

HEC Textbook Writing Support Program – Revised Policy

Introduction

1. Textbooks play a central role in improving quality of education. They seek to compile and organize the cumulative human knowledge in major areas of expertise, and thus provide a resource for both students and faculty members.
2. There are many arguments on behalf of locally produced textbooks. They are likely to contain local context and local examples, which enable and inspire students to learn more effectively. They can also save valuable foreign exchange. The financial incentives can motivate faculty members to remain abreast the latest developments in their fields.
3. However, there are counter-arguments as well, the most important being that local textbooks have to compete with international ones, whose quality has been established over time through significant investments. Care needs to be exercised that to ensure the technical and academic quality of local textbooks. Students have to compete increasingly in international markets, and need to be possessed of the latest knowledge and information.
4. Furthermore, the international textbook industry has become extremely sophisticated. Besides the textbook itself, its products include a host of ancillary material: electronic versions, teachers' guides, databanks of exam questions and quizzes, power point slides, and a variety of audiovisual material.
5. The HEC Textbook Writing Support Program is being redesigned in the light of the above considerations.

Objectives

6. The main objective of the HEC Textbook Writing Support Program (HWTSP) is to promote the production of high-quality textbooks, in physical as well as digital forms, by national authors for use as recommended or required reading in undergraduate or graduate level courses.
7. In addition, the following ancillary objectives will also be achieved:
 - a. Develop a world-class academic publishing industry in Pakistan, with a special focus on the textbook publishing industry.
 - b. Bring the work of national scholars to international attention
 - c. Develop high standards of quality control in academic publishing, and popularize them among students as well as faculty members
 - d. To provide necessary facilitation to local authors to establish effective networks with the publishing partners for textbook development and publishing
 - e. Encourage book writing culture based on local experience and information
 - f. Build capacity of faculty members in the publishing domain

Structure

8. The program will provide financial support to eligible authors for the preparation of the textbooks.
9. In order to facilitate the program, HEC will reach out to leading academic publishers, e.g., Oxford University Press Karachi, Pearson Publishing, Taylor and Francis, McGraw Hill, and others, in order to reach institutional agreements on such matters as quality control, royalties, pricing, marketing, and international engagement.
10. In addition, technical support will be arranged for selected Pakistani academic institutions, especially universities, to enable them to build their own academic publishing houses.
11. The program will directly engage professional councils and learned societies in order to ensure smooth integration of textbooks into curriculums.

Call for Proposals

12. HEC shall invite eligible faculty members once a year to submit proposals including a subject and draft title, the level of the proposed textbook (e.g., introductory, intermediate, or advanced or graduate), the table of contents, methodology, two sample chapters, an itemized budget (i.e., Personnel costs for applicant and research assistants), timeline for completion, and a brief CV.
13. *Evaluation Criteria:* There are three main evaluation criteria:
 - a. *Quality:* The quality of the proposal, including the demonstration of subject
 - b. *Relevance:* The relevance of the textbook to the existing curriculums and market needs. The following may be used to determine relevance:
 - i. *Priority subjects* or disciplines that might be specified by the HEC at the time of issuing the call.
 - ii. Expression of interest from an academic publisher. HEC may approach publishers directly, or the author may submit an acceptance letter from a prequalified academic publisher, including a market assessment of the potential demand, and availability of technical support (i.e., peer review, copy editing, and marketing), as well as terms of the agreement (i.e., copyright, royalty, and expected sales price).
 - c. *Authors:* The academic competence and reputation of the authors. A minimum of 8 years of teaching experience at the appropriate level (graduate or undergraduate) will be required for eligibility.

Selection Process

14. Textbook grants will be awarded on the basis of a rigorous and competitive process, led by the HEC Scientific Review Panel, and comprising of subject experts. Ineligible/ Incomplete proposals or proposals not recommended by the review panels/ expert reviewers or not supported for publication by the publishers will be rejected.
15. Textbook grants will be subject to a maximum amount, which will be fixed from time to time. The expected maximum grant in 2021 is Rs. two million per project.
16. The maximum duration of each project is 12 months.

17. The proposal can be submitted by a maximum of three authors, with clearly mentioned contributions.
18. The agreements will be signed directly between HEC and authors. In case of multiple authors, the funding will be distributed according to the approved budget, and based on the quantum of time contributed by each author.
19. The budget will be released in three installments:
 - a. First payment, of 40 per cent of the amount, upon the award of the project.
 - b. Second payment, of 40 per cent of the amount, upon the approval of the mid-term report by HEC.
 - c. Final payment, of 20 per cent of the amount, upon successful completion of the project and acceptance of the final report by HEC.

Monitoring and Evaluation

20. Authors will submit a mid term report after 6 months, and a final report on the completion of the project.
 - a. *Midterm report*: Ordinarily, the mid-term report will include the completed manuscript along with a letter of acceptance from the publisher. The successful acceptance of this report will result in the release of 2nd installment.
 - b. *Final report*: to be accompanied by the camera-ready copy of the manuscript, its successful acceptance will result in the release of the final installment.

Development, Publishing, Printing, Distribution & Copyright

21. HEC will establish broad MOUs with prequalified academic publishers in order to facilitate authors. The MOU will set out the framework for collaboration, including management of the peer review process as well as copy-editing and other publishing services. It will also provide guidance on royalty and pricing.
22. HEC will play no direct role in the publishing, printing, and distribution of the textbook.
23. Authors may provide free copies (printed or digital versions) of textbooks, including those funded by HEC, for distribution to university HEC libraries.