

# INSTITUTE OF BASIC MEDICAL SCIENCES PESHAWAR

## Policy on the Use of Third Party Proof-readers

Students are responsible for their written work: be it an assignment, report, article, thesis, dissertation or any other form of academic writing.

All MPhil/PhD students of IBMS are taught academic writing, Microsoft Office and SPSS during their course work. In addition, a number of workshops are organized regularly throughout the year. Thus as part of academic writing one of the most important skills for a student to develop is proof reading their work. Although this is highly encouraged however, in some instances it may be considered acceptable for students to seek help in proof-reading their work. This help may be by friends or family members or even professional proof-readers. A Proof-reader is any person, other than the author of the text or the supervisor/course leader/tutor (i.e. a third party) who carries out proof-reading.

As a default the guidance to avail any such services as stated below shall apply to all academic assessed work of a word limit of 7000 and above at the final stage and not interim stage of writing.

However if the supervisor or institute decide that the purpose of the assessment is to determine students' abilities then the rubric for assessment should state clearly that no proof-reading assistance is permitted.

Students wishing to engage the services of a proofreader must do so with the approval of their supervisor and obtain written verification from the member of faculty<sup>1</sup>.

The use of third party proof-readers is not permitted for work where the word limit is fewer than 7,000 words.

### **A proof-reader may<sup>2</sup>**

- May work on a printed or electronic version of the thesis or dissertation but suggested amendments must be indicated by comment tools, rather than tracked changes<sup>3</sup>
- Identify typographical, spelling and punctuation errors;
- Identify formatting and layout errors and inconsistencies (e.g. page numbers, font size, line spacing, headers and footers);
- Identify grammatical and syntactical errors and anomalies or ambiguities in phrasing;
- Identify minor formatting errors in referencing (for consistency and order);
- Identify errors in the labeling of diagrams, charts or figures;
- Identify lexical repetition or omissions.

### **A proof-reader may not**

- Add to content in any way;
- Check or correct facts, data calculations, formulae or equations;
- Rewrite content where meaning is ambiguous;
- Alter argument or logic where faulty;
- Re-arrange or re-order paragraphs to enhance structure or argument;
- Implement or significantly alter a referencing system;
- Re-label diagrams, charts or figures;
- Reduce content so as to comply with a specified word limit;
- Translate any part of the work.

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## Authorial responsibility

Students have overall authorial responsibility for their work and should choose whether they wish to accept the proof-reader's advice. A third party proof-reader should mark up the student's work with suggested changes which the student may then choose to accept or reject. The thesis/dissertation candidate must keep a copy of the draft that contains the third party's comments.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines could constitute a breach of academic integrity and contravene KMU and HEC plagiarism policy. It is therefore the student's responsibility to provide the proof-reader with a copy of this policy statement.

Thesis proofing/editing services if used should be duly acknowledged in all academic writing including thesis/dissertations. The text to be integrated into the declaration is, as below<sup>4</sup>:

"I have used a proof-reader, paid or unpaid, to support the submission of this assignment" YES/NO

The University expects all proof-readers to comply with its policy in this area. By ticking 'yes', you confirm that the proof-reader was made aware of and has complied with the IBMS's proof-reading policy"

The use of a third party, does not absolve the supervisor(s) from the normal advisory duties connected with the intellectual content and text of the thesis or dissertation. In this context the intention of this policy is not to stop or restrict good supervisory practice. So as faculty are bound by professional codes of conduct and their primary role is to support students in producing strong academic content they may do this through actively annotating drafts and highlighting/correcting errors that would be prohibited in other contexts<sup>4</sup>.

Students and supervisors should ensure that both parties are clear regarding to what level proof-reading will be undertaken and with what frequency.

IBMS is unable to comment on or verify the experience or qualifications of any proofreader. The institute will not take responsibility for the quality of work of any particular proofreader.

## References

1. Francis L, Placzek S, Clough G. Policy on Proofreading Students ' Written Work. 2015.
2. Oxford U of. Policy on the Use of Third Party Proof-readers, Education Committee. [cited 2018 Mar 24]; Available from: <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/policyonproofreaders/>
3. Dean of Graduate Studies. Third Party Editing and Proofreading of Theses and Dissertations Guidelines - The University of Auckland [Internet]. 2018 [cited 2018 Mar 24]. Available from: <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/teaching-and-learning/postgraduate-research/undertaking-your-research/third-party-editing.html>
4. Hasler L. Proofreading Policy [Internet]. [cited 2018 Mar 24]. Available from: [https://warwick.ac.uk/services/aro/dar/quality/categories/examinations/policies/v\\_proofreading/](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/aro/dar/quality/categories/examinations/policies/v_proofreading/)