

Editing and proofreading your dissertation

Lesson aims

By the end of this session you will have...

Considered the importance of editing and proofreading

Analysed features of text that we often focus on in editing and proofreading

Practised proofreading a text

- 'Proof read your dissertation, then proof read it again. A spell checker alone is not adequate.' MSc Dissertation Project PGT Students Handbook

Editing

- Editing is sometimes called revising.
- You do this to check whether the paper is well-organised, and you have included all the necessary information in each section of your dissertation.
- **Editing** involves improving the 'big picture' of your assignment: whether it addresses the task requirements fully, how the paragraphs are structured and flow and so on.

Proofreading

It is checking that your work is written well. It focuses on specific details like:

- Structure within paragraphs
- Clarity
- Style
- Citations
- Grammar

Editing

- As you edit, you will usually make significant revisions to the content and wording of your paper.
- This is why you should proof read **AFTER** editing/revising!
- Keep an eye out for patterns of error: Keep a record of feedback from instructors and WAS sessions so you know what your most common errors are.
- Then you can develop techniques for spotting and correcting future instances of that pattern.

Editing your work: Coherence and Cohesion

When editing your work for **coherence and cohesion**, think about the following questions...

Editing your work: Content, Coherence and Cohesion

Is your writing coherent?

- Have you presented ideas and information in a logical order?
- Will the reader see the structure of your argument easily? Did you signpost it?
- Does each paragraph have one main idea? Is there a topic sentence?
- Have you used headings?

Editing your work: Content, Coherence and Cohesion

Is the writing cohesive?

- Are there links between the sentences in each paragraph?
- Can the reader easily move from old information to new?

Cohesion - linking words

- contrasting ideas (however / in contrast / on the other hand)
- expressing sequence (firstly / further / next / previously)
- additional supporting points (further / in addition)
- the type of supporting information cited (reports / claims)
- conclusion or effect (as such, / as a result, / therefore,)
- supporting examples (for example / such as / including)
- causal relationship (because / due to)

Previewing sections of text

The section below describes ...

What follows is an account of ...

In the following pages, I will present ...

The following is a brief description of ...

In the section that follows, it will be argued that ...

The problem of X is discussed in the following section.

A more detailed account of X is given in the following section.

The structure and functions of X will be explained in the following section.

The following part of this paper moves on to describe in greater detail the...

Moving from one section to the next

Turning now to ...

Let us now turn to ...

Let us now consider ...

Moving on now to consider ...

Turning now to the experimental evidence on ...

Before proceeding to examine X, it is important to ...

Before explaining these theories, it is necessary to ...

Having defined what is meant by X, I will now move on to discuss ...

So far this paper has focused on X. The following section will discuss ...

This chapter has demonstrated that ... It is now necessary to explain the course of ...

Having discussed how to construct X, the final section of this paper addresses ways of ...

This section has analysed the causes of X and has argued that ... The next part of this paper will ...

Common mistakes - grammar

- Tense agreement: mixing past and present tenses
- Subject/verb agreement: using plural verb with singular/uncountable subjects (e.g. knowledge are always...)
- Leaving out 3rd person s (e.g. 'It often appear to be' vs. 'It often appears')
- Leaving out plural s (e.g. 'Many student' for 'Many students')
- Using a word you don't fully understand. This often happens when a student has used a word in a thesaurus; check the new word in an Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Try: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/>

Look at the text on the following slide.

Can you find examples of:

Grammatical mistakes

Informal words/phrases

Errors in word class (noun/verb/adjective forms)

Unnecessary words (that could be deleted)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/13H2Bc6pSecubbl7rCWS6xQui8isvD5Wd/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=107604344083891248031&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Can you find and correct 12 errors in the text?

There is many researches to develop new Apps. For example track and trace apps is new area on identify possible carriers of Covid-19. The aim of these project is to create and evaluate a user-friend app for this purpose. The app modelled and created and it trialled to 150 users, who were students and staff at University of Sheffield in summer 2020. The outline of dissertation is as follows: Chapter 2 outlines on previous research of developing similar tracing apps chapter 3 describes the requirements analyse chapter 4 discusses modelling and implementation chapter 6 is discussion and conclusion.

Corrected version:

There is much research to develop new apps, for example 'track and trace' apps. This is a new area of research and such apps can be used to identify possible carriers of Covid-19. The aim of this project is to create and evaluate a user-friendly app for this purpose. The app was modelled, created and trialled with 150 users, staff and students at the University of Sheffield, in summer 2020.

The outline of the dissertation is as follows: Chapter 2 outlines previous research into developing similar tracing apps; Chapter 3 describes the Requirements Analysis; Chapter 4 discusses modelling and implementation; Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the results and provides a brief conclusion.

Other points to check ...

- Contents page complete?
- Are all the sections and chapters included & complete?
- Covid-19 Impact Statement?
- Declaration?
- Page numbering
- Labels / headings/subheadings
- Tables: column headings
- Figures: keys / variables
- Equations: numbers
- References & sources – accurate and complete?

Turnitin

Turnitin will help you identify unintentional plagiarism in your work.

However, it's important to remember that...

'Turnitin actually does not check for plagiarism in your work. What we actually do is check your submissions against our database, and if there are instances where your writing is similar to, or matches against, one of our sources, we will flag this for your instructor to review.'

It is perfectly natural for an assignment to match against some of our database. If you've used quotes and referenced correctly, there will be instances where we will find a match and that is totally OK! The similarity score simply highlights any matching areas in your paper so your instructor can use this as an investigative tool to determine if the match is or is not acceptable.'

[Turnitin.com](https://turnitin.com)

Clarity

- Have you defined any important terms that might be unclear to your reader?
- Is the meaning of each sentence clear?

Style

- Have you used an appropriate tone (formal, informal, persuasive, etc.)?
- Have you varied the length and structure of your sentences?
- Do you use passive voice appropriately?
- Does your writing contain a lot of unnecessary phrases like “due to the fact that,” etc.?
- Do you repeat certain words unnecessarily?

Citations

- Have you appropriately cited quotes, paraphrases, and ideas you got from sources? Are your citations in the correct format?
- Make sure that you know which reference style your department favours - Check your department style with Star+ Library Catalogue
- Software – such as Mendeley- & Websites – citethisforme- can help you with this. If you use technology make sure you proof read it carefully !!!

Proofreading top tips

1. Leave enough time to proofread your work before the deadline. It is an essential part of the writing process, not an add-on.
2. If possible, let your work sit for a while before you proofread it. Approach the writing from a fresh perspective, and then your brain is more able to focus on the actual words rather than seeing the words you *think* you wrote.
3. Work from a printout, **not** the computer screen.
4. Read out loud. This is especially helpful for spotting unfinished sentences and the words you *actually* wrote.
5. Use a blank sheet of paper to cover up the lines below the one you're reading. This technique keeps you from skipping ahead of possible mistakes.
6. Circle every punctuation mark. This forces you to look at each one and check if it is correct.
7. Check separately for each kind of error, starting with the most important or your weak areas.
8. Use the search function of your software (e.g. MS Office) to find mistakes you often make. Search for "it," for instance, if you confuse "its" and "it's."
9. End with a computer spelling check.
10. Be careful: A spelling checker won't catch all mistakes or certain errors (e.g. "he" for "the", 'form' instead of 'from' etc.).

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Where can you get feedback on drafts of your dissertation?

- 'Produce a draft for each chapter in turn and follow each up with a discussion with your supervisor.'
MSc Dissertation Project PGT Students Handbook
 - Use the Writing Advisory Service: <https://students.sheffield.ac.uk/eltc/was>
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