**Commercial Publisher**

A recognised commercial publisher is an entity for which the core business is producing books and distributing them for sale.

If publishing is not the core business of an organisation but there is a distinct organisational entity devoted to commercial publication and its publications are not completely paid for or subsidised by the parent organisation or a third party, the publisher is acceptable as a commercial publisher.

University presses are regarded as commercial publishers, provided that they have responsibility for the distribution of the publication, in addition to its printing.

**Book Publishers**

In addition to the criteria for HERDC, the quality of the publishing house is an important consideration. There have been indications that the Government will introduce a ranked list of publishers similar to the rankings that were done of journals for ERA. The publisher matters – it has an impact on the status of the research, the researcher, and the distribution and access other researchers and those outside the research community will have to the work. Not everyone can get published by an A\* publisher but there are still suitable publishers who may be ranked as B or C. There are, however, some publishing companies that probably won’t make the ranking table at all and it is important to tread carefully if considering one of these companies.

Some publishers have been marketing aggressively to academics trying to encourage authors to lodge manuscripts. They appear to randomly send out emails to researchers asking them to submit material. The web site for the company looks quite impressive! However, books produced by these companies generally have poor distribution procedures, are rarely held in university library collections and are therefore rarely accessed.

There are also other companies out there who solicit PhD theses for publication. Of significant concern to those publishing their thesis in this way is that once it is published, you are unable to submit any of the work for publication in a journal. Journals require that authors sign a declaration to state that the work has not been previously published. They want to ensure that they are dealing with original research and data.

**If you are approached by a publisher, what questions should you ask to determine the legitimacy of their request?**

* Will my book proposal or book chapter be sent out to readers / reviewers (i.e. refereed)?
* Will my completed manuscript be professionally edited by the publishing company?
* Is there a financial commitment required immediately, or in the future?
* What is the distribution of the publisher?
* Are there standing orders from university libraries?
* What standing do the editors have in the discipline?
* Is the company really a vanity publishing house? Will publishing with this company impact on my reputation as a scholar?
* If in doubt about the validity of the publisher, discuss with another academic, contact your academic auditor, or your Associate Dean (Research)