MACQUARIE University

How do I…

GET MY THESIS PROFESSIONALLY EDITED

So, you've been advised to get your thesis edited before you submit. Or maybe you want someone to polish up just a chapter or two. All you need to do is just ask someone who writes well to fix all the mistakes in your thesis, and then you pay them, right? No, wrong! Here's a better way:

START PLANNING EARLY

You won't be able to get your thesis copy-edited within a week of your submission date; we'd recommend you allow at least a month. Some editors may offer an urgent service for a higher fee, but it's best not to rely on that.

Finding the right editor and getting quotes can take time, so the sooner you start, the more options you'll have and the better your decision-making capacity!

FIND OUT IF THERE'S FUNDING

Email your Faculty Liaison Coordinator and Dept HDR admin team to find out if there's university funding available to you for thesis copyediting. If there's no such funding, be prepared to pay for this service yourself.

If there is university funding available, find out what you need to do to apply. You'll probably need to supply a quote from the editor you have selected. Approval may take some time, so again: don't leave this until too late!

WORK OUT WHAT YOUR TEXT NEEDS

- Does your text need major structural work? This is known as structural, content, or **substantive editing**, and falls outside of the boundaries of what is permissible for a thesis editor. Thesis editors may provide advice and examples but should not simply fix all the structural problems in your text.
- Do you want the editor to fix grammatical errors, ambiguities and inconsistencies? This is known as **copy editing.**
- Does your text just need a sanity check for the odd typo so it's ready for publication/submission? This is known as **proof-reading**.

If you're not sure what level of editing your text needs, ask your supervisor.

STICK WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES

There are strict rules governing what a thesis editor can and cannot do, so you need to make sure that anyone who makes wording or structural changes to your thesis stays within those boundaries. The Guidelines for Editing Research Theses, approved by the Australian Council of Graduate Research (ACGR) are available from the Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd) website.

FIND A SUITABLE EDITOR

Whether you engage a professional editor (highly recommended!) or a personal contact who is experienced with English academic writing, writes well, and has an eye for detail, the editor you engage should be well versed in the following:

- The ACGR Guidelines for Editing Research Theses,
- The conventions of your discipline, and
- Research thesis conventions.

You can find an experienced editor of theses in your discipline by searching the Society of Editors website.

For editing services recommended by graduate research candidates and staff at MQ, email Graduate Research Development at gr.development@mq.edu.au.

GET QUOTES AND SELECT YOUR EDITOR

Get quotes from at least two editors/providers. You will probably need to submit a sample of your writing, usually a chapter. To get an accurate quote, make sure it is *your* writing, not something revised or touched up by your supervisor or someone else. You will also need to indicate the total length (e.g., number of words) of your thesis, and whether you want the front material and Reference List edited.

APPLY FOR FUNDING AND ENGAGE THE EDITOR

See advice above on funding.

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR THESIS EDITOR

In your Thesis Acknowledgements section, it is good practice to thank your thesis editor. Check with your editor whether s/he would like to be named in your Acknowledgements or not.

Dr Juliet Lum
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How Do I…? Guidelines are produced by the Graduate Research Development team for graduate research candidates. They provide succinct, user-friendly advice consistent with best practice and MQ Policy and Procedures at time of writing.