

STATEMENT ON EDITORIAL HELP FOR STUDENTS' WRITTEN WORK

Guidance for students, supervisors and examiners

This statement was approved by the Academic Board, July 2012

- * Any written work a student produces (for classes, seminars, examination scripts, dissertations, essays, computer programmes and MPhil/PhD theses) must be solely their own work¹. Specifically, a student must not employ a "ghost writer" to write parts or all of the work, whether in draft or as a final version, on their behalf².
 - * This guidance is for use when a student is considering whether to employ a third party such as a professional copy editing or proof reading company when producing work in draft or final version.
 - * It also applies when a student seeks editorial help from other, non-professional third parties, such as fellow-students or friends.
 - * It is not concerned with the regular and iterative interaction between student and tutor/supervisor(s) on draft versions of their work throughout the registration period. The student's tutor/supervisor is not regarded as a "third party" for this purpose.
 - * For research students, further guidance is included in the Supervisor's Handbook produced by the Teaching and Learning Centre.
 - * If a student contravenes this statement, this will be considered an assessment offence and investigated in accordance with the [Regulations on assessment offences: plagiarism](#).
1. If the student chooses to employ a third party, it is their responsibility to give them a copy of this statement. When submitting work the student must acknowledge what form of contribution they have made, by stating for example, 'this thesis/essay/dissertation was copy edited for conventions of language, spelling and grammar by ABC Editing Ltd'.
 2. A third party **cannot be used**:
 - 2.1 to change the text of the work so as to clarify and/or develop the ideas and arguments;
 - 2.2 to reduce the length of the work so that it falls within the specified word limit;
 - 2.3 to provide help with referencing;
 - 2.4 to correct information within the work;
 - 2.5 to change the ideas and arguments put forward within the work; and/or
 - 2.6 to translate the work into English.
 3. A third party **can be used** to offer advice on:
 - 3.1 spelling and punctuation;
 - 3.2 formatting and sorting footnotes and endnotes for consistency and order;
 - 3.3 ensuring the work follows the conventions of grammar and syntax in written English;
 - 3.4 shortening long sentences and editing long paragraphs;
 - 3.5 changing passives and impersonal usages into actives;
 - 3.6 improving the position of tables and illustrations and the clarity, grammar, spelling and punctuation of any text in or under tables and illustrations; and
 - 3.7 ensuring consistency of page numbers, headers and footers.
 4. The third party shall give advice by means of tracked changes on an electronic copy or handwritten annotations on a paper copy or other similar devices. The student must take responsibility for choosing what advice to accept, and must him/herself make the changes to the master copy of the work.

**Notes**

¹ Except where the School's regulations might permit it to include the work of others e.g., Regulations for Research Degrees (paragraph 31.1) permit a thesis to include the work of others and individual programme regulations for taught students permit group work.

² This does not preclude the use of a 'scribe' where verbatim dictation might be required for a student with a particular disability.

See the [Calendar](#) for further information about Programme Regulations, Course Guides, School and academic Regulations.