ELC Proofreading Policy 2019-20

Introduction
The English Language Centre (ELC) encourages students to proofread and edit their own work when preparing written assignments. The ability to do so is a key academic skill that is explicitly developed on our programmes. However, we recognise that securing the help of a third party\(^1\) to proofread pieces of work is encouraged in some King’s departments.

Please note that the ELC does not oblige or recommend students to engage the services of third party proofreaders. This Policy is simply designed to clarify best practice for students and third party proofreaders, and to establish what is and what is not acceptable. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the [Academic Honesty & Integrity Policy](#) and the [Student Guidance on Academic Honesty & Integrity](#).

Proofreading and editing
The ELC makes a distinction between proofreading and editing.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Proofreading</strong></th>
<th>is defined as the identification of language errors (spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax), as well as formatting and layout errors, in a text submitted by a student for assessment.</th>
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<td><strong>Editing</strong></td>
<td>is defined as any intervention that goes beyond proofreading, as defined above. This includes substantial changes to a student’s work, such as correcting (as opposed to identifying and highlighting) incorrect uses of language and expanding or condensing the content of the work.</td>
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Editing by third parties (as defined above) is NOT permitted on any ELC programme.

It is important for students and proofreaders to understand this key distinction between proofreading and editing. Allowing third parties to edit a piece of work may lead to a student being charged with plagiarism, collusion or cheating (these terms are defined below).

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<tr>
<th><strong>Plagiarism</strong></th>
<th>is defined by the College as “the taking of another person’s thoughts, words, results, judgements, ideas, images etc., and presenting them as your own”. Note that “using translation software” is a form of plagiarism.</th>
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<td><strong>Collusion</strong></td>
<td>occurs “when two or more students collaborate, without permission, to produce individual assessments that, when compared, significantly overlap in content, order, structure and/or format”.</td>
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<td><strong>Cheating</strong></td>
<td>occurs “when a student submits a summative assessment that has been written by a third party or obtained from a professional writing ‘service’”.</td>
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For more details on different kinds of academic misconduct, please refer to the [Academic Honesty & Integrity Policy](#) and the Student Guidance on Academic Honesty & Integrity.

Acceptable & unacceptable interventions
If a student decides to engage the services of a third party to proofread her/his work, the following restrictions apply:

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<th>A proofreader MAY:</th>
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<td>✓ only comment on the final draft of a student’s work;</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ identify and highlight language errors (spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax);</td>
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<td>✓ identify and highlight inconsistencies and errors with formatting, layout, labels and references;</td>
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<td>✓ indicate passages where the meaning is unclear;</td>
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<td>✓ indicate stylistic inappropriacies.</td>
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\(^1\) Third parties are defined as people other than the tutor, marker or examiner. These may be family members, other students on the programme, friends or professional proofreaders who offer a paid service.

Last reviewed: August 2019
A proofreader MAY NOT:
• supply new information or data;
• alter arguments or furnish new ones;
• make corrections to spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax;
• make corrections to formatting, layout, labels and references;
• make corrections to facts, calculations, equations and formulae;
• make text-level changes (e.g. reordering paragraphs and sections);
• reduce the text to meet word count requirements;
• translate the text into English.

The above applies to all ELC programmes and modules except those on which proofreading skills are explicitly tested.

For the avoidance of doubt, modules on which proofreading of any form is prohibited are as follows: KIF English for Academic Purposes, KIF English for Scientific Academic Purposes, KIF Academic Expression & Critical Thinking and the Pre-sessional Programme.

Format for making comments

Please note the following restrictions for third party proofreaders when making comments.

A third party MUST:
✓ only comment on electronic copies of a student’s work;
✓ use the ‘track changes’ and ‘comments’ functions of Microsoft Word to highlight errors and inconsistencies.

A third party MUST NOT:
• make comments on hard copies (i.e. on paper copies);
• make direct, in invisible edits to a text without using the ‘track changes’ and ‘comments’ functions of Microsoft Word.

Students who engage the services of a proofreader may be asked by tutors, markers and/or examiners to provide draft versions with proofreaders’ comments as part of the ELC’s quality assurance procedures.

These draft versions must be retained by the student and made available until marks are released for that assignment.

Please note that failure to produce draft versions of proofread texts with comments visible may result in charges of academic misconduct.

Assignment cover sheet declaration

Students must confirm on the revised ELC Written Assignment Coversheet 2019-20 that, if they engaged the services of a proofreader, the proofreader was given a copy of, and fully understood, the information in this Policy.