

UC ANR Publishing Author Guide

Peer Review and Publication Process

UC ANR peer-reviewed publications carry the institutional credibility of the University of California and provide evidence of your professional development for merit and promotion. The UC ANR Publishing team handles editing, design, and distribution, while you focus on the content. This guide covers everything you need to know to move your manuscript from first draft to publication.



1. Before you begin

Every project starts with a conversation. Before writing anything, contact the Director of Publishing, Rachel Lee, to confirm your idea and learn what comes next.

- **Rachel Lee, Director of Publishing:** anrlee@ucanr.edu
- Contact the Director of Publishing whether you are proposing a new publication or updating an existing one.
- The team will walk you through the proposal process and, once approved, you will be paired with a subject-area handling editor (HE).

UC authorship requirements

UC ANR publications must meet UC authorship standards. Please review the requirements before submitting a proposal—they determine whether your author group is eligible to publish through UC ANR.

The standard requirement is:

- The majority of authors must be from UC ANR, or the technical editor, coordinator, or senior author must be from UC ANR.

If the above standard cannot be met, all three of the following conditions must be satisfied:

- At least one author must be from UC ANR.
- There must be strong support from a UC ANR workgroup, statewide program, or coordinating body.
- There must be a reasonable estimate that the publication will be marketable. For longer print books, cost recovery is generally expected. For other formats, this requirement may be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Copyright of all material published by UC ANR is assigned to the Regents of the University of California.

If you are unsure whether your author group meets these requirements, contact Rachel Lee before preparing your proposal.

Publication types

UC ANR currently publishes two types of peer-reviewed materials. The Publishing team can help you determine which is the right fit for your content.

- **Books**—Longer, in-depth publications covering research, technical guidance, or comprehensive subject matter. These are priced publications available in print and digital formats.
- **Open-access publications**—Short, practical guides distributed as free PDF downloads. These are digital only, generally ten pages or fewer, and designed for quick reference by practitioners and the public.



2. The publishing process

The process has six main stages: Proposal, Board Review, Agreement, Writing and Submission, Peer Review, and Production. Each stage is described below.

1. Submit a publication proposal

After speaking with the UC ANR Publishing team and before you write your manuscript, you must submit a proposal for review by the [Publications Editorial Board](#). This ensures the publication fills a need and fits UC ANR's publishing program before you invest time in writing.

Complete the [Publication Proposal Form](#) and submit it to the Publications Editorial Board. The form asks for:

- **Type of publication**—what format best fits your content (see Publication types above)
- **Estimated length**—approximate page or word count
- **Subject area**—the primary topic and intended audience
- **Similar existing titles**—Are there comparable UC ANR or UC publications already? How does yours differ or add to them?
- **Manuscript draft timeline**—When do you expect to have a complete draft ready?
- **Funding**—Do you have funds to support production costs, if applicable?

2. Publications Editorial Board review

The UC ANR Publications Editorial Board reviews all submitted proposals. The board meets monthly. Questions during the review period can be directed to Julie Finzel, Editor-in-Chief, at jafinzel@ucanr.edu.

The board evaluates whether the proposed publication:

- addresses a genuine need for UC ANR's clientele
- is appropriate in scope and format for UC ANR's publishing program
- does not significantly duplicate existing UC ANR or UC publications
- is feasible within the proposed budget and timeline

You will be notified of the committee's decision. If your proposal is accepted, you will proceed to Stage 3. If it is not accepted, the committee may offer feedback on how the proposal could be revised and resubmitted.

3. Sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Once your proposal is accepted, you and UC ANR Publishing will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) before manuscript work begins. This document establishes the formal agreement for the project and covers:

- rights granted to the Publisher, including distribution in all formats and media
- author delivery requirements and deadlines
- expectations for peer review
- roles and responsibilities for both parties
- AI content disclosure requirements
- dispute resolution and termination conditions

Production cannot begin on any project without a signed MOU on file.

Sample chapters and early writing support

At this stage, the UC ANR Publishing team takes a hands-on approach to help set your project up for success. Before you write your full manuscript, your HE may ask to review one or two sample chapters. This gives you an opportunity to get early feedback on writing style, structure, level of detail, and audience appropriateness before you commit significant time to the full draft.

If sample chapters are requested, your HE will let you know what is expected and provide guidance. This step is not a separate review but part of the collaborative relationship between author and editor during the writing phase.

4. Write and submit your manuscript

With your proposal approved and MOU signed, you are ready to write. See Part 3 of this guide for detailed manuscript preparation guidance.

Step 1: Submit to your Handling Editor

When your manuscript is complete, submit it to your HE. Do not submit directly to Scholastica at this stage. Your HE will read the manuscript to determine whether it is ready for peer review—checking for completeness, clarity, and overall readiness.

Step 2: Create your Scholastica account

Once your HE is satisfied with the submission, they will ask you to enter your manuscript into Scholastica, UC ANR's online peer review system. If you do not already have a Scholastica account, create one before submitting.

1. Go to [the Scholastica link](#).
2. Fill out the registration form completely and click "Sign Up."
3. Check the inbox of the email address you used for a confirmation email from Scholastica and click the confirmation link to activate your account.
4. You can now log in at any time at [the Scholastica link](#).

Note: Author accounts are free. If you already have a Scholastica account from another journal, you do not need to create a new one.

Step 3: Submit your manuscript in Scholastica

1. Log in at [the Scholastica link](#).
2. From your Dashboard click "Submit a Manuscript."
3. Search for and select "UC ANR Publications."
4. Complete the submission form, uploading your manuscript file. Required fields will be marked with an asterisk.

5. Manuscripts that include pesticide recommendations also require an OPIC (Office of Pesticide Information and Coordination) review before peer review is considered complete. Please complete and submit the [OPIC form](#), and once reviewed, you will receive a signed Statewide Pesticide Coordinator Certificate to upload into your manuscript file as an attachment
6. Review all details carefully on the confirmation page, then click “Submit.”
7. You will receive a confirmation email once your submission is complete.

Click here for the [full Scholastica author guide](#).

5. Peer review

Your HE oversees the entire peer review process. Here is what to expect:

1. **Reviewer selection.** The HE selects at least two independent reviewers with relevant subject-area expertise. Reviewer identities are kept confidential. You may suggest potential reviewers when you submit, though the final selection is at the HE's discretion.
2. **Review.** Reviewers evaluate the manuscript and submit one of three recommendations: accept, revise and resubmit, or reject.
3. **Decision communicated to author.** The HE emails you a decision summary that includes a link to view comments from reviewers and a link to submit a revision. If revisions are requested, the comments will be explained in detail. You will also see a notification on your Scholastica dashboard when you log in. For a full explanation of what to expect after a decision is made, see the Scholastica help article: [What happens after a decision is created?](#)
4. **Author revision.** Upload your revised manuscript in Scholastica as an attachment to the original submission—do not create a new submission. Include a written response document explaining how you addressed each reviewer comment.
5. **HE acceptance.** The HE confirms that reviewer comments have been satisfactorily resolved and formally accepts the submission.

6. Editorial and production

UC ANR Publishing team handles copyediting, design, and layout. A kickoff meeting outlines production next steps. Depending on your publication type, you will work from one of the following templates:

- **Print book template**—for book-format publications
- **Open-access publication template**—for digital-only, open-access publications

Your published print books will be distributed through [ANR Publications](#). All ADA-compliant open-access publications will be available on ANR Library.



3. Writing your manuscript

Strong, carefully written manuscripts move through peer review faster and require fewer revision cycles. The guidance in this section will help you submit a manuscript that is ready for review.

Before you write

Consider the following tools before you begin the writing process:

- **Define your audience first.** Who you are writing for shapes everything—vocabulary, level of detail, and how you frame conclusions. UC ANR publications serve lay readers, practitioners, and professionals. Write accessibly without sacrificing accuracy.
- **Avoid claims not supported by your data.** Every conclusion you draw should be traceable to evidence presented in the manuscript.
- **Keep language clear and direct.** Avoid slang, overuse of abbreviations, and excessive technical jargon. Define acronyms on first use.
- **Get an outside read before submitting.** Ask a colleague who was not involved in the work—and who represents your intended audience—to review the draft.
- **Set the draft aside, then reread it.** Prepare a first draft, set it aside for at least a day, then return to it. Remove unnecessary words. Ask yourself: Do the conclusions make sense based only on the information presented?

Recommended manuscript structure

The following structure applies to most UC ANR publication types, though not every section will be needed for every manuscript. Discuss any variations with your HE before submission.

- **Title.** Concise and descriptive. Do not include company names, brand names, or abbreviations.
- **Authors.** List full names and institutional affiliations. Order authors by level of contribution.
- **Abstract.** A summary of approximately 150–350 words stating the purpose, main findings, and key conclusions. Write this last.
- **Introduction.** Outline the problem or need the publication addresses.
- **Body.** Present your methods, data, and findings in a logical sequence. Use subheadings to aid navigation.
- **Conclusions.** State conclusions directly and briefly. Every conclusion must be supported by evidence in the body.
- **Acknowledgments.** Briefly acknowledge significant help from individuals, institutions, or funding sources.
- **References.** List all sources cited in the manuscript.
- **Appendices.** Use for supporting material too lengthy for the body. Label multiple appendices as Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.

If you are unable to find the answer to a formatting question in the [UC ANR Style Guide](#), please consult the [Chicago Manual of Style](#).

Figures and tables

Figures and tables should be formatted according to the following guidelines:

- **Number all figures and tables sequentially** in the order they appear and reference every figure and table in the body text.
- **Use tables only when they communicate data more effectively than running text.**
- **Keep figures simple.** Remove unnecessary grid lines, legends, and decorative elements. Assume most readers will view a black-and-white printout.
- **Write brief but descriptive captions** for every figure and table.
- **High-resolution files are required for production.** Minimum 300 dpi. You may embed low-resolution versions in your Word file during the review stage for convenience, **but high-resolution image files must be provided separately before production can begin.** Images that cannot be replaced with production-quality files will delay or halt the publication process.

File format and submission requirements

Submit manuscripts in Microsoft Word (.docx) format. This is the required format. Use the following standard formatting throughout:

- **Double-space the entire manuscript.** This is a review requirement and does not reflect the final publication format.
- **Use a 12-point serif font** such as Times New Roman or Palatino.
- **Set margins to a minimum of 1 inch on all sides.**
- **Avoid custom formatting** such as sidebars, text boxes, columns, or decorative elements—these do not transfer cleanly through the peer review system and will be removed during production.
- **Remove all identifying information about authors and co-authors.** UC ANR Publications uses double-blind peer review. For step-by-step instructions to anonymize a document, please see [Anonymizing a Word Document](#) (Word and Mac).
- **Turn off Track Changes before submitting.** You may use Track Changes during your own drafting and revision process but accept all changes and turn off Track Changes before uploading.
- **File size.** If your manuscript and supporting files are large, charts, graphs, tables, and large image files should be uploaded as separate attachments. Low-resolution versions of photos can be embedded in the Word file for convenience during review. NOTE: High-resolution image files must be provided separately before production can begin. Images that cannot be replaced with production-quality files will delay or halt the publication process.
- **Multi-chapter books.** Submit each chapter as a separate file and a separate submission on Scholastica.

Originality, plagiarism, and commercialism

Note that UC ANR only publishes original content. For more information on what this means, read the following guidelines:

- **Original expression is required.** ANR publication content may draw on widely known information, but the writing must be your own. Do not reproduce passages from other sources, even with attribution.
- **Plagiarism is unacceptable.** UC ANR Publishing routinely scans all submissions for plagiarism and AI-generated content using detection software. Any manuscript found to contain plagiarized material will be removed from the review process.
- **Commercial content is not permitted.** UC ANR publications may not promote specific companies, products, or services. Use generic descriptions in place of trade names and brand names wherever possible.
- **Obtain written permission for any third-party copyrighted material.** Written permission must be obtained and submitted with your manuscript.
- **Disclose AI-assisted content.** See Part 4 for full AI guidelines.

Co-authors

For manuscripts with multiple authors, read carefully.

- **List all contributors accurately.** Only individuals who made substantive intellectual contributions should be listed as authors.
- **The submitting author is responsible for the submission** and serves as the primary contact throughout the review process.
- **All authors will be credited in the final publication** unless they request otherwise.



4. Artificial intelligence

This policy aligns with, and defers to, the broader UC ANR and UC policies on AI use:

- [UC ANR Use of AI Tools](#)
- [UC AI Governance and Transparency](#)

All authors are expected to read and understand those policies before submitting a manuscript. AI is a fast-changing technology. Guidelines may be updated at any time and authors should be familiar with the latest version of all policies.

Generative AI vs. assistive AI

This policy distinguishes between two categories of AI use:

- **Generative AI** refers to the creation of new content by AI technology, typically from prompts.
- **Assistive AI** refers to tools that support and improve human-created work — for example, grammar checking, copyediting, improving sentence clarity, generating reference lists, or reformatting text.

Permitted and prohibited uses

Authors may use assistive AI tools in manuscript preparation.

Authors may not:

- Use generative AI to produce manuscript content.
- Use AI in the creation of figures, images, or photographs.
- Cite generative AI outputs as a reference source.

Disclosure requirements

Authors must disclose, at the time of submission, when and how they used AI tools in manuscript preparation. Disclosure should be included in the submission cover letter and, where appropriate, in the manuscript's Acknowledgments section. Describe which tool was used and for what purpose.

Example: "Sections of the introduction were drafted using [tool name] and subsequently reviewed and revised by the authors."

As standard practice, all accepted papers are run through iThenticate for plagiarism detection and AI-use screening. If AI was used inappropriately or excessively during manuscript preparation, the editorial office reserves the right to reject the manuscript at any stage.

Accuracy and responsibility

AI tools can produce plausible-sounding but inaccurate statements, fabricated citations, and content that may infringe on copyright. Authors should carefully review all AI-assisted content before submission.

Regardless of how AI tools were used, the author is solely responsible for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of all submitted content. Technical editors of multichapter books or series bear this responsibility for all chapters or works within that series.



5. Quick reference

Key contacts

- **Rachel Lee, Director of Publishing**—anrlee@ucanr.edu: your first point of contact for all publishing questions
- **Julie Finzel, Editor-in-Chief, Publications Editorial Board**—jafinzel@ucanr.edu: questions about the proposal process and board review
- **Your Handling Editor**: assigned after proposal approval; manages your manuscript from submission through acceptance
- **UC ANR Publishing Production Team**: handles copy-editing, design, and production after peer review is complete
- **Publications Marketing**: supports the promotion and distribution of UC ANR publications

Typical timeline

The timelines below are approximate only and reflect the expected pace of a well-prepared project. Author deadlines are firm commitments—returning revisions promptly

keeps your publication relevant and supports the team in scheduling production efficiently. Production timelines are estimates and may shift depending on team workload, manuscript condition, or complexity of revisions required.

- **Proposal submission and board review**: monthly; contact Julie Finzel, jafinzel@ucanr.edu
- **MOU signing**: must be completed before writing begins
- **HE initial review (after manuscript submission)**: 1–2 weeks
- **Peer review**: 4–8 weeks
- **Author revision**: TBD and adjusted based on the extent of revisions requested—once a deadline is set, authors are expected to meet it
- **Production (editorial, design, and layout)**: several months; varies by publication type, manuscript condition, and team scheduling

Starting the conversation with the UC ANR Publishing team early—before you begin writing—helps avoid delays at every stage. If you have not heard back within the expected timeframe for any stage, contact [Rachel Lee](#) or your HE directly.



Submission checklist

Before submitting your manuscript to your HE, confirm the following:

- ☐ Proposal approved by the UC ANR Publications Editorial Board
- ☐ MOU signed and on file with UC ANR Publishing
- ☐ Manuscript in Word (.docx) format, double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point font, anonymized
- ☐ Track Changes turned off and all edits accepted
- ☐ All figures, tables, and charts included (low-res embedded is fine for HE review; high-res required for production)
- ☐ Written permissions included for any third-party copyrighted material
- ☐ AI-generated content disclosed if applicable
- ☐ Suggested reviewer names ready to enter into Scholastica (optional but encouraged)

UC ANR author resources

Peer review system:

[Scholastica login](#)

[Author Guide](#)