

Introducing the New USP Ranking System for Books and Book Chapters

Following a USP wide consultation, the Book and Book Chapters subcommittee of the University Research Committee has confirmed a new method of ranking, which has recently been approved by SMT. The Research Office, is pleased to announce the new system of ranking Books and Book Chapters for all USP publications as detailed below:

A) RANKING OF BOOKS

1. Adapted from the Australian HERDC system, the following criteria will be used:

- **Must be a substantial work of scholarship**
- **Must make an original contribution to knowledge and scholarship in the discipline**
- **Must have evidence of having been academically peer refereed**
- **Must Have an International Standard Book Number (ISBN) or DOI.**
- **Must be written entirely by a single author, or by joint authors who share responsibility for the whole book**
- **Be publically available (either in print and/or online)**

In addition, high quality publically available refereed reports will also count as publications even though they have not been produced by a commercial publisher and/or may not be offered for sale.

2. The Research Office will have the discretion to ask for an external academic opinion on any particular text should there be doubt about its authenticity as a research-based publication.
3. It is acknowledged that the issue of 'substance' (quantity of words) is to an extent subjective. However, this criterion is intended to reflect the need for the publication to be comparable in terms of time and effort of production to that required for the writing of the equivalent in journal articles. The final decision on this will reside with the DVCR&I who may take advice from an appropriately qualified peer reviewer of his/her choice.
4. Introductory overviews of literature in a discipline would not be accepted as research-based. However, analyses of current debates in a discipline that themselves make a substantial and original contribution to the development of the discipline would be recognized as scholarly texts for the purposes of this assessment (as is the norm in research evaluations elsewhere in the world). Where appropriate, further evidence (including peer review) may be requested by the DVCR&I to substantiate claims for inclusion.
5. USP Press publications are in principle to be included if they satisfy the criteria for being ranked as research-based publications.
6. All books that meet the criteria above will by default **ranked 'B'** in the USP ranking system. However, an author may make a claim for a higher ranking (A or A*). If this occurs the author will need to make the case as to why their publication falls within the top 15% or 5% respectively of book length publications in their field. This evidence would typically include a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators including, but not limited to, citation indices, published peer reviews in leading journals, sales, course adoption, prestigious awards, etc. The DVCR&I

may also request an independent external peer review. In all cases the final decision will be that of the DVCR&I.

B) RANKING OF BOOK CHAPTERS

1. Similar criteria will be adopted in relation to book chapters (point 1 above).
2. In the case of editorial introductions, the same considerations should apply as in point 4 above.
3. It is proposed that Book Chapters will by default be **classified B** within the USP ranking system but that they will also be treated in the same way as books. The onus is upon the submitting author to make the case for a higher ranking and to provide evidence to justify this. The DVCR&I will make the final decision (on the advice of peer reviewers if he/she feels that to be appropriate).

C) RANKING OF EDITED BOOKS

1. Contributions by editors to books which they have themselves edited would be assessed on the same basis as applies to book chapters in general. However, the onus would be upon the author to demonstrate why their contribution should be ranked higher than 'B'.
2. Consistent with international practice, the default position will be that **no specific allocation will be made for the editing of books**, except insofar as an editorial introduction which makes a significant and original contribution (as distinct from a summary of major themes or chapters) will be considered in the same way as a book chapter. However, it is open to an editor to make a submission as to why their book is of such exceptional significance in transforming the field of study that it should be recognized for inclusion within the USP classification system. It is anticipated that this would be the case only in very rare circumstances. In all cases, peer review assessments and ranking will be called upon.

D) WEIGHTING OF BOOKS

It is generally agreed that research-based books are substantial endeavors of scholarship and that this should be recognized in the assessment of their research contribution. The Australia HERDC annual research return weights research books to journal articles at 5:1. This weighting is commonly adopted internally within Australian universities allocation and reward systems. Therefore, USP will adopt a **5:1 rating for books** to be consistent with practice in research assessment internationally.

E) WEIGHTING OF BOOK CHAPTERS

To be consistent with our international comparator universities, a book chapter in a recognized edited volume will be weighted equally to a journal article.

F) WEIGHTING OF AN EDITED BOOK

The weighting for an edited book, if accepted within the classification system, would be equivalent to a single journal publication.

G) PUBLISHED CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

1. In the case of Computer Science, where there is clear evidence of the importance of this form of publication within the discipline, refereed conference proceedings will be ranked on the same basis as journal articles using the Scopus and Web of Knowledge assessments.
2. In all other disciplines, published refereed conference proceedings may be treated as journal publications (where there is appropriate evidence for their evaluation) otherwise they will be classified as 'B'. If no evidence is provided of refereeing they will not be classified within the USP framework.