

GUIDELINES FOR THE PROOFREADING OF POSTGRADUATE THESES AND DISSERTATIONS AT AUT

This document acknowledges the right of AUT's postgraduate students to contract a proofreader to read and correct a thesis or dissertation before it is examined.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for students, supervisors, schools and proofreaders as to what constitutes appropriate proofreading of a thesis or dissertation.

Definition

For the purposes of this document, the following definition is adopted:

Proofreading is the correction of errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction, referencing, and idiomatic usage. Proofreading may include identifying and alerting the author to passages that lack clarity, ie, are poorly written or constructed. Proofreading may also extend to feedback on structural issues.

Proofreading does not include structural editing or revising/rewriting passages that lack clarity. Revising and rewriting is the responsibility of the student alone.

GUIDELINES FOR THE STUDENT

Any student who has concerns about their writing skills should, as soon as possible, contact Te Tari Āwhina, the Learning Development Centre.

Support from Te Tari Āwhina

What TTA staff can do is made clear by TTA policy, which states:

- Staff are ethically and morally bound to facilitate students' learning and cannot be involved in extensive rewriting of students' assignments.
- Staff are willing to assist students gain writing skills, looking at assignment structure and relevance of content.
- Staff are able to advise on the areas of grammar that require changing, but cannot extensively correct the student's grammatical errors.

For postgraduate students, this means that TTA staff will read several pages, sometimes a whole chapter, in order to identify writing problems. The student will be taught how to correct such problems. This may take some time and may require several sessions with a TTA staff member. However, with these skills, the student should be able to identify and correct many of the errors in their writing.

TTA staff cannot correct entire theses or dissertations.

Students can also develop their writing skills through KEYS classes offered by TTA staff, namely Keys to Postgraduate Writing Success and Keys to Academic Writing Success. These short courses, of 10 and 8 hours duration respectively, are free and are offered several times each semester.

Further support can also be found in TTA's Self Access Learning Labs, based in the libraries at both Akoranga and Wellesley St Campuses. The SALLs offer a useful and wide-ranging collection of reference books on various aspects of writing, from basic grammar books to thesis writing guides.

Professional proofreading services

The University acknowledges the right of postgraduate students to contract a proofreader to read and correct a thesis or dissertation before it is examined. The University encourages schools to develop and maintain lists of reputable and experienced proofreaders that can be provided to postgraduate students. Students should contact the postgraduate office in their school for a list of proofreaders.

The student must seek her or his supervisor's agreement to this course of action. The primary aim of this requirement is to ensure that the supervisor is satisfied that the content of a thesis or thesis chapter is in an approximately final state, and that it is appropriate for proofreading to take place.

The student must supply the proofreader with a copy of the AUT guidelines for thesis proofreaders.

Drafts of theses for proofreading must be given to the proofreader in hard copy form only, to avoid the wholesale acceptance of suggested corrections on electronic documents without due consideration by the student.

The student must include, in the acknowledgements section of the thesis submitted for examination, a statement which indicates the name of the proofreader and the nature of the services rendered by that person.

Disclaimer

A contract for services between a student and a proofreader is a private matter between the student and the proofreader. The charges for such services are also a private matter, but AUT recommends that, before the work is begun, students establish the charge rates and period of time for completion of the work. However, AUT can accept no responsibility for the quality or cost of a proofreader's work. This disclaimer applies whether the proofreader is a member of staff at AUT or not, and in situations where the proofreader's name was provided by any member of staff at AUT.

GUIDELINES FOR THE SUPERVISOR

Supervisors should provide their students with advice on the content, structure and style of a thesis or dissertation. It is not the responsibility of the supervisor to correct an entire thesis or dissertation. Any supervisor who has concerns about a student's writing skills should advise the student to contact Te Tari Āwhina, the Learning Development Centre.

Support from Te Tari Āwhina

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- Staff are able to advise on the areas of grammar that require changing, but cannot extensively correct the student's grammatical errors.

For postgraduate students, this means that TTA staff will read several pages, sometimes a whole chapter, in order to identify writing problems. The student will be taught how to correct such problems. This may take some time and may require several sessions with a TTA staff member. However, with these skills, the student should be able to identify and correct many of the errors in their writing.

It is not the responsibility of TTA staff to correct entire theses or dissertations.

Students can also develop their writing skills through KEYS classes offered by TTA staff, namely Keys to Postgraduate Writing Success and Keys to Academic Writing Success. These short courses, of 10 and 8 hours duration respectively, are free and are offered several times each semester.

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Professional proofreading services

The University acknowledges the right of postgraduate students to contract a proofreader to read and correct a thesis or dissertation before it is examined. The University encourages schools to develop and maintain lists of reputable and experienced proofreaders that can be provide to postgraduate students. Students should contact the postgraduate office in their school for a list of proofreaders.

The supervisor should be satisfied that the content of a thesis or thesis chapter is in an approximately final state, before proofreading takes place. The student must therefore seek her or his supervisor's agreement before taking a draft thesis to a proofreader.

It is not recommended that a supervisor acts as proofreader for her or his own student, nor should a supervisor request a third person to proofread a thesis for her or his student.

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS

The University acknowledges the right of postgraduate students to contract a proofreader to read and correct a thesis or dissertation before it is examined. It is recommended that schools compile a list of reputable and experienced proofreaders who can be contacted by postgraduate students for proofreading services.

The reasoning for placing this task in the hands of the schools is that they are most likely to be aware of and have contact with individuals within and beyond the academic community who have the skills appropriate to the discipline(s) covered by the school.

The University Postgraduate Office will support schools in identifying professional proofreaders who have general skills but encourages schools to augment these lists from their own knowledge base.

GUIDELINES FOR PROOFREADERS

This guide is provided by AUT to ensure an appropriate approach to the proofreading of an academic thesis or dissertation. The thesis or dissertation is a record of an original research project that will be examined to ensure that the student has demonstrated her or his ability to carry out a sustained investigation. It must therefore be wholly the work of the student.

AUT acknowledges the right of postgraduate students to contract a proofreader to read and correct a thesis or dissertation before it is examined. However, in order to reflect the academic requirement that a thesis is the work of the student, AUT has defined proofreading as follows:

“Proofreading is the correction of errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction, referencing, and idiomatic usage. Proofreading may include identifying and alerting the author to passages that lack clarity, ie, are poorly written or constructed. Proofreading may also extend to feedback on structural issues.

Proofreading does not include structural editing or revising/rewriting passages that lack clarity. Revising and rewriting is the responsibility of the student alone.

We ask you to respect this boundary between proofreading and rewriting.

Drafts of theses for proofreading must be given to the proofreader in hard copy form only, to avoid the wholesale acceptance of suggested corrections on electronic documents without due consideration by the student.

The student must include, in the acknowledgements section of the thesis submitted for examination, a statement which indicates the name of the proofreader and the nature of the services rendered by that person. Any relevant academic or professional experience possessed by that proofreader should also be indicated. Please ensure that the student is aware of any such relevant experience.

Disclaimer

A contract for services between a student and a proofreader is a private matter between the student and the proofreader.

The charges for such services are also a private matter, but AUT recommends that, before the work is begun, proofreaders establish the charge rates and period of time for completion of the work. AUT can accept no responsibility for a student's failure to pay for a proofreader's work.

In order to avoid any potential conflict of interest when the proofreader is an AUT staff member, the following must be applied:

1) If an AUT employee is engaged to carry out proofreading services for a student, the AUT employee must do this work outside of their normal AUT work hours and must not use AUT resources. The proofreading work should not impact on their substantive AUT position

2) Proofreading of student work should ideally be done outside of the AUT employee's discipline and/or teaching area eg: A lecturer in Tourism, should not be providing proofreading services for a student in Tourism.

3) Remuneration - payment for provision of proofreading services is a private transaction between the proofreader and the student. The proofreader is responsible for all tax/payee matters related to the work being completed.

Document History

Version 2: Version 1 amended 17/8/05 by making proofreading corrections supplied by Robyn Ramage.

Version 3: Version 2 amended 20/1/06 on the basis of feedback from PSSG members and other interested people. Comments and questions for further discussion added.