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 work. 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 behalf.

* 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.