Proof-reading and Editing of Theses and Dissertations

Amended on: 9 June 2004
Date of effect: 10 June 2004

Approved by: Academic Board on 24 March 2004
Date of effect: 25 March 2004

1. Policy

The purpose of this policy is intended to clarify the extent to which external paid assistance may be involved in the preparation of the final version of a thesis/dissertation prior to submission.

2. Background

The national group of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDoGS) identified this as a common concern and agreed on a standard policy which each institution was asked to adopt or modify to suit their needs. This policy has been altered to suit the needs of the University of Sydney.

3. Coverage

This policy applies to all staff and students involved in postgraduate research higher degree training candidatures.

4. Procedures

4.1 The supervisors of research higher degree students are expected to provide editorial advice to their students. Students are permitted to use additional editors in preparing their thesis for submission, but should discuss this with their supervisor/associate supervisor and provide the editor with a copy of these guidelines before they commence work.

4.2 Editorial intervention should be restricted to:

4.2.1 Proofreading: that is, detecting and correcting the presentation of the text to conform with standard usage and conventions (e.g. spelling, quotations, italics, lists, word usage, punctuation, graphs, charts, citations, references, heading hierarchies, symbols and equations, headers and footers, style of numbers etc)

4.2.2 The identification and provision of advice in matters of structure (the need to restructure and reword, deletions, additions); the conventions of grammar and syntax; use of clear language; logical connections between phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and sections; voice and tone; and how to avoid ambiguity, repetition and verbosity.

4.3 Material for proofing should be submitted to an external editor in hard copy not electronic (because it is too easy for the reader to make changes and the student to hit the 'accept button' without thinking about the suggested correction).

4.4 When a thesis has had the benefit of editorial advice then:

4.4.1 The name of the editor and a brief description of the service rendered should be printed as part of the list of acknowledgements or other prefatory matter near the front of the work when it is to be presented for examination.

4.4.2 If the professional editor's current or former area of academic specialisation is similar to that of the candidate, this too should be stated in the prefatory matter.

5. Authority

5.1 Development/consultation

The Dean of Graduate Studies presented the proposed policy developed by the national group of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies. This was considered by the Postgraduate Research Training Sub-Committee and recommended to the Graduate Studies Committee. Some modifications were made by the Graduate Studies Committee prior to the recommendation to the Academic Board to adopt the policy, to ensure the policy was specific to the University of Sydney.

5.2 Management responsibility

The Graduate Studies Office has overall management responsibility for the policy.

5.3 Implementation and monitoring

The Graduate Studies Office has responsibility for implementing and monitoring the policy.

5.4 Review

The Graduate Studies Office is responsible for initiating the review process. The policy is to be reviewed initially within two years of its introduction.

5.5 Communication

The Graduate Studies Office has responsibility for communicating the policy.

5.6 Contact

For information contact:
Graduate Studies Office
L4.05
A14, Main Quadrangle Building
Phone: (02) 9114 1302
E-mail: gradstudies.office@sydney.edu.au

6. Related information

6.1 Related University legislation, resolutions, policies and procedures include:

6.1.1 Postgraduate Research Higher Degree Training Supervision at the University of Sydney