



BLACK CAT EDITORIAL SERVICES

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Black Cat Proofreading for Students

Thank you for your interest in the Black Cat proofreading service for students. This guide is intended to help you decide whether this service is right for you, and to give you an idea of what to expect during and after the proofreading process.

What is the scope of the proofreading service?

Proofreading is not copy-editing, rewriting, restructuring or creating new content. The Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) describes proofreading as the final “[quality check and tidy-up](#)”. This is particularly important when working on student essays, dissertations and theses. A high level of intervention by a third party could lead to accusations of academic malpractice and seriously damage your academic career. Unless your institution has its own guidelines, which will take precedence over these, this is what the Black Cat proofreading service will cover:

- Checking and correcting spelling, grammar and punctuation in the main text, tables, figures, endnotes and appendices (as agreed). This may include limited rewording of sentences to correct the English.
- Making sure that spelling, punctuation and capitalisation are consistent. I will also make sure that other aspects of style and formatting (such as headings and numbering) are consistent.
- Identifying the incorrect use of words and either suggesting alternatives or notifying you that an alternative should be investigated by you.
- Highlighting any text where the meaning is not clear. I will outline the problem so that you can make amendments.
- Suggesting ways to divide very long sentences and paragraphs. However, I will not reduce the overall word count.
- Checking that the references follow the correct style (for example, Harvard or APA). However, I will not check the details and I will not add in any missing information. In addition, I will not arrange references into a required style if no attempt has been made by you to do so.

If you have any questions about whether the help you require is covered by the above, please don't hesitate to contact me. I will do my best to clarify anything you aren't sure about. Royal Holloway, University of London (RHUL), students should consult the guidelines given by CeDAS; the service for RHUL students is restricted to the identification of errors.

The Black Cat proofreading service sounds just the thing for my dissertation/thesis! What happens now?

Please make sure you are allowed by your institution to use the services of an editorial professional. I will require you to confirm this to me (using the project agreement detailed below) before I can accept your project. Please note: RHUL students must book my service via CeDAS.

If you haven't contacted me yet, please check the [contact page](#) for the information I need to provide you with a quote. If you have already received my quote via email, please respond confirming you would like to go ahead with the work. I will tell you at or before this stage if an advance payment will be required.

Once you confirm you are happy with my quote, I will send you a project agreement. It will record your name, the project name and word count, the brief, the start and completion dates (or agreed timeframe), the total cost, any advance payment required, and when payment is due. You will need to fill in the form with your name, a contact number and your address before returning it to me. You will also need to sign it to say that you accept the terms in the document and the [terms and conditions](#) on my website. It is really important that you read them; they are there to protect both of us.

Advance payments have to be received before I can confirm the project in my schedule. You will receive an invoice for the amount once I have the completed project agreement, and the invoice will contain the details you need to make a bank transfer. If you are a non-UK client, I may accept alternative payment methods – please discuss this with me before I send you the invoice. Once I have received the payment, I will send an email to confirm the project and start date with you.

I have completed the project agreement and paid any applicable advance. What's next?

I am happy for you to send me the file as soon as you can, but providing it the day before the proofreading work is to commence is often ideal. This makes sure I can spend all of the agreed start-date working on your project and often get it back to you sooner than you might expect!

When I receive your document I will email you to confirm I have it and the date it will be returned by. If you have any particular areas you would like me to pay special attention to, or any style decisions you would like me to make sure have been implemented, please let me know before I start work.

What will you send me when proofreading is finished?

I will send you an email titled 'Proofreading completed'. It will have the following documents attached:

- The proofread document with mark-up
- The style and feedback sheet for the project
- The invoice for the work
- The client sign-off form.

I compile a style sheet for all my jobs – it tracks your style choices (e.g. use of serial commas, *-ise* or *-ize* suffixes) and changes I have made for consistency – and I will send this to you for your future reference. (A style sheet may not be provided for very small projects as it would be so limited it would have little to no value.) If necessary, I will also include a section on any errors you make regularly – this should give you an idea of the areas of your writing you could improve.

The invoice will contain the details required for you to make the payment for the work. I will also provide a sign-off form for you to confirm that I have completed the project according to our project agreement and my terms and conditions. You can also use this form to provide feedback on the service; it would be greatly appreciated if you would consider writing a testimonial I can feature on the Black Cat website.

I have a question about a change you've made or I would like some more advice

Please don't hesitate to send me an email with any queries you have. I am happy to try to explain more or differently, and I can refer you to any appropriate resources for additional information. If you would like me to proofread new or additional content, I would be delighted to provide you with a quote for that work.

Unfortunately, I cannot provide additional help or proofreading for RHUL students. If you need more advice, you should contact CeDAS.

I've paid the invoice. Thanks, Hannah!

Thank you! I will send you an email to confirm I have received the payment.