SKILLS FOR LEARNING

GUIDE TO EDITING AND PROOFREADING

Editing and proofreading can be time-consuming and it is easy to underestimate the time required. It is a good idea to allow time for both in your assignment plan. It is especially important that you follow the module brief and requirements such as referencing, line spacing and margins.

WHAT IS EDITING?

Editing is part of the redrafting process and entails checking the tone, structure and content of your assignment to ensure that it has a logical and coherent flow and expresses ideas clearly and in an academic manner.

CHECKLIST:

Editing		check
Content	• Have all elements of the assignment brief, learning outcomes and marking criteria been met? • Is all information contained within the assignment directly relevant to the question? • Is your assignment within the word count? You can usually go 10% over or 10% under the overall word count.	
Expression	• Are the introduction and conclusion both suitable? i.e. does the introduction provide an overview of your intentions within your assignment and does the conclusion draw together the main points you have made? • Does each paragraph express one main point or idea and successfully link to the next paragraph so there is a logical train of thought running throughout the assignment? • Has similar information been kept together? • Are sentences easy to follow or too long and wordy?	
Use of supporting evidence	• Have you paraphrased and summarised ideas in your own words much more than you have quoted? • Have you acknowledged the authors of the theories, ideas or concepts you have used in your work? • Have you used appropriate and up-to-date resources? • Have quotations been copied down correctly?	

WHAT IS PROOFREADING?

Proofreading involves checking the content and appearance of your written work: looking for errors in typing, spelling and grammar, and ensuring that it is presented in a style that meets the requirements of a module or course. Proofreading is an essential final stage of the assignment writing process which should not be overlooked, as a poorly presented piece of work can lose marks.

CHECKLIST:

Grammar		check
Spelling	• Do not rely on the spellchecker in Word - this will not pick up "typos" such as from/form or been/bean. • Use a dictionary to check spellings and any specialised terminology- do not guess at a spelling. • Ensure the correct usage of words such as to, too or two.	
Tenses	• Does the subject match the verb? • Are tenses used consistently within sentences? • Have apostrophes, full stops, commas and colons been used correctly?	
Language	• Have capitals been used where necessary? For example, for personal names, organisations or the start of a sentence. • Have some words been used frequently within a paragraph or an essay? If so, search for synonyms for alternative words to use. • Is the language suitable for an academic essay? • Has objective language been used where appropriate for example, 'this essay will describe' rather than 'I am going to describe'? • Have contractions been avoided for example, cannot instead of can't? • Have rhetorical questions been avoided unless appropriate to the module content? • Have acronyms such as NHS been spelled out in full on first use? • Have colloquialisms been avoided and more formal language been used instead for example, 'in the 19th century' rather than 'in the olden days?'	
Referencing		
Correct style	Are you using the correct style? Check your assignment guidelines for which style you should use.	
Consistent	Is the referencing consistent?	
Quotations	Have quotations been fully referenced? i.e. have you included quotation marks and page numbers if appropriate?	
Bibliography	• Have you included all the items you have cited in your text? • Are the references complete?	

Presentation		
Line spacing	Does the assignment require particular line spacing?	
Margins	Are there any requirements regarding margins?	
Font size/type	Do you need to use a particular font size or type?	
Typing errors	Have all corrections been made in the final version?	
Feedback		
	Have you taken account of feedback and ensured that you have not repeated any errors or omissions made in previous assignments?	

TIPS FOR BETTER PROOFREADING:

1. **PRINT WORK** - It is easier to read and check for errors on paper than on a computer screen.

2. **RECURRING ERRORS** - If you are aware that the same errors recur within an assignment, create a list of these and make a conscious effort to look out for them.

3. **READ ALOUD** - This will highlight sentence structure and increase your awareness of the flow of the essay, and of any sentences that are too long or too short. It will also give you an idea of whether a sentence makes sense and if there is the right amount of punctuation.

4. **ASK SOMEONE TO READ YOUR WORK** - They will be seeing your work for the first time and will be more likely to pick up any errors.

5. **PROOFREAD SEPARATELY** – Check for one issue at time for example, grammar, referencing, and presentation.

6. **READ ONE LINE AT A TIME** – This will help your concentration. Cover up any sentences below the one you are reading.

HELP AND ADVICE

The Skills Development Team will not be able to edit or proofread your essay but can provide general guidance. For more details about the type of help that is available, please refer to the Skills for Learning website at http://www.wlv.ac.uk/skills.

FURTHER RESOURCES.

For more information on editing and proofreading, please see our Skills for Learning course on Canvas. We have an array of print and electronic resources about proofreading including:

Osmond, A. (2016) *Academic writing and grammar for students*. London: Sage.

Sandie, G. (2013) *How to proofread your own writing: tips and techniques to help you produce an error-free manuscript.* Createspace Independent Publishing Platform.

To request this document in an alternative format please contact skills@wlv.ac.uk