

PROOF READING POLICY

Purpose and Context

This document provides a framework to advise students on the use of human proofreading services. It does not apply to the use of inbuilt software support e.g. spellchecker in Microsoft Word, or the use of free translation applications e.g. Google Translate. Students are advised to read this document in conjunction with the University's Academic Misconduct/Research Conduct Regulations. Should students require advice on academic skills, they are encouraged to seek advice from their School's Academic Skills Tutors.

Scope

This applies to all students on a taught programme at undergraduate or postgraduate level, including those studying for University of Huddersfield awards under a collaborative partnership agreement. It also applies to postgraduate research students.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 It is not essential for students to use a proof-reader. If they wish to do so, they should familiarise themselves with the university's regulations for students on both taught and research programmes of study. These regulations allow for the use of proof-reading whilst making clear that students are solely responsible for the content of the work that they are submitting for assessment.
- 1.2 The following guidance aims to clarify the boundaries between legitimate support and unacceptable intervention when using any proof-reading service.
- 1.3 The guidance applies to all forms of proof-reading services which can be provided by either professional (i.e. paid for) proof-reading services, which includes the use of online services, or non-professional proof-reading, which includes support provided by friends or relatives.
- 1.4 The University does not offer proof-reading services to students.

2 Services which can be provided by proof-readers

- 2.1 Proof-readers may provide guidance and developmental advice on spelling, grammar and syntax, either within the text of a submission or in the labelling of diagrams/figures/charts.
- 2.2 This includes indicating but not amending:
 - Spelling errors;
 - Incorrect use of capitalisation;
 - Incorrect use of punctuation;
 - Incorrect use of verb tense;
 - The omission of articles (a/an, the); prepositions (in, to, at) or pronouns (he, she, it);
 - Instances where sentences are ambiguous or too complicated;
 - Errors in the formatting of the document (e.g. differences in font or spacing).

3 Services which cannot be provided by proof-readers

- 3.1 Proof-readers must not make amendments to any piece of written work. Submission of work in which such amendments have been made would constitute a breach of the academic Misconduct regulations on the part of the student.
- 3.2 Examples of the services that proof-readers cannot provide include:
- Rewriting any section of the submission;
 - Translating the text from a student's native language to English;
 - Introducing any new content to the work;
 - Providing factual correction of content contained within the submission;
 - Reducing or expanding the document size (e.g. to meet a word limit);
 - Changing the order of sentences/ paragraphs/chapters;
 - Adapting or amending formulae, calculations or code;
 - Adapting the content to help clarify arguments.

4 Levels of Guidance provided by proof-readers

- 4.1 The University acknowledges that the level of support provided by proof-readers to students can vary. For the avoidance of doubt, the proof-reader support is limited to providing an indication that an error has occurred within a document; however, no solution to the error is given to the student. An indication of the presence of an error may be made by, for example, underlining or circling the error.
- 4.2 The University accepts that, for the purposes of illustration, the proof-reader may offer an example of how a possible correction could be made; however, the responsibility for making the correction within the submission rests with the student.
- 4.3 Any other form of support and guidance provided by a proof-reader is unacceptable. The proof-reader must not make an actual correction within the text or provide the solution or the correction for the student to insert themselves.
- 4.4 When using a proof-reader, students must remember that they remain responsible for the content of the work which is submitted for assessment. In view of this, students must ensure that both the student and proof-reader are aware of the boundaries between legitimate support and unacceptable intervention. The guidance in this policy can help students to decide if the service offered by a proof-reader is appropriate.
- 4.5 If there is any doubt, the student should seek advice from the Academic Skills Tutors or Students' Union Advice Centre.
- 4.6 When using the services of a proof-reader it is advisable to:
- Provide the proof-reader with a copy of this guidance;
 - Keep a record of any written correspondence between the student and proofreader;
 - Keep a separate copy of the original work sent to the proof-reader;
 - Keep a separate copy of any advice received from the proof-reader;
 - Maintain evidence that the student has made the changes.

5 The Role of the Academic Skills Tutors

- 5.1 The University's Academic Skills Tutors will not provide proof-reading services for students. They will provide advice, guidance and teaching in the following areas:
- Improvement of academic writing style;
 - Structuring work appropriately;
 - Constructing arguments;
 - Referencing skills;
 - Research skills: finding and evaluating information;
 - Exam preparation

6 Exceptions

- 6.1 In some disciplines and for particular pieces of assessment it may not be appropriate for any proofreading to take place e.g. where correct grammar is part of the assessment criteria. Where it is inappropriate for students to use a proof-reader, the School should make students aware of this in advance of them undertaking the assessment.
- 6.2 Disabled students whose disability means that they may need proofreading support that may exceed the limitations set out in this policy should liaise with their personal academic tutor and Disability Services. Whilst proofreaders supporting students with disabilities will have to adhere to these regulations, some students with disabilities such as those with specific learning difficulties for example, may be able to access additional support. This may include access to assistive software which is available University wide or specialist study skills tuition to help them develop strategies to help mitigate the impact of their disability on the construction and grammatical presentation of their written work. Except where correct grammar is a key part of the assessment criteria, sympathetic consideration of spelling and grammar can be included in the PLSP. Regardless of the form in which further support is provided, the content of the work submitted for assessment should be exclusively the student's.
- 6.3 Some modules require students to work closely to produce a collaborative piece of work for assessment. The content for these assignments will necessitate a process of drafting and re-drafting of content by a number of different members of the team. This process is a key part of the learning experience. In these cases, students may actively edit content of other students within the group although it is expected that, collectively, the group is bound by the expectations set out in this policy in respect to engaging with further third parties. This exception only applies to those pieces of work that are explicitly assessed as part of a group exercise. No form of collusion should take place regarding standard individual pieces of work and when detected, such cases may be investigated under the University's Academic Misconduct/ Research Conduct Regulations

7 Proof-reading and Academic Misconduct/Research Conduct

- 7.1 Students are ultimately responsible for the content of the work that they submit for assessment. In instances where a student has used a proof-reader and the submitted work becomes the subject of an investigation under the Academic Misconduct or Research Conduct Regulations, the University will not accept the use of a proof-reader as mitigation or defense in relation to the allegation.

POLICY SIGN-OFF AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS	
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Compliance Checks:	Compliance checks are completed as part of Quality Appraisal activity and identification/ remedy where non-compliance identified
Related Policies/Procedures:	Regulations for Taught Students, Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students

REVISION HISTORY			
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V2.0	May 2019	Formatting to fit policy template Minor amendments of style Clarification of scope and exceptions	Director of Registry
V3.0	May 2020	Additional clarification on support for disabled students Correction of minor typographical errors	Director of Registry
V3.1	May 2021	No changes	Director of Registry
V3.2	May 2022	Clarification on the distinction between support provided by a human being and that of an algorithm	Director of Registry