



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Guide to proofreading

Proofreading a document gives you a final chance to check the copy for any inaccuracies and to ensure nothing has been overlooked/misunderstood in the design process. It can be challenging to proofread your own copy and it's advisable to ask someone else to do this, preferably a professional proofreader. You can contact the Publications team in CAM for further advice on this.

The following offers you a brief guide.

Always print out the document – it is easier to catch mistakes on paper than it is on screen.

Read the document at least twice – firstly to check for sense and that all the relevant information is on the page; and secondly to focus purely on the words, checking for spelling, punctuation, grammar and typos.

Once you have read the document, scan it from start to finish to ensure the page furniture such as headings, folios, tables etc is consistent throughout.

Use this quick checklist as a general guide:

Folios and page numbers

Do all pages have folios? Are the pages numbered correctly? Are all fonts consistent?

If there is a Contents page, check that the chapter or section page numbers match up with those throughout the document.

Headings and colours

Are the fonts, heading sizes and colours consistent?

Full stops

Check that full stops on captions, standfirsts (introductions) and pull quotes are consistent.

Spacing

Is spacing under headings, photos, in tables, after bullet points, and at the bottom of text columns, consistent throughout?

Advertising and logos

Are advertising elements in the correct position? Check that logos, or requested information such as photo credits, writer's bylines, charity straplines, copyright symbols, is included.

Ragged or justified copy

If ragged (ranged left/right) copy is used, is it consistent throughout? If copy is justified, check hyphenation is consistent throughout.

Widows and orphans

In body copy, try to avoid single words at the top of a text column (widow) and, less importantly, the first line of a paragraph starting at the very bottom of a text column (orphan).

Tables

Are all columns lining up? Is the use of bold or italicised type within the table consistent?

A few common things to watch out for:

Double spaces after full stops

Always use one space between sentences.

Americanisms and foreign words

Avoid American spellings such as realize, organization, color etc; if in doubt refer to *The Oxford English Dictionary*. If foreign words have been anglicised – such as cafe – don't italicise them or give them an accent.

Hyphenation

Check our editorial style guide if in any doubt about how to use hyphens or en-rules.

And vs ampersand (&)

Spelling out the word 'and' is preferable, unless in a College or School name.

If in any doubts, contact CAM:

Barbara Laing, Publications Manager

E barbara.laing@ed.ac.uk

T 50 9848