



To advance the  
profession of editing

## **Guidelines for editing research theses**

The Institute of Professional Editors' 'Guidelines for editing research theses' outline the extent and nature of editorial services that professional editors can provide when editing research students' theses and dissertations. Academic supervisors and research students also need to be clear about the editor's role as well as their own roles and responsibilities.

These guidelines were revised by IPEd and approved by the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies on 12 November 2010. They were originally developed by DDOGS collaboratively with IPEd's forerunner, the Council of Australian Societies of Editors, in 2001.

### **Background**

Students may use a professional editor in preparing their thesis for submission, but they should obtain permission from their principal supervisor to do so. They should also provide the editor with a copy of these guidelines before commencing work.

Professional editors need to be clear about the extent and nature of services they offer when editing research students' theses and dissertations. Academic supervisors of research students also need to be clear about the role of the professional editor as well as their own editorial role. Finally, students need to be clear about the scope and limits of services they might expect from a professional editor.

These guidelines have been developed primarily to give guidance to professional editors. They also provide a guide for academic supervisors and students. This document has been developed with close attention to the [Australian Standards for Editing Practice \(ASEP\)](#). Academic supervisors and students are encouraged to become familiar with this publication.

### **Editing and proofreading of research theses and dissertations**

It is expected that the academic supervisors of research higher degree students will provide their students with editorial advice relating to matters of substance and structure; language (including matters of clarity, voice and tone, grammar, spelling and punctuation, specialised and foreign material); and use of illustrations and tables. They may also assist with copyediting and proofreading. This type of advice is covered in Standards C ('Substance and structure'), D ('Language and illustrations') and E ('Completeness and consistency') of *ASEP*.

Professional editorial intervention should be restricted to copyediting and proofreading. This type of advice is covered in Standards D and E of *ASEP*.

In relation to matters of substance and structure (Standard C), the professional editor may draw attention to problems, but should not provide solutions. Examples may be offered in order to guide the student in resolving problems.

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Material for editing or proofreading should be submitted to the editor in electronic or hard copy (although if an individual academic institution has a preference for editing format, this should be followed). If the thesis is to be edited electronically, the editor and student need to agree on the process by which the student will check each suggested change before accepting it. For example, it is preferable that text marked up electronically is returned to the student in PDF format. The editor should keep on file all marked-up versions of the work.

**Acknowledgement of editor's contribution**

When a thesis has had the benefit of professional editorial advice, of any form, the name of the editor and a brief description of the service rendered, in terms of *ASEP*, should be printed as part of the list of acknowledgements or other prefatory matter.

See FAQs for editors, research students and research supervisors at [http://www.iped-editors.org/Resources\\_for\\_editors/Editing\\_theses](http://www.iped-editors.org/Resources_for_editors/Editing_theses)