



Division for the Student Experience

PROOFREADING PROCEDURE

Overview and Purpose

1. Students are expected to proofread their own work, but the University also acknowledges that students may utilise proofreaders/ proofreading services, including online checkers and other tools.
2. The general principle of any contributory (summative) assessment is that the structure, argumentation, content, analysis and conclusions are wholly the students' own, and by submitting work, students confirm that no proofreader (as defined by this document) made comments or changes beyond this.
3. The purpose of this document is to outline the University's expectations and student responsibilities where a proofreader or proofreading service is used.
4. It is in place to ensure that all students are given a fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate academic achievement without gaining unfair advantage. It also serves to maintain and promote the academic integrity essential to scholarship and research.
5. This document should be read in conjunction with the 'Academic Misconduct Policy' for taught students, and 'Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research' for postgraduate researchers.

Scope

6. These protocols apply to contributory (summative) assessment for which marks contributing to a module are awarded, including those modules which are marked pass/fail.
7. For the purpose of this document, 'proofreader' or 'proofreading service' may be human, software, a digital tool, or artificial intelligence. It may be a commercial (paid) service, or free of charge and includes any other proofreading that violates the general principles of academic integrity.

Responsibilities

8. It is the student's responsibility to familiarise themselves with the University's assessment requirements.
9. Students are expected to allocate time to proofread their work and check for

accurate referencing, errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction, formatting and layout prior to submission.

10. Students are required to take full responsibility for the originality and ownership of their work, and be transparent, through citation and acknowledgement where a proofreader or proofreading service has been used.
11. Students are responsible for keeping drafts of their work so that the extent and type of any changes after proofreading can be evidenced if challenged.

Protocols

12. Proofreading should be limited to minor language correction. This can include errors in grammar, vocabulary, expression, minor translation (i.e. single words), presentation and word order. Proofreading must not change the meaning of the work.
13. A proofreader should not make any changes directly to the work, but should suggest changes by writing on a hard copy or using track changes/ comments etc. The proposals made by a proofreader should be retained by the student in case a concern regarding misconduct is raised.
14. No substantial changes to the content should be made, the extent of which would constitute the content being produced by the proofreader without correct citation.

Therefore, a proofreader may not:

- Rewrite sections where argumentation or logic is unclear.
- Rewrite sections to improve paraphrasing.
- Rearrange paragraphs and sentences with the intention of improving structure.
- Rearrange paragraphs and sentences with the intention of improving the argument.
- Correct calculations, data, or factual errors etc.
- Make any changes or correction to the references and bibliography.

A proofreader may:

- Identify errors in grammar, vocabulary, expression and word order only making specific minor suggestions where the communication is clear.
- Highlight areas where communication is unclear or where there is inconsistent use of a referencing system.

15. The University will only recognise tools recommended by Library Services on the [Skills Hub webpages](#) or as recommended by Disability Advice as part of a Learning Support Plan. It remains the student's responsibility to ensure the accuracy of outputs where these tools are used.
16. A proofreader may not be used for assessments where the use of language and the formal accuracy of the work form part of the mark. The assessment task will state if a proofreader is not allowed to be used.

17. The use of a proofreader, proofreading service or translation tool to generate an assignment (or part of an assignment) and submit this as if it were a student's work will be regarded as academic misconduct.
18. Students should not ask another student on the same taught module taking the same assessment to proofread their work. This may be regarded as academic misconduct and treated as 'collusion'.

Review / Contacts / References	
Title:	Proofreading Protocols
Date approved:	2015
Approving body:	UEC
Last review date:	September 2025
Revision history:	Version 1 (<i>NB: decommissioned as a Policy in autumn 2025 so version control is re-set to 1</i>)
Next review date:	August 2027
Related internal policies, procedures, guidance:	Progression and Award Regulations Academic Misconduct Policy Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research Skills Hub
Document owner:	Division for the Student Experience
Lead contact / author:	Academic Regulations Manager