PROOF READING GUIDE FOR STAFF
Undergraduate, Postgraduate taught programmes and Post graduate research

Introduction
This guidance covers all students at DMU; undergraduate, post graduate taught and post graduate research.

What is proof reading at DMU?
Proof reading is the final part of the editing process, and as such is an integral element of the process of producing academic writing. It is the process of identifying surface errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling.

When students seek help, this may include aspects of academic style (e.g. pointing out colloquialisms and/or contractions); it does not normally include correcting identified errors (unless limited proof reading is being used as a learning development tool in order to identify necessary skill development).

As it is an integral part of the reviewing and editing process it is not helpful for it to be done for students (this may mask writing difficulties which could later be exposed, for example in an exam situation,) but it can be done in a limited way with students as a springboard for writing development.

Proof reading is not reading and commenting on the whole assignment.

Proof reading is not related to content.

Does DMU recommend or provide proof reading services?
The university does not provide or recommend proof reading services. It does however provide appropriate provision so that all students have the opportunity to develop independent proof reading skills so that the use of professional proof reading services should not be necessary. This applies to all students including students with disabilities and international students.

Inevitably some students will use third party proof readers (professional services or friends and family) and they should be aware that they should discuss this with their tutor and must then declare this on their submitted work.

Professional proof reading should only comprise the identification of errors – it should never involve correcting errors or amending content. The student’s authorship should therefore not be compromised.
What is the university’s role in developing students’ proof reading skills?

Clearly articulated expectations of unaided proof reading and correction, especially in assessment criteria (if that is what is required – in some instances that may not be the case).

Access to high quality, and positively promoted, academic support provided centrally or from within the faculty or programme (find out more – What is available in DMU to enable students to develop proof reading skills)

Clarity about the purpose of academic support for proof reading, which is always to enable the student to be confident and independent in their own proof reading.

Access to high quality and well publicised self-help materials (find out more – What is available in DMU to enable students to develop proof reading skills)

Read further – Student proofreading guidelines.

Are there specific issues relating to disabled or international students?

Both groups may experience difficulties with proof reading but in all cases the focus should be on enabling and empowering students to be responsible for their own work rather than looking to remove or reduce their responsibility.

What is available in DMU to enable students to develop proof reading skills?

The Centre for Learning and Study Support (CLaSS) in Library and Learning Services provides access to a wide range of high quality resources and expertise for students.

Staff in CLaSS can advise and work with course teams and can offer bespoke input into the curriculum.

Additionally, the following resources are available:

- 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: bookable individual tutorials with the Centre for Learning and Study Support – help to develop proof reading skills but not proof reading or correcting work for students. See http://library.dmu.ac.uk/class/tutorials

Formal DMU Regulations covering the use of proof readers are as follows for Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught programmes:

1. All work submitted for assessment must be the student’s own work. However a student may have assistance with proof-reading.
2. A proof-reader ensures that the meaning of the assessment is not misrepresented because of the quality and standard of the English used.

3. A proof-reader may only correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.

4. 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.

**For Doctoral thesis work**

The thesis must be the result of the student’s own work. The requirement does not preclude a student obtaining limited assistance with proof reading. When such help is obtained it must be with the prior approval of the supervisor who must be satisfied that the spirit of the ‘own work’ requirement is not breached.

If a student employed a professional proof-reader for their research thesis the following definition applies:

The role of a proof-reader of a thesis is to ensure that the meaning of the text is not misrepresented due to the quality and standard of the English used.

A proof-reader must not:

   - change the text of the thesis to clarify or develop an argument;
   - reduce the length of the thesis;
   - assist with academic referencing;
   - correct factual information;
   - or translate the thesis into English.

A proof-reader may correct spelling, grammar and punctuation accuracy.

If a student obtains the assistance of a proof-reader for the thesis, a statement must be included in the thesis declaring editorial assistance was used.

**Bibliography**

DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC QUALITY (2019) Academic regulations, taught programmes, De Montfort University, September, p7 – 8

De Montfort University (2018) Code of Practice for Research Degree Students Incorporating: Research Degree Regulations

Guidance Notes for Examiners Guidance Notes for Annual Review Panels Regulations for Higher Doctorates, De Montfort University, P 50 - 51