, memorable, intriguing, and includes essential key words
- Organization that is clear and effective
- A succinct introduction
- Illustrations that enhance the text
- Sections that are meaningful either alone or as part of the total book
- Navigational aids: chapter titles, running heads, subheads, notes, bibliography, index
- A voice (relationship of author to reader) that functions like an invisible tour guide or creative storyteller, and avoids sounding like a lecturer at a podium

there’s more… ➤
The revision process

Basics
- Forget your dissertation. Forget your committee.
- Be bold!
- Clarify your modified topic and audience.
- Determine how to present it in a dynamic way.

Details
- Remove unnecessary references to yourself.
- Remove conspicuous chapter intros and summaries.
- Make style parallel in chapter titles, captions, chapter openings and closings, subheads.
- Revisit the Introduction and Conclusion.
- Remove unnecessary notes; condense or combine others.
- Remove most cross-references.
- Remove unnecessary examples and data.
- Make chapter openings strong, clear, and inviting.
- Add definitions of jargon, foreign terms, biographical and historical dates.
- Brainstorm several possible titles and subtitles.
- Tighten prose.
- Use active verbs.
- Begin and end sentences with words you want to emphasize.

Resources

