STUDENT PROOF READING GUIDELINES
Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught programmes

What is proof reading?
Proof reading is the very last stage in the process of producing a piece of writing, when you should check your work for errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.

It will also include your use of language and your academic style. It is an integral part of the process of producing academic writing, and therefore you are expected to carry out your own proof reading.

What is the difference between ‘editing’ and ‘proof reading’?
Editing is the process of making sure that your ideas and information are presented and supported appropriately, that your facts are accurate, your writing is well structured and that your argument is consistent and clear. You will do this throughout your writing and will probably produce several drafts as a result. Proof reading is purely a check for spelling, grammar and punctuation accuracy.

Why is proof reading so important?
The ability to independently identify and correct errors in your writing is an academic and professional skill that you will use throughout your studies and professional life. Writing that is well structured, well presented and free of errors is impressive and will be taken seriously.

Developing your proof reading skills: Help and support available:

- De Montfort University provides information, guidance and tuition to ensure that our students have the opportunity to develop their proof reading skills: Higher Education Assignment Toolkit (HEAT) Stage 6 ‘Drafting, Editing and Proof Reading’. See http://library.dmu.ac.uk/class/HEAT
- Workshops: The Centre for Learning and Study Support offers short informal workshops on proof reading in the Library each term. See http://library.dmu.ac.uk/class/workshops
- Study and writing tutorials: You can book an individual study or writing tutorial with the Centre for Learning and Study Support – we will help you to develop your proof reading skills but we will not proof read or correct your work for you. See http://library.dmu.ac.uk/class/tutorials

Using software to assist your proof reading
Spelling and grammar checkers can be useful but they are by no means foolproof, so after using them you will still need to check for accuracy. A spell checker cannot identify which form of a word you need to use when different spellings are possible (for example it may accept ‘their’ when you mean ‘there’ or ‘form’ when you mean ‘from’). If this happens, your reliance on a spell checker, rather than your own careful proof reading, will be obvious to your reader.
Why doesn’t DMU recommend or provide proof reading services?
Proof reading is an integral part of the writing process and you, as the author are responsible for this process. De Montfort University advises strongly against the use of professional proof reading services, or proof reading by third parties (such as friends or parents) which edits or amends the content of your work.

For this reason, if you do use a third party to proof read your work, or a professional proof reading service, you must discuss this with your tutor and declare this in a written statement accompanying your work when you submit it for assessment.

Professional proof reading should only include the identification of errors – it should never involve correcting errors or amending content. Your work must remain your own.

WARNING! You will always be held responsible for work which you submit, and your use of third party proof readers will not be accepted in mitigation of any deficiencies in your work. If you use a third party proof reader, be sure to comply with the University guidelines below or your work may not be deemed to be your own and you are in danger of committing an academic offence.

Formal De Montfort University Regulations covering the use of proof readers on Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught programmes are as follows:

**Use of proof-readers**

All work submitted for assessment must be the student’s own work. However a student may have assistance with proof-reading.

A proof-reader ensures that the meaning of the assessment is not misrepresented because of the quality and standard of the English used. A proof-reader may only correct spelling, grammar and punctuation. A proof-reader must not:

- Change the text to clarify or develop an argument
- Significantly alter the length of the assessment
- Assist with academic referencing
- Correct factual information
- Translate the work into English

A statement must be included with the assessment confirming that a proof-reader was used. A copy of the original unedited assessment must be available on request.