

HUMAN AND COMPUTER PROOF READING POLICY

Purpose and Context

This document provides a framework to advise students 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.

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 proof-reading 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 proof-reading service.
- 1.3 The guidance applies to all forms of proof-reading services which can be provided by either professional (i.e. paid for) proof-reading services, which includes the use of online services and GenAI, or non-professional proof-reading, which includes support provided by friends or relatives.
- 1.4 The University does not offer human proof-reading services to students.

2 Human Proof reading

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 proof reading

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, or helps with searching for or summarising information. 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 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.

5 Use of Language Translation Software and Services

- 5.1 Translation software is ubiquitous and can be a useful tool for non-native speakers, 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 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.

6 The Role of the Academic Skills Team

- 6.1 The University's Academic Skills Team will not provide proof-reading 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 In some disciplines and for particular pieces of assessment it may not be appropriate for any proofreading, GenAI use or machine translation to take place, e.g. where correct grammar is explicitly part of the assessment criteria. Where it is inappropriate for students to use a proof-reader or translation software or GenAI, the School should make students aware of this in advance of them undertaking the assessment.
- 7.2 Disabled students where the impact of a disability could 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 Some modules require students to work closely to produce a collaborative piece of work for assessment. The content for these assignments will necessitate a process of drafting and re-drafting of content by a number of different members of the team. This process is a key part of the learning experience. In these cases, students may actively edit content of 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

8 Proof-reading, Translation Software and GenAI in Academic Misconduct/Research Conduct Cases

- 8.1 Limited use of translation software and GenAI, for example, to look up an item of vocabulary or check the phrasing of an individual sentence will not be considered misconduct, unless the use of language is a key part of the assessment criteria (see 7.1).
- 8.2 If the intellectual content is the student's own, the use of translation software and GenAI to assist writing may be considered acceptable. As long as the student is able to communicate sufficiently well in general English, limited use of software for written assignments is permitted. The accepted level of technical proficiency in English may vary between academic subject areas, and any specific requirements or restrictions should be outlined in the assessment criteria.

- 8.3 If a student were to translate large portions of text written initially in their native 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 their use of translation or GenAI tools appropriately 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.
- 8.4 The inappropriate use of online translation or GenAI technology to conceal the source of a text or otherwise present work that is not the student's own will be considered misconduct.
- 8.5 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.

POLICY SIGN-OFF AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS	
Document name:	Human and Computer Proof Reading Policy
Version Number:	V4.1
Equality Impact Assessment:	Reviewed Jan 2025
Approved by:	UTLC
Date Approved:	Jan 2025
Next Review due by:	Jan 2026
Author:	Registry and Academic Development
Owner (if different from above):	Director of Registry and Academic Development
Document Location:	https://www.hud.ac.uk/media/policydocuments/Proof-Reading-and-Machine-Translation-Policy.pdf
Compliance Checks:	Compliance checks are completed as part of Quality Appraisal activity and identification/ remedy where non-compliance identified
Related Policies/Procedures:	Regulations for Taught Students, Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students

REVISION HISTORY			
Version	Date	Revision description/Summary of changes	Author
V1.0	23/05/2018	First redraft under the new Policy Framework	Head of Registry
V2.0	May 2019	Formatting to fit policy template Minor amendments of style Clarification of scope and exceptions	Director of Registry
V3.0	May 2020	Additional clarification on support for disabled students Correction of minor typographical errors	Director of Registry
V3.1	May 2021	No changes	Director of Registry
V3.2	May 2022	Clarification on the distinction between support provided by a human being and that of an algorithm	Director of Registry
V3.3	November 2022	Additional clarification on machine translation (interim update)	Director of Registry
V3.4	February 2023	Additional clarification on spelling and grammar considerations (interim update)	Director of Registry
V3.5	April 2023	Document location link updated	Director of Registry

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