Language correction

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Purpose	This policy provides guidance for students and staff on language correction and proof-reading services.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
2.1	Update to clarify section 5.1 on student responsibility where assessments are marked for language accuracy.	Updated	Academic Policy Officer (Digital & Student Experience)	August 2025

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

POLICY ON LANGUAGE CORRECTION

1. Introduction

1.1. This document aims to provide guidance for staff and students on the University's policy on language correction and proof-reading services.

1.2. The policy rests upon the principle that any assessment submitted by a student represents their own effort, ability and understanding of the assignment.

1.3. This policy will clarify the boundaries between legitimate support and unacceptable intervention when receiving assistance from an individual or proof-reading service.

2. Policy

2.1. The level of support provided by an individual (not including a Postgraduate Supervisor for the purposes of instruction), or proof-reading service (including that provided using software) is limited to improving the accurate use of the written language and identifying language errors within the text.

2.2. Students may obtain assistance from an individual or service, whether paid for or not, under the following conditions:

a) Where it is not forbidden to do so by their School as stipulated in the School Handbook or assessment description; and
b) Where it is explicitly acknowledged in the submitted work.

2.3. For a particular assessment, it may not be appropriate for a student to access a language correction or proofreading service. For example, the learning outcomes for a module may include the student's ability and understanding of a written language.

3. Guidance for Students

3.1. Proof-readers can provide support and guidance to students in the following ways:

(a) suggesting adjustments in grammar, style, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation
(b) identifying passages within a text where the meaning is overly complex or unclear

3.2. Students are responsible for ensuring that an individual or proofreading service does not make the following amendments to an assignment:

(a) adjustments to the content, structure or meaning of the text
(b) changes to citations or references
(c) amendments to calculations, formulae or code
(d) additional sources, figures, diagrams or materials

3.3. Students should follow the guidance in conjunction with the University's Good Academic

Practice Policy and Guidance for Students.

4.   Acknowledgement

4.1.   Any language correction assistance (including friends and family, professional bodies, electronic proofreading, language correction and translation services), must be explicitly acknowledged in the following signed declaration at the front of the submitted work:

'I, [INSERT MATRICULATION NUMBER], received particular assistance in the writing of this work in respect of matters of grammar, style, vocabulary, spelling or punctuation.

The assistance was provided by (delete as appropriate):

- •   A member of the Academic Staff
- •   A member of professional or support staff
- •   A fellow Student
- •   Other Source (please specify)

5.   Exceptions

5.1.   Students with a registered disability and/or specific learning difference (SpLD) for which proof-reading support (either in-person or assistive software), and/or language correction is recommended as a reasonable adjustment, are not required to acknowledge this assistance.

5.1.1.   Students may wish to discuss their writing process with the Disability Team and their module coordinators, if they have questions.

5.1.2.   Students are encouraged to check their module handbooks for assessments with allocated marks for language accuracy.

5.2.   In a group project or assessment, it is appropriate for students to proofread the contributions of other individuals for grammatical errors or consistency in format and style.

5.3.   Where sharing of academic work for language correction contravenes Section 2.2 of the Good Academic Practice Policy.

6.   Infringements

6.1.   If a student uses an individual or service to proofread their work, they remain responsible for the content of the work which is submitted for assessment.

6.2.   Suspected use of non-permissible types of adjustment will be considered in accordance with the University's Good Academic Practice Policy.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date

01	Amendments to policy providing guidance for students and staff on language correction and proof-reading services and clarify boundaries between legitimate support and unacceptable intervention when receiving assistance.	Updated	-	June 2020
02	Updated for one year pending review	Updated	Administrative Officer Education and Student Experience	July 2024
2.1	Update to clarify section 5.1 on student responsibility where assessments are marked for language accuracy.	Updated	Academic Policy Officer (Digital & Student Experience)	August 2025