Proofreading Guidelines

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1.0.	05/10/21	Updated from policy to guidelines. Additional information added in to clarify certain sections based on guidance from other institutions.	Maddi Courtnage	approved

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1. Purpose and Context

These guidelines aim to help students understand what proofreading is and how it can assist them with the final presentation of their written work.

The University does not offer a proofreading service to students and advises against using such services. Should students choose to use a proofreading service, it is important that they follow the guidance provided below. Proofreading is the final stage of producing a piece of written work and therefore, whenever possible, the University believes that students should carry out their own proofreading. Should students require advice on academic skills, they are encouraged to seek advice from the University's Academic Skills Team.

2. What is Proof Reading

Proofreading is the very *last stage* in producing a piece of writing, when work should be checked for accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Proofreading is different from editing. Editing is making sure the information is appropriate, facts are accurate, and the writing is clear and well-structured. Students must always edit their own work.
As noted above, the University does not provide proofreading services.

3. What a proofreader is able to do

The following guidance aims to clarify the boundaries between legitmate support and unacceptable intervention when using any proofreading service.

Any work submitted by a student must be their own work and any use of a third-party proof reading or editing service must not compromise the authorship of the work submitted.

A proofreader may:
- Identify spelling and typographical errors;
- Identify poor grammar; tense use, verb form, sentence structure, word order
- Highlight formatting errors or inconsistencies;
- Identify errors in labelling of diagrams, charts or figures;
- Draw attention to repeated phrases or omitted words.

A proofreader may not:
- Rewrite passages of text to clarify the meaning;
- Change any words or figures, except to correct spelling;
- Check or rewrite calculations, formulae, equations or computer code;
- Rearrange or reformat passages of text;
- Contribute any additional material to the original;
- Re-label diagrams, charts or figures.

- Translate text from a student's native language to English
- Alter a referencing system, add to references or correct errors identified in the reference system applied

The proofreader may indicate where the meaning is not clear but will not suggest alternative wording.

4. Responsibilities

The below section outlines your responsibilities as a student should you decide to utilise a proofreader.

It should be noted that:
- Students should ideally carry out their own proofreading
- Staff at Regent's do not provide a proofreading service
- Some software programs can assist with proofreading, but students should appreciate that these are not always 100% accurate

If there is any doubt, the student should seek advice from the Academic Skills Team.

It is not University policy to recommend any proofreader / proofreading service. If a student chooses to seek a proof-reader they should check the following:
- The total cost (some charge by the hour / some charge per page);
- The turnaround time;
- The proofreader's qualifications / professional membership.

When using the services of a proofreader, students should:
- Provide the proofreader 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 proofreader
- Keep a separate copy of any advice received from the proofreader
- Maintain evidence that the student has made the changes

Students should consult their tutors / programme handbooks about preferred methods of referencing – e.g. Harvard, American Psychological Association. Guidance on using these referencing systems is available from the Library.

Failure to adhere to above requirements will result in an investigation under the University's Misconduct Regulation and appropriate penalties will be applied.

5. The Role of The Academic Skills Team

The University's Academic Skills Team will not provide proofreading services for students.
They will provide advice, guidance and teaching in the following areas:
- Improvement of academic writing style;
- Structuring work appropriately;

- Constructing arguments;
- Research skills: finding and evaluating information;
- Exam preparation

6. Proofreading and Academic Misconduct

Students are ultimately responsible for the content of the work that they submit for assessment. In instances where a student has used a proofreader 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 proofreader as mitigation or defence in relation to the allegation.

Buying work from essay services or similar is listed in our Academic Regulations as a severe offence (C6 - Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct). Depending on the nature of the offence, there are a range of penalties, the most severe being expulsion from your course and the University.

We would encourage students to write their work independently, seeking help from our Academic Skills Officer if needed.

Acknowledgement is made to the University of Leicester's Guidance on proofreading.

In addition, in creation of these guidelines, the following sources were consulted:

- http://www.essex.ac.uk/proofreading/policy.aspx#Intro
- http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/assessments/documents/proof-reading.docx/view
- http://www.reading.ac.uk/exams/Policies/exa-proofreading.aspx
- http://www.library.dmu.ac.uk/Images/CLASS/Student_Proof_Reading.pdf
- https://www.hud.ac.uk/media/policydocuments/Proof-Reading-Policy.pdf
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