



How DHET accredits books and evaluates publishers: a university research office perspective

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Topics

- DHET policy regarding publications
- Requirements for book publications
- SU: interpretation of policy & internal guidelines
- Process for submission
- Subsidy & incentive funding
- Closing remarks



Introduction

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) encourages research productivity by rewarding quality research outputs at public HEI's through the implementation of the Research Outputs Policy. The Policy provides research subsidy funding towards publications produced by academics in public HEI's. Under this Policy, all public HEI's must annually submit to the Department their subsidy funding claims for research outputs in the form of publications.

□ DHET definition of research output:

“textual output where research is understood as original, systematic investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge and understanding. Peer evaluation of research is a fundamental prerequisite of all recognised research output and is the mechanism of ensuring and thus enhancing quality”

Official Research Outputs Policy (2015)

Submission of books

*Books refer to **peer reviewed**, non-periodical scholarly or research publications disseminating **original** research and developments within specific disciplines, subdisciplines or fields of study. Only books that meet specified criteria in this policy may be subsidised.*

Criteria for books to be met:

- The purpose of the book must be to disseminate **original** research and new developments within specific disciplines, sub-disciplines or fields of study;
- The book must be **peer reviewed** prior to its publication;
- The book must have an International Standard Book Number (**ISBN**); Books published on-line must have an e-ISBN
- The length of the book must be a minimum of **60 pages**, excluding references, bibliography, index and appendices,
- The target audience of the book must be **specialists** in the relevant field.
- Researchers have to provide a research **justification** where the following the aspects are highlighted: originality of research, contribution to existing knowledge in the field, target audience & declaration of no plagiarism/published elsewhere

Submission of books (continue)

Criteria

- In the case of **second or later editions** being submitted for subsidy, clear evidence of new research must be provided in the written justification. The author should submit a detailed statement clearly indicating the new work. The previous version of the publication should also be handed in. It is necessary that at least 50% of the publication being claimed must have not been published previously
- **Dissertations and theses** that have been converted into books must be clearly identified as such and there must be evidence of substantial reworking and additional research carried out. The author should submit a detailed statement clearly indicating the new work in the written justification. The dissertation or thesis should also be handed in

List of reputable publishers mentioned in policy, has not been released yet

Interpretation of policy re peer review

- Evidence of the pre-publication peer review **process** must be provided for every book or chapter submitted for subsidy by the **publisher** of the book
- **Mere statement** that peer review had taken place is not sufficient. If the editor was responsible for facilitating the peer review process, the publisher must confirm this in a letter so that the **general editor** can give the details of the peer review process of the book
- The peer-review evidence must be **clear** and **unambiguous**
- The **names and affiliations of the reviewers** should be mentioned (unless in the case of blind review)
- It should also be stated clearly whether peer review had taken place on the **whole manuscript or the proposal** only
- If possible, the **peer review reports** should be provided to support the submission
- Other post publication reports/reviews can be handed in addition to the peer review report to strengthen the submission
- Templates or a **generic declaration** is not sufficed (in the past we have received declarations from different publishers using the exact same statement re the peer review process that had been followed)
- If the **editor** of the book also contributed towards a chapter(s) in the book, information should also be provided regarding his/her contribution to validate the fact that **independent peer review** had taken place

Process of submission

- SU uses online information system, Research Administrator (RA) for capturing of research publications
- Departmental coordinators capture information & signed off by Head of department (HOD) by internal closing date (end January each year)
- Quality control of information by members of Research Office: publications (books & conferences) that meet criteria are evaluated by internal evaluation panels, consisting of experts in the field of the submitted publications
- Publications approved by internal panels are submitted to DHET via the Research Outputs Submission System (ROSS) (online system hosted at NRF) by 15 May
- DHET provides feedback reports, both institutional & sector wide, after own internal evaluation
- Subsidy amount varies annually, latest *ca* R128 790
- SU provides incentive funding for DHET approved publications: Special Support Scheme for Research (max 10% of DHET subsidy amount)
 - Strict policy for incentive funding: not to be utilized as salaries, only for research related purposes

Closing remarks

- “Gaming” of the system
- DHET policy: comments & suggestions

Thank you!

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