

Statement on the use of Proof Reading Services

This statement is intended to clarify to students the scope of any proof reading support they may choose to engage. This statement is applicable to all undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students. The University does not expect students to use any form of proof reading service. However, the University does understand that for theses and dissertations students may wish to have their work proofread as these form substantive bodies of work. Nothing in this statement of policy should prevent students from sharing ideas and working together in the Exeter learning environment where appropriate. Should students have any questions about proof reading they should contact their personal tutor, module lead or supervisor in the first instance.

1. Definition of Proof Reading

1.1 The University defines proof reading as reviewing student work prior to submission to help with structure, fluency, presentation and to highlight errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

1.2 Proof readers can be a friend or colleague, or someone paid by the student to provide a proof reading service.

1.3 Proof reading should not include any assistance in relation to the content of the essay, nor should it involve any tutoring on the part of the proof reader. The proof reader should confine themselves to the structure, fluency, presentation and to highlight errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. If a proof reading service is offering to check the academic content of a written assignment, then this is not a legitimate proof reading service. If a Student persists in using such a service this may open the Student to an allegation of academic misconduct. (For the University's procedures on academic misconduct or research misconduct please see the following links: (Taught Students <http://as.exeter.ac.uk/academic-policy-standards/tqa-manual/aph/managingacademicmisconduct/>) (Research Students <http://as.exeter.ac.uk/academic-policy-standards/tqa-manual/pgr/researchmisconduct/>)

1.4 Prior to engaging a Proof Reader, a Student should ensure that their work conforms to the guidance given by their Discipline, in terms of style and presentation, in the appropriate module or discipline handbook, or in the case of Post Graduate Research Students, the information contained within Chapter 11 – Presentation of Theses/Dissertations for Degrees in the Faculty of Graduate Research: Statement of Procedures.

1.5 This statement does not preclude members of Academic Staff from providing appropriate supervision, through the reading of drafts of material produced by students, as part of supervising a theses or dissertation.

2. Checking whether proof reading is appropriate

2.1 Students should always check with either the Module Leader, or their Supervisor as to whether it is appropriate to have a piece of work professionally proof read. Certain professional programmes assess students on clarity of communication as a key competency, and therefore in these circumstances, it would not be appropriate to have work professionally proof read.

3. Scope of Proof Reading

3.1 A third party may be used to assist the student in the following :

- That appropriate English spelling and punctuation is being used.
- That the work is appropriately formatted and that the footnotes and endnotes are consistent.
- That the work follows the conventions of grammar and syntax of written English.

- Shortening long sentences and paragraphs.
- Ensuring that the page numbers and any header or footer is consistent across the piece of work.
- Improving the positioning of tables and illustrations and the clarity of grammar spelling and punctuation of any text in or under tables and illustrations.

3.2 A third party cannot be used to assist the student with the following:

- To change any part of the text of the work so as to clarify ideas and/or to develop the ideas and arguments.
- To reduce the length of the work so that it falls within the stated word limit.
- To provide any assistance with referencing.
- To correct information within the work.
- To change the ideas and argument put forward by the Student
- To translate the work into English.
- To provide comments to the Student on how well the work answers the question.

4. Owning the Corrections

4.1 The Proof Reader should make all corrections either on a hard copy of the student's work, or in track changes on an electronic document. The Proof Reader should make sure that all changes are visible to the Student.

4.2 The expectation is that the Proof Reader will highlight to the Student where corrections are necessary and the Student will then review the suggested changes and make changes to the master copy of their work, should they choose to. Students should take care to check all of the suggested corrections, as Proof Readers may suggest corrections to the style or layout which do not confirm with the University's guidance. In the case of electronic track changes, Students should not just click accept all, they should check all the suggested corrections. The Student should retain the copy of the work they receive from the Proof Reader in case they are asked to supply this at a later date.

4.3 It is the Student's responsibility to choose whether or not to implement suggested changes, and it is the Student that is held accountable for standard of their work.

5. Drafts

5.1 The expectation is that the Proof Reader will only see the final version of the Student's work, i.e. the work is in its final form ready for submission to the best of the Student's ability. The Proof Reader will then see this version and conduct their work only on this version. The Student will then receive this version from the proof reader and review the suggested corrections as above in section 4.2.

6. Agreeing the Scope of Work

6.1 Students should agree the scope of the work with a Proof Reader well in advance of the deadline. Students should use the agreement ([download here Proof Reading Template agreement](#)) to ensure that the individual they have engaged to undertake proof reading is aware of this policy and is not offering a service which in anyway breaches this policy and retain a copy of this for their records.

7. Disclaimer

7.1 This document is intended to provide all students, members of staff and third party proof readers' guidance for good ethical practice in relation to student work being proof read and then assessed. Both the Proof Reader and the Student have a duty to ensure that the proof reading process follows the guidance

within this document. However it is imperative that students bear in mind that any adjustment to student work which is then submitted for assessment is ultimately the responsibility of the Student.