

# Guidance on Proofreading

1. Proofreading (including copyediting) is the close reading or checking of a draft of a text in order to detect errors and identify appropriate corrections. As such, proofreading is the final stage of producing a piece of written work and therefore, whenever possible, should be carried out by the student submitting the work themselves. Proofreading is an important aspect of the development of an independent style of written English and clear academic communication.
2. Nevertheless, the use of an independent proofreader or proofreading service (whether paid or unpaid), is acceptable provided that this guidance is followed. Proofreading which does not follow this guidance may be considered a form of cheating, for which a student may face disciplinary action with the possibility of appropriate penalties as a result.
3. In all cases work submitted by a student must be their own work and any use of a third party proofreader or proofreading, editing or checking service must not compromise the authorship of the work submitted.
4. Where a proofreader or proofreading service is used they *may*:
  - a. Identify spelling, punctuation, and typographical errors
  - b. Identify poor grammar
  - c. Highlight formatting errors or inconsistencies
  - d. Identify errors in labelling of diagrams, charts, figures, etc
  - e. Highlight a sentence or paragraph that is overly complex, long, or where the intended meaning is not clear
  - f. Draw attention to repeated phrases or omitted words
  - g. Identify issues connected with the formatting and sorting of footnotes, endnotes, and other references for consistency and order
  - h. Highlight issues with the consistency of page numbers, headers, footers, etc
  - i. Raise questions about the student's text for them to consider further
5. Where a proofreader or proofreading service is used they *must not*:
  - a. Rewrite passages of text to clarify the meaning and/or develop the ideas and arguments
  - b. Change any words or figures, except to correct spelling
  - c. Check or rewrite calculations, formulae, equations, computer code, etc
  - d. Rearrange or reformat passages of text
  - e. Contribute any additional material to the original
  - f. Re-label diagrams, charts or figures
  - g. Reduce the length of the work so that it falls within the specified word limit
  - h. Correct or add to information within the work
  - i. Change the ideas and arguments put forward within the work
  - j. Translate the work into English

6. The student must take responsibility for choosing what advice to accept, and must make any changes to the final copy of their work. The student is advised to retain an annotated version of the draft which was proofread in order to provide this to the University if necessary.

For further information about this policy, please contact the Academic Registrar.

**Approved by:**

Academic Enhancements & Standards Committee, 22 April 2015

Academic Board, 28 April 2015