



PROOFREADING STUDENT GUIDANCE

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'PROOFREADING' vs 'PROOFREADERS' Definitions

PROOFREADING is the final stage of checking a piece of writing to make sure it is accurate, clear, and free from mistakes. It involves carefully reviewing your work for **spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting, and minor wording errors** after all main edits have been made. When this is completed by yourself, on your own work, without the use of any third party (person, grammar checking tool or Generative Artificial Intelligence) it does not fall under the scope of the Academic Integrity & Misconduct Policy.

Ideally, you should always proofread your work yourself (and advice on how to do this effectively is available via the [Academic Skills Team](#)). However, if you are working on a long piece of text such as a dissertation, or if you are not confident about your written English, you might consider using a '**PROOFREADER**'.

A **PROOFREADER** is anyone, human, or Generative AI tool, who checks your work for surface errors. Typically, this might be a friend or relative with good written English skills, a commercial (paid) human **Proofreader**, or a digital / Generative AI Tool such as **Grammarly, ChatGPT or Microsoft Co-Pilot**.

City St Georges has clear rules about the use of '**PROOFREADERS**' and about using **Generative AI software** in your academic work.

The rules regarding the use of Proofreaders fall under the scope of our **Academic Integrity & Misconduct Policy**, and **you are expected to familiarise yourself with and follow these rules to avoid committing Academic Misconduct like plagiarism and contract cheating, either accidentally or on-purpose**. If you have not done so already, please familiarise yourselves with our [Academic Integrity & Misconduct Policy](#).

This Guidance document provides further explanations and clarity regarding the appropriate use of human, grammar checkers and Generative AI **‘Proofreaders’**.

Am I allowed to use a Proofreader?

This varies depending on your course and the particular assignment. To find out if permission is given, always check your assignment guidelines and if you are unclear ask your course tutor or supervisor.

The use of a **‘Proofreader’** whether they are human, digital (GenAI assisted Grammarly) or Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) (ChatGPT or Microsoft Co-Pilot) is **not*** allowed at all where structure, formatting, and grammar are part of the criteria for assessment.

*please note that for Doctoral Research, this does not include developing your research writing and presentation skills by working on drafts interactively with your supervisor, including for your final thesis.

Where use is permitted, what can a Proofreader help me with?

Any type of Proofreader **MAY** proofread to check for, identify and suggest corrections for errors. This means a Proofreader may:

- Identify typographical, spelling and punctuation errors;
- Identify formatting and layout errors and inconsistencies (e.g. page numbers, font size, line spacing, headers and footers);
- Identify grammatical and syntactical errors and anomalies;
- Highlight overly-long or complex sentences or paragraphs, especially where meaning is ambiguous;
- Identify minor formatting errors in referencing (for consistency and order);
- Identify errors in the labelling of diagrams, charts or figures;
- Identify lexical repetition or omissions.

Any type of Proofreader **MAY NOT** edit the work (that is, check or amend ideas, arguments or structure), since to do so is to compromise the authorship of the work. This means a Proofreader may not:

- Add to content in any way;
- Check or correct facts, data calculations, formulae or equations;
- Rewrite content where meaning is ambiguous;
- Alter argument or logic where faulty;
- Re-arrange or re-order paragraphs to enhance structure or argument;
- Implement or significantly alter a referencing system;
- Re-label diagrams, charts or figures;
- Reduce content so as to comply with a specified word limit;
- Make grammatical, syntactical or stylistic corrections;
- Translate any part of the work into English.

Any use of a Proofreader for any of the above points would be categorised as Academic Misconduct, which can result in a module mark of zero. (If you have special adjustments from Student Health and Wellbeing, this may be different. Please check with them.)

Please be aware that you have overall authorial responsibility for your work and are responsible for choosing whether you wish to accept the Proofreader's advice.

It is important that the Proofreader annotates your work in such a way that you can see each change that is being proposed and choose whether to accept it or not. Microsoft Word offers functionality to enable a text to be annotated in this way. Ultimately, it is your piece of work, and it is up to you decide whether to accept all, or any, of the Proofreader's suggested changes. Leave yourself plenty of time to review the suggested changes one by one.

Authorship of the finished work must be yours alone. It is advisable to keep a copy of the text as it was before the proofreader worked on it; this enables you to show that any changes they have proposed are surface-level changes only (e.g. spelling, punctuation, grammar).

Can the University help me find a commercial (paid) Proofreader?

City St George's does not endorse any commercial Proofreaders or Proofreader services.

The 'Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading' (www.ciep.uk) maintains a publicly searchable database of individuals offering their services as commercial proofreaders. These individuals are broadly ranked by CIEP on the basis of their experience and qualifications. **Use of any Proofreader is at your own risk.**

At what stage of the writing process might I use a Proofreader?

Proofreaders must only be used, where permitted, at the final stage of the writing process, so wait until you have completed the text before using any type of Proofreader. Any accepted proofreader advice must also be clearly acknowledged.

In order to demonstrate authorship, should the need arise and to support the academic integrity of your work, you are strongly encouraged to keep draft copies of your assessments. Wherever possible and appropriate retain dated versions of your work, including outlines, rough drafts, and revisions. Maintaining multiple drafts helps demonstrate your development of ideas and can serve as crucial evidence in cases of suspected academic misconduct.

Should I declare in the work where a Proofreader (any type) has been used?

Yes, this is good practice. Your assignment guidelines might suggest a suitable place to do this, such as the Acknowledgments section of your work. Please check your assignment guidance about where you should do the same when using Generative AI.

What digital/online tools are there that can act as a Proofread for me?

Digital tools such as GenAI assisted Grammarly or Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT and Microsoft CoPilot are available and could be used where permitted.

The University's Academic Integrity & Misconduct Policy states that you are expected not to use Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT and Microsoft Co-Pilot) to generate any work, unless you have been explicitly told that you may or must do so. This includes using the GenAI functions within grammar checkers such as Grammarly.

Using Generative AI to gain an unfair advantage by misrepresenting its work as your own is considered to be Academic Misconduct and can have serious consequences.

The University's Guidelines on the use of Generative AI tools can be found on the Student Hub: [Using generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) for learning | Student Hub | City, University of London](#)

Always check your assessment guidelines and check with the Module Leader/Programme Director if you are unclear on what has been authorised.

Example of what IS and IS NOT allowed

This example has been taken from the [AI Tools Birmingham City University Guidelines](#).

Below is an original human sentence with some mistakes:

'Many scholar say globalisation often defined as process through what countries become more links in terms of there economies, cultures, and population.'

Allowed: Minor corrections for grammar, spelling or punctuation

The writing tool corrections are highlighted in bold and underlined in green below:

Many **scholars** say globalisation **is** often defined as **the** process through **which** countries become more **linked** in terms of **their** economies, cultures, and **populations**.

Not allowed: Major (re)writing of your sentences by Generative AI tools
The AI writing tools made significant changes highlighted in bold below:

Globalisation is frequently characterized as the phenomenon in which nations become increasingly interconnected in terms of their economies, cultures, and demographics.

Such changes made by an AI writing tool are not allowed and would be considered academic misconduct.

Academic Misconduct can be committed intentionally or accidentally, and the University actively pursues all cases of suspected academic misconduct, so please make sure you read and follow our policy carefully.

How to turn off generative AI functions in Grammarly

1. **Log in to Grammarly:** Go to [Grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com) and sign in.
2. **Go to Settings:** Click your profile icon and select Account Settings.
3. **Disable AI features:** In Settings or Customisation, find options like "Rewrite suggestions" or "Tone adjustments." Turn off these options to keep Grammarly focused on grammar and style checks.
or
4. **Use Manual Mode:** In the Grammarly editor, switch to a mode that only highlights basic proofreading issues.

More advice from the Academic Skills Team

For further study skills advice, please look at the Academic Skills Team's Moodle module (City Ready & Academic Skills), which you will find listed under My Modules in your Moodle.

You can make an appointment for one-to-one study skills support here: <https://city-uk-lead.libcal.com/appointments/>

For any other query, please contact us via skills@city.ac.uk