

Editing Agreement for Student Work

Documedic editors understand and uphold the high ethical standards that rightly underpin research and scholarship. Most universities have policies in place to maintain the line of separation between author and editor, particularly in terms of authorial integrity and plagiarism. Student submissions are graded, in part, on the student's ability to communicate ideas and arguments; the pen must therefore remain firmly in the student's hand. This agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party for the ethical editing of theses, dissertations, and other student work that will be submitted for evaluation. It is based on guidelines established by the Editors' Association of Canada (EAC) in conjunction with university administrators: <http://www.editors.ca/hire/theses.html>

The basic rule of thumb is that the student will write the paper, the supervisor will ensure that the content is appropriate and acceptable, and the editor will polish it to perfection.

Student Responsibilities

1. Students must inform their faculty supervisors that they will be working with a professional editor. If required by the university, they should get permission in writing. Usually, email verification is considered adequate.
2. Students should share this agreement with their supervisors. If a supervisor would like the scope of the edit revised, it is the student's responsibility to inform us accordingly. Everyone should be in agreement as to what work will be undertaken.
3. Students should note on the appropriate page of their research paper, such as the acknowledgements page, that it has been edited. This alerts the thesis committee and shows that edits have been made scrupulously.
4. As an overarching rule, our editing is undertaken such that it does not affect the content of the student's thesis. If the editor thinks such revision would be beneficial, that will be suggested to the student in a comment. Even so, it is our position that the onus of ensuring the content meets university standards rests with the student and the faculty supervisor.
5. Responsibility for content includes adherence to a specified template or handbook and inclusion of any required sections or appendixes. If students would like their editor to compare the paper to a university template to double check that all items are in place, they must state so explicitly. It is not otherwise included in our scope.
6. Editors will indicate errors and suggest edits using track changes. It is the student's responsibility to review these suggestions and accept or reject them accordingly. The actual correction of the error is thus in the student's hands.

Editor Responsibilities

1. Editors will apply the proofreading, copy editing, and stylistic editing standards outlined below. Editors will not specify changes beyond these standards. If the editor must rewrite a sentence to show a problem, he or she will keep to the student's own words as much as possible. Editors will minimize rewriting by querying and by marking spots where the text could be simplified or improved without amending it themselves.
2. Until the thesis has been accepted, editors will keep working copies showing the tracking and edits, as well as other pertinent material such as correspondence and queries.

Definitions

“Proofreading” is checking of formatted, edited material for accuracy of inputting, for adherence to a specified design, and for mechanical errors in text, such as spelling mistakes or small deviations from the editorial style sheet.

“Copy editing” means editing for grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation, and other mechanics of style; checking for consistency of mechanics and for internal consistency of facts; inserting head levels and approximate placement of art (including graphs, tables, maps).

“Stylistic editing” means work to clarify meaning, polish language, and perform other nonmechanical line-by-line editing.

Proofreading

The following proofreading standards will be applied:

- Correct typographical errors.
- Correct end-of-line word divisions and bad breaks (incorrect line or page breaks).
- Check cross-references, running heads, page numbers, nontext items, and fields such as tables of contents or lists of figures.
- Correct errors resulting from markup protocols, spell and grammar checkers, optical scanners, and translation programs.

Copy Editing

The following copy editing standards will be applied:

- Check metrication.
- Apply a system of citation (such as APA or Chicago).
- Edit captions and credit lines (citations of sources for artwork or figures).
- Edit front matter (title page, contents page, lists of tables, lists of figures, acknowledgements).
- Correct spelling errors.
- Correct word usage errors and infelicities or offensiveness in diction.
- Correct grammar and syntax.
- Check errors and inconsistencies in punctuation.
- Establish and maintain consistent patterns of mechanics (e.g., capitalization).
- Apply the desired style to citations and references; query any that appear to be missing. The editor has no responsibility for obtaining reprint permissions but will point out where they may be needed.
- Ensure internal consistency of text and art; query the author about apparent errors in arithmetic and in other facts within the realm of general knowledge.
- Establish and maintain consistency and accuracy in the styling of tables, graphs, and other art, including their labels, captions, and text mentions.
- Treat non-English terms in English text appropriately and consistently.
- Use accepted markings for corrections and for queries to the author.
- Follow common practices, the faculty’s preferences, or the suggested style guide for conventions such as the use of italics, boldface, and underlines, of metric or imperial measurements, and of abbreviations and symbols, the treatment of technical and trademarked terms, and the choice of spelling and punctuation styles.

Stylistic Editing

The following stylistic editing standards will be applied:

- Clarify ambiguous vocabulary and syntax.
- Eliminate redundancies and verbosity.
- Eliminate jargon that is inappropriate for the intended audience.
- Correct or improve infelicitous connections and transition, parallels, and paragraphing.
- Correct inconsistencies in the form and use of headings (e.g., inappropriate level, grammatically nonparallel forms).
- Maintain consistent style in headings and in captions for tables, figures, and illustrations.
- Identify inconsistencies in logic, facts, and details, and query. The editor will not question statements of fact or conclusions drawn from them in a paper's argumentation, unless patently suspect or silly ("Calgary is east of Montreal," "Canada's population is double that of the US").
- Write coherent notes to the author asking for clarification or explaining changes.
- Identify, in language and in content, possible legal trouble spots (e.g., libel, plagiarism, missing reprint permissions) or departures from social acceptability (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age, or other bias; failure to give sources).

Unless otherwise specified in writing, the student and editor hereby agree to the above responsibilities.