

Publishing from the Dissertation

For first-year faculty, publishing from the dissertation becomes an excellent, and often expected, way to begin to build a pipeline of research activity as well as to gain visibility in one's scholarly field. Here, we pause to explore the nuances of this process, considering practical steps for moving your writing forward.

Scope

A dissertation contains extensive chapters related to literature, theory, and methodology, telling a detailed 'story' of the study. For articles and book chapters, it often becomes necessary to narrow the focus to particular aspects of the dissertation. For instance, one might write a methodological article about an innovative analytic approach, or hone in on select findings. Condensing a 200+-word dissertation into a 20-page article rarely works. Instead, aim to narrow the scope to effectively tell part(s) of the story.



Audience

Another important consideration is your intended audience. Think about who you want to engage, and how you will engage them. First, what respected journals are important to target in order gain visibility by scholars in your field? Second, based on your target journals, how can you craft a compelling article with relevance for that, specific, audience? Use language that your audience will understand, and be sure to define jargon that might not be accessible to all readers.



Dissertation to Book

Some aspire to turn their dissertation into a book and wonder where and how to begin. Engaging carefully with academic press websites to familiarize yourself with the book proposal process is a start. As such, research if the press has a history of publishing dissertations as books. It is also acceptable to contact the relevant managing editor to gauge their interest. You might even reach out to authors who have gone from dissertation to book to see what wisdom they might be able to share. Finally, consider that your audience will ostensibly differ from the dissertation, and write your proposal with audience in mind.



Additional Resources

- From Dissertation to Book_by Leonard Cassuto
- Turning Your PhD Into a Successful Book by Terry Clague from Routledge
- From Dissertation to Book by William Germano
- Publishing Your Dissertation by Beth Azar
- Transforming a Dissertation Chapter into a Published Article by Faye Halpern and James Phelan

