

## Guidelines: UoM PGR Third Party Proofreading

This guide is for postgraduate researchers (PGRs) at the University of Manchester and explains the use of third-party proofreading services, including AI tools and applications. It should be used alongside the University Proofreading Statement.

This guidance applies to all PGRs at the University and covers all written submissions, including progression reports and theses/dissertations.

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### Key Principles

- **What we mean by proofreading:** Proofreading refers to carefully checking for and identifying errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, formatting, and layout, including the bibliography. This can be done by human proofreaders, commercial services, or AI tools.
  - **What we mean by third parties:** Third parties are people or tools that a PGR might use for proofreading. This could include fellow PGRs, friends or family (paid or unpaid), professional proofreaders, or AI applications. However, this does not include the PGR's supervisory team, as supervisors are expected to provide feedback on content, logic, structure, and clarity of arguments in PGR work.
  - **PGR responsibility:** It's the PGR's job to ensure that all submitted work is their own and reflects their abilities and understanding. Using a proofreader must not compromise the originality or authorship of the work.
  - **Developing your skills:** PGRs are encouraged to build their own proofreading skills and can access support from the University, including Researcher Development resources.
  - **Consultation with supervisors:** PGRs should talk to their supervisors before using a third-party proofreader.
  - **Accountability for proofreading:** The University will not accept poor proofreading as an excuse for errors or deficiencies in submitted work. Delays caused by proofreading will also not be considered valid grounds for extensions.
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### What Is and Isn't Allowed

It's okay for a third-party proofreader to:

- Fix issues like spelling, punctuation, grammar, syntax, and general word usage (but not specific terminology).
- Highlight and correct inconsistencies in things like capitalization, italics, abbreviations, quotations, or numbering in sections, tables, and appendices.
- Ensure consistent formatting in areas like page numbers, headers/footers, and bibliography entries.

It's okay for a proofreader to **highlight but not fix**:

- Clarity of expression.
- Changes to verb tense or switching from passive to active voice.
- Logical flow and connections between sentences and paragraphs.
- Ambiguities or repetition.

It's **not okay** for a proofreader to:

- Rewrite or significantly change the PGR's work, such as altering clarity, tone, or expression.
  - Rearrange, add to, or condense sentences or sections of the work.
  - Add academic content, references, or contribute missing material.
  - Edit technical content like data, calculations, equations, formulae, or computer code.
  - Translate work into English.
  - Change the core ideas or arguments presented in the work.
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### **Academic Integrity**

- **Ownership of the work:** PGRs are fully responsible for everything in their submitted work.
- **Stick to acceptable support:** Proofreading help must follow the acceptable limits outlined above.
- **Exceeding limits is misconduct:** Using support beyond what's acceptable is considered plagiarism and academic malpractice. For more information, refer to the University's [\*Guidance to Students on Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Malpractice\*](#).
- Misconduct related to academic integrity is subject to disciplinary action under the [\*University's Regulation XVII \(Conduct and Discipline of Students\)\*](#).