AVISTA Studies: A Guide for Volume Editors

This guide is intended for novice editors of volumes in the AVISTA Studies series, some of whom will have never previously edited a scholarly volume of articles by contributing authors. Some items in the guide may seem obvious but useful reminders, while others may be of benefit to otherwise experienced editors preparing a volume for this particular series for the first time, or even to prior AVISTA Studies editors returning for a second or third volume.

This guide reflects and incorporates the role of AVISTA’s Editorial Board, as constituted in 2014. The guide is written to address the process of publication of AVISTA Studies volumes as transformed by the institution of the Board. Editors with volumes in the series that were already in progress before the Board was constituted should consult with the Publications Director as to how to proceed in conjunction with these developments.

Planning:

Content: Start with an idea of your central theme and a list of your core author-contributors. It has often been the case, but is not required, that volumes in the AVISTA Studies series proceed from a series of conference sessions sponsored by AVISTA. If you started with conference sessions organized around a particular theme, it is important to know early which of your contributors may wish to contribute to a volume. In some cases the material may be otherwise committed (for a monograph, a festschrift, or the like); publications in your volume should not be clones of articles published elsewhere. Should some or many of your core authors state that they intend to publish the material elsewhere, it may be a good idea to reconsider whether your volume will come together well. You may also wish to consider adding papers (by people who didn’t speak at your session, or to add to your core group to make up a full volume), but maintaining the thematic unity of your volume is important. It’s useful to ask: “What is the overarching theme or purpose of this volume and how will this author be able to contribute to it?”

Funding: It’s also important to keep careful track of the number of participants and what that will mean in terms of total word and image count: beyond the maximum of 75,000-125,000 words and 60 images stipulated in the AVISTA-Ashgate contract, such overruns incur publication costs that Ashgate will not cover. If a more lavish volume is anticipated (larger word count, more images, images in color, sometimes but rarely a larger volume format), you will need to seek funding. If the volume is attached to conference sessions, funding can be sought from outside granting agencies to cover both expenses of some of the session speakers (travel costs and/or registration) and a publication subvention for the volume. It is useful to discuss the possibility and anticipated amount of such costs with the series’ supervising editor at Ashgate early in the process. The supervising editor usually meets with the current editors as a group at Kalamazoo, and one-on-one meetings can also be arranged. Please don’t assume that AVISTA will be able to cover these costs for you; also, seeking funding takes time and sometimes has to go through several steps, so it is wise to start the process early as your volume moves toward press.
Initial proposal: Once you have your title in hand, plus your list of authors and their titles or subjects, and a sense of the word and image count for the volume, you should submit a preliminary proposal for the volume to the AVISTA Publications Director, who will circulate it to the Editorial Board. The statement should include a general statement of the central theme or purpose of the book. It would be useful to assume that not everyone on the Board is a specialist in the area with which the book is concerned, so the statement should include such basics as the scholarly state of play in the volume’s particular subject, why this volume would be timely and/or important as an addition to the literature in this area, and why the AVISTA Studies series would be a logical home for the volume. The Editorial Board will determine whether the volume should be included in the AVISTA Studies series and also provide feedback on the planning process. The Editorial Board is also available to you at all stages of the preparation and publication of the volume as an advisory council and sounding board.

Working with authors:

Start with a firm commitment from each of your contributing authors. An e-mail statement of intent is fine, but an oral expression of generic interest at a conference is not a firm commitment and should not be incorporated into your planning until you have it in writing. It is useful also to emphasize early to all your authors (in a general introductory e-mail to the group) that if any of the contributing authors decide not to participate, they need to let the volume editor know as soon as possible.

The introductory letter is a good place to describe the review process and the role of outside readers (see below). Authors should be given to understand that although they have been invited to participate in the volume, submission of an article is not a guarantee of its publication, since all participating authors wish to have their work published in a volume of consistently high quality.

The introductory e-mail is also a good place to talk about deadlines and anticipated date of publication. Your authors, especially junior scholars on the tenure clock and international scholars subject to governmental quantitative evaluation systems need to know when to expect the volume to be out, as the publication may be a critical part of their planning and/or of the long-term self-reports of departments, divisions and universities. Even more critically, most academic authors often take on their projects more or less in the order of deadline proximity; your authors should be given every opportunity to meet your deadlines by knowing as much in advance as possible when they are.

In every volume there will be one or more authors who consistently miss deadlines without comment or continually negotiate with you for “just a little more time,” which can gradually grow into weeks or months. Whatever that person’s status in the field or their article’s importance to the volume, you will need to be firm with them, for the sake of your untenured and assessment-subjected contributors who have done their work on time and have every right to expect the publication to emerge approximately on schedule. Ashgate puts publications in a queue; once a volume has fallen behind schedule, it may lose its place in the queue and be further delayed. All author-participants in such an endeavor, regardless of their professional status or level of over-commitment, owe at least a minimum level of consideration to others. If some of
your authors can’t deliver their paper to you or meet reasonable revision deadlines, can
the volume proceed without them? It may be useful to mention this possibility to all
participants in the volume in the general introductory letter; it seems less ad hominem and
tends to foster a sense of a group project in which people will not want to be a source of
problems.

**Also in the introductory group e-mail(s):**

It may be useful to circulate to all your contributing authors a list of all participants’
names, titles/subjects and e-mail contact information. They may want to e-
mail amongst themselves about areas of possible overlap or point to each other’s articles
as expanding upon areas they themselves are not covering. The volume may be stronger
and more thematically harmonious because of such exchanges.

All authors should be given an initial maximum word and image count for their
essays. It is useful to ask whether each author is planning to use images; not all will need
them. If some need fewer images than their maximum (or none at all), the remaining
images should be shared out among those who need them. It is imperative to be fair
about this; for an author contributing to an essay collection, there’s nothing quite as
disheartening as struggling to pare down the length and the illustrations for an article only
to find that another author in the same volume has been given a significantly greater
word and image count.

Authors using images should also start to obtain the images and permissions for
their use while in the process of preparing their article for submission, as this process
can take quite a bit of time. Ideally *AVISTA Studies* volumes will be in both print and e-
book format. However, e-book editions are not always practicable, especially if this causes
severe complications (of cost) with permissions. Authors should nonetheless be asked to
inquire about both print and electronic publication rights for the images they plan on
using to illustrate their article. As electronic publication rights can be expensive, authors
may be given the choice of obtaining print rights initially, with the obligation to go back
and obtain the electronic rights later if the volume goes to the e-book format (the option
of having some or all of their images blanked out in the e-book, which is problematic both
for the value of the book and for the clarity of the author’s contribution, and is not
desirable). These matters obviously need to be discussed in advance, so that authors know
what to expect. By the same token, authors will not want to pay in advance for rights for
the print version, only to find that some of their images then have to be omitted in the
electronic version.

**Rights to be obtained:**

- single-language (usually English), world rights
- print run of a number of copies to be determined with Ashgate
- electronic rights of a number of years to be determined with Ashgate

Some image sources will request publication context: cover or inside page, color or
greyscale, full/half/quarter page size. Authors should ask for inside page, greyscale
(unless previously negotiated with the volume editor for color), full-page size. The size of
the image on the published page may actually be smaller, but full-page rights are a good
idea to cover any eventuality, and rarely much more expensive. Obviously, this depends on the nature of the image.

Authors will also need to be able to provide to holders of image copyright the following information:

- their name and contact information
- the title of their essay
- the title and name(s) of the editor(s) of the volume
- the publisher (and sometimes contact information for the publisher)
- the anticipated date (year) of publication
- in some cases, the retail price of the volume.

In some cases print and electronic use of images is contracted separately, on separate forms. Authors will need to submit copies of their permissions to the volume editor(s).

**Image quality:** Images need to be a minimum of 300 dpi at the size desired for reproduction. Large image files may be sent to the volume editor using Dropbox or other large file sharing structures on line. Please send on the original images to Ashgate, as well as any version the author or editor may have edited/cropped, etc.

Authors submitting *images (objects, ground plans, etc.) drawn or otherwise reproduced to scale* should include a measure of scale in the image. Images may be adjusted in size to fit the dimensions of a page, so the accuracy of ratios alone (such as 10 feet to 1 centimeter) may not be predictably maintained.

**Manuscript preparation:**

Authors should follow the Ashgate Author Guide (on line at www.ashgate.com). Generally the primary basis for manuscript preparation is the *Chicago Manual of Style* (current edition).

Editors may wish to use a standardized list of abbreviations for journal titles and the like, as may be considered appropriate in the particular subfield of the volume. If so, such a standard list should be circulated to the authors, and should be included in the prefatory material to the volume.

Authors should provide lists of captions for their images and a separate list of image credits for the front matter. A standardized caption format should be used.

A full-volume bibliography is not standard for *AVISTA Studies* volumes. However, an index is required. Authors should be asked to submit lists of indexing terms to the volume editors along with their revised essays.

**Working with Ashgate:**

Before the submission of the proposal for the volume to Ashgate which gives rise to the contract, the proposal should be submitted to the AVISTA Publications Director, who will send it on to the AVISTA Editorial Board for review and approval: this is the second and final review of the volume for publication by the Editorial Board. In preparing the proposal, see also the Ashgate Proposal Guidelines for Humanities Authors at www.ashgate.com/default.aspx?page=1671
The proposal should contain:

I. Proposed title
II. Aims and rationale for the book
III. Table of contents
IV. Synopsis of contents: rationale for structure (sections, sequencing) and abstracts of articles
V. Sample chapter as a downloadable file, if available
VI. Details of competing books
VII. Readership level
VIII. Potential markets
IX. Estimated word count, including any prefatory texts
X. Number of illustrations by type (grayscale plates, color plates, drawings, tables, maps)
XI. Estimated date of delivery of the volume to Ashgate
XII. XIII: External funding: needs, sources and state of play
XIII. XIV. An indication as to whether the proposal has been submitted to any other press
XIV. XV. Short bio and abbreviated CV of the editor(s)

Once approved by the AVISTA Editorial Board, the proposal may be submitted as an e-mail attachment to the AVISTA series editor at Ashgate. The contract for the volume is then negotiated between the individual author and Ashgate.

**Outside readers:**

As authors’ essays are submitted for the volume, volume editors should plan on sending each essay to at least two outside readers for review and comments. Review should be double-blind, in that the author and the commentator should, as far as possible, be kept unaware of each other’s identity: review copies of essays should be sent out without the author’s name on the title page and reviewers’ comments should be sent to the article author by the volume editor, not directly by the reviewer. It is entirely possible to ask one reader to consider more than one essay, but as readers are not recompensed in this process, it is good form not to overburden any one reader with too many articles (asking that a reader review two essays is acceptable; asking for three can be excessive). Outside readers should be given strongly set deadlines but also reasonable spans of time to do their work (at least two weeks is essential; more time would be kind). A gently phrased reminder that the purpose of review is to provide constructive critique is useful, especially given scholarly territoriality in some areas. Once the reviews come in, they should be sent on verbatim to the authors (minus the reviewer’s name); however, reviews that recommend that the article should be excluded from the volume or that are deliberately hurtful should be considered by the volume editor alongside the review from the second reader, and perhaps the review of a third reader should be sought. If the reviews are universally condemnatory, the editor should seriously reconsider whether the article should be part of the volume.

**Revisions:**

Once the reader’s reports come in, they should be sent on to the authors (as described above) as guidance for revisions. Authors should be asked at this point to provide a revised edition of their article by a specific deadline. These need not all be the same: as the articles come in initially over the space of over a span of weeks, they can be sent on to
the readers; as the readers’ reports come in, they can be sent back to the authors, who can then start revisions. It is most useful for authors to receive all their readers’ reports in one bundle, since they will want to undertake the revision process once rather than in several separate phases.

Once the revised articles come in from the authors, the volume editor(s) should read them through carefully and send the authors a set of editorial suggestions (sentences that need clarification, inconsistencies of capitalization and the like). This can be done with marginal mark-up, which allow the author to approve changes, make insertions, rephrase, etc.

At this point, the volume editors will need to have received all images and copies of the permissions for their use in the volume. Any prefatory essay will also have been received, edited and revised. The volume package can now be assembled and submitted to Ashgate in accordance with the instructions the editor will have received with the contract. Note that everything must be in place and complete, including all illustrations, permissions, contributor agreements (a standard form from Ashgate), etc., as Ashgate cannot start its production process until all is in hand.

Ashgate will provide the editor with a timetable for production, and then submit the volume to a copy editor. Queries from the copy editor will be returned to the editor, who can if need be send them on to the article authors for resolution, on a fairly tight deadline to fit with the planned timetable.

Once copy is approved, and the volume laid out, a set of proofs will be sent by Ashgate to the volume editors for careful review. The chapters may be sent to the individual authors, but again with a fairly tight deadline; dilatory authors may be told that uncorrected errors may be printed unless they respond by a particular date. Alternatively, if particular authors create delay at this point, the volume editors may elect to review the proofs for those articles themselves so as to assure an on-deadline return of the manuscript to Ashgate.

**Addenda:**

The keys to the process of good volume editing are direction, attention and timeliness.

By direction is meant having a firm idea of the intent of the volume from the start. Although it is useful for the editor to allow some flexibility in the volume’s evolution as the articles develop through the thought processes of writing and revision, it is also important to maintain a clearly expressed concept of core subject and purpose so that the resultant volume is a cohesive whole.

By attention is meant being mindful of all parts of the process at each stage of its movement from start to finish, like a complex machine. A good editor keeps track of authors who seem to have gone silent, of a delayed response from a funding organization, of that last missing permission for one author’s images.

By timeliness is meant keeping the authors gently but firmly on track toward deadlines, knowing at which point each essay is in any given part of the process (Author A has received her readers’ reports and is revising; Author B has re-submitted and is waiting for the editor’s editorial read-through…), and keeping the big deadlines (initial submission of
the volume to Ashgate, response to copy editor’s revisions, etc) in mind all the way. You as editor are the conductor of the orchestra; you have to keep time for the players from one end of the symphony to the other. Hopefully this oversight will help to create a collective sense of harmonious purpose.