

HUMAN AND COMPUTER PROOFREADING POLICY

Purpose and Context

This document provides a framework to advise students and staff on the use of both human and computer proofreading services, with particular reference to generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) and machine translation software. It does not apply to the use of basic inbuilt software support e.g. spellchecker in Microsoft Word, but it does apply to GenAI when incorporated into software like Copilot in Windows and Office and machine translation software like Google Translate or DeepL. This policy provides an outline of key principles to all students on the safe and ethical uses of human proofreaders and software packages which offer similar support.

Students are advised to read this document in conjunction with the University's Academic Misconduct/Research Conduct Regulations and [Artificial Intelligence Guidance for Students](#). Should students require advice on academic skills, they are encouraged to seek advice from the Academic Skills Team **Scope**

This applies to all students on a taught programme at undergraduate or postgraduate level, including those studying for University of Huddersfield awards under a collaborative partnership agreement. It also applies to postgraduate research students.

Guidance concerning GenAI in this policy is concerned with proofreading only; other uses are covered in the Academic Misconduct and Research Misconduct regulations.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 It is not essential for students to use a proof-reader. If they wish to do so, they should familiarise themselves with the university's regulations for students on both taught and research programmes of study. These regulations allow for the use of proofreading and the limited use of translation software, whilst making clear that students are solely responsible for the content of the work that they are submitting for assessment.
- 1.2 The following guidance aims to clarify the boundaries between legitimate support and unacceptable intervention when using any proofreading service.
- 1.3 The guidance applies to all forms of proofreading services which can be provided by either professional (i.e. paid for) proofreading services, which includes the use of online services and GenAI, or non-professional proofreading, which includes support provided by friends or relatives.
- 1.4 If a student were to use technology to translate large portions of text written initially in another language or use GenAI technology to significantly rewrite or generate large portions of text and submit this for assessment, this may be considered misconduct, as it raises the question of authorship of the assignment. Students should reference where their work includes content which has been machine translated or created with GenAI tools and should

be able to demonstrate full understanding of the language they have produced. This could include being asked to summarise the content or paraphrase the grammatical functions and vocabulary used.

- 1.5 The University does not offer human proofreading services to students.
- 1.6 Students are ultimately responsible for the content of the work that they submit for assessment. In instances where a student has used a proof-reader or GenAI 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 proof-reader, translation software or GenAI technology as mitigation or defense in relation to the allegation.

2 Human Proofreading

2.1 Services which can be provided by human proof-readers

Human proof-readers may provide guidance and developmental advice on spelling, grammar and syntax, either within the text of a submission or in the labelling of diagrams/figures/charts. This includes indicating but not amending:

- Spelling errors;
- Incorrect use of capitalisation;
- Incorrect use of punctuation;
- Incorrect use of verb tense;
- The omission of articles (a/an, the); prepositions (in, to, at) or pronouns (he, she, it);
- Instances where sentences are ambiguous or too complicated;
- Errors in the formatting of the document (e.g. differences in font or spacing).

2.2 Services which cannot be provided by human proof-readers

Human proof-readers must not make amendments to any piece of written work. Submission of work in which such amendments have been made would constitute a breach of the Academic Misconduct regulations as the student would be presenting work which was not their own.

Examples of the services that human proof-readers cannot provide include:

- Rewriting any section of the submission;
- Translating the student's own text from their native language to English;
- Introducing any new content to the work;
- Providing factual correction of content contained within the submission;
- Reducing or expanding the document size (e.g. to meet a word limit);
- Changing the order of sentences/ paragraphs/chapters;
- Adapting or amending formulae, calculations or code;
- Adapting the content to help clarify arguments.

3 Levels of Guidance provided by human proof-readers

- 3.1 The University acknowledges that the level of support provided by human proof-readers to students can vary. For the avoidance of doubt, the human proof-reader support is limited to providing an indication that an error has occurred within a document; however, no solution to the error is given to the student. An indication of the presence of an error may be made by, for example, underlining or circling the error, either on paper or by using the Review and Comments functions in Microsoft Word.
- 3.2 The University accepts that, for the purposes of illustration, the human proof-reader may offer an example of how a possible correction could be made; however, the responsibility for making the correction within the submission rests with the student.
- 3.3 Any other form of support and guidance provided by a human proof-reader is unacceptable. The proof-reader must not make an actual correction within the text or provide the solution or the correction for the student to insert themselves.
- 3.4 When using a human proof-reader, students must remember that they remain responsible for the content of the work which is submitted for assessment. In view of this, students must ensure that both the student and proof-reader are aware of the boundaries between legitimate support and unacceptable intervention. The guidance in this policy can help students to decide if the service offered by a human proof-reader is appropriate.
- 3.5 If there is any doubt, the student should seek advice from the Academic Skills Team or Students' Union Advice Centre.
- 3.6 When using the services of a human proof-reader it is advisable to:
 - Provide the proof-reader 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 proof-reader;
 - Keep a separate copy of any advice received from the proof-reader;
 - Maintain evidence that the student has made the changes.

4 Use of software and generative artificial intelligence tools for proofreading

4.1 Use of software and GenAI which is acceptable

The University recognises that a range of software solutions can provide similar support to that of a human being and, like with human proofreaders, there are services which are acceptable and services which are not. The acceptable use of software is limited to that which highlights where an error or omission has occurred and provides one or more alternative suggestions. Examples include:

- Software which indicates a spelling, grammatical, punctuation or formatting error.
 - Software which suggests the use of a replacement word or a small number of alternative words.
 - Software which suggests the possible reconstruction of individual sentences to improve clarity.
 - Software which predicts the following word when typing.
- 4.2 When using GenAI or similar technology to proofread, it is advisable to:
- Keep a separate copy of the original work;
 - Keep earlier versions of the work to provide evidence of the process used to create it;

4.3 Use of software and GenAI which is unacceptable

- Using software to generate elements of new content for submission, unless specified in the assessment brief and correctly referenced.
- Rewriting or amending paragraphs and whole sections of the submission.
- Creation of an entire submission for assessment using prompts in a GenAI tool and then cutting and pasting the AI generated text.
- Attempting to conceal or misrepresent the source of text which is presented as the student's own.

5 Use of Language Translation Software and Services

- 5.1 Translation software, including translation features of GenAI platforms, is ubiquitous and can be a useful tool for students who primarily use another language, particularly in the early weeks of their course. The University recognises that, when used in moderation, it can support students in their learning.
- 5.2 However, the University is aware that UKVI visa requirements state that international students should study and be assessed in English. Students who over-use machine translation software could be in breach of visa regulations.
- 5.3 It is not acceptable for students to use translation software to translate work written in another language before submission.
- 5.4 It has been observed that students who use translation tools on a regular basis can experience a decline in their ability to communicate effectively in English. To avoid this, the University will ensure that a range of different assessment approaches are used which allow students to demonstrate their competency in written and oral English.
- 5.5 The inappropriate use of online translation to conceal the source of a text or otherwise present work that is not the student's own will be considered misconduct.

6 The Role of the Academic Skills Team

- 6.1 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;
 - Referencing skills;
 - Research skills: finding and evaluating information;
 - Exam preparation

7 Exceptions

- 7.1 Where correct grammar is explicitly part of the assessment criteria, it is expected that standard in-built tools like spell-checking and Grammarly may still be used, but additional proofreading, GenAI use or machine translation will be prohibited. Students should seek clarification from the module leader where required.
- 7.2 Disabled students who require proofreading support that may exceed the limitations set out in this policy should liaise with their personal academic tutor and Disability Services. Whilst support workers assisting disabled students will adhere to these regulations, some disabled students, may be able to access additional support. This may include access to assistive software, including GenAI technology or specialist study skills tuition to help the development of strategies to mitigate the impact of a disability on the construction and grammatical presentation of their written work. Where spelling and grammar are a key academic outcome, the student's Personal Learning Support Plan will ask that the student is made fully aware of this. Regardless of the form in which further support is provided, the content of the work submitted for assessment should be exclusively the student's own.
- 7.3 In group work, students may actively edit content produced by other students within the group although it is expected that, collectively, the group is bound by the expectations set out in this policy in respect to engaging with further third parties. This exception only applies to those pieces of work that are explicitly assessed as part of a group exercise. No form of collusion should take place regarding standard individual pieces of work and when detected, such cases may be investigated under the University's Academic Misconduct/ Research Conduct Regulations

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V4	Jan 2024	Statement of position on use of Generative AI in proofreading and distinction with human proofreading	Director of Registry
V4.1	Jan 2025	Updated team name and embedded hyperlink	Director of Registry and Academic Development
V4.2	Jan 2026	Change of spelling of proof-reading to proofreading in line with the BBC, Guardian Style Guide and UK Chartered Institute of Editors and Proofreaders	Director of Registry and Academic Development