

FAQs for research students

I want to employ the services of a professional editor. What should I do?

You should discuss the matter with your principal supervisor and obtain their approval. Next, you should read the guidelines, '[The editing of research theses by professional editors](#)', for guidance on what is involved in having your thesis professionally edited. You can then check the website of the editing society in your state or territory to identify a suitable professional editor. Alternatively, your educational institution may hold a list of approved professional editors from which you can make your selection. Ensure that the editor you choose has appropriate professional experience. You should also familiarise yourself with the publication [Australian standards for editing practice](#). This will inform you about the range of services that professional editors provide (see [also](#)).

What is *Australian standards for editing practice*?

The standards were devised by the Standards Working Group of the Council of Australian Societies of Editors (CASE), forerunner of the Institute of Professional Editors Limited; approved by the members of all Australian [societies of editors](#); ratified by CASE; and published in 2001. The standards were developed for editors to use as a basis for judging the comprehensiveness of their own knowledge and skills when promoting themselves and the editing profession generally.

The second edition of the *Standards* was published in 2013, after many months of consultation between IPEd's member societies, ratification by IPEd Council and approval from the societies' members. The structure of the revised edition remains unchanged, although content has been updated to reflect current practice and terminology. The second edition also includes a revised preface, a new introduction, which describes the fundamentals of editing and the role of editors, and a glossary.

What services will a professional editor provide?

A professional editor may only provide you with [copyediting](#) and/or [proofreading](#) services. Copyediting services include editing to achieve the following: clarity of expression; accuracy of grammar, spelling and punctuation; appropriate use of style and tone; appropriate use of technical, specialised or foreign material; appropriate, accurate and consistent use of illustrations, diagrams and the like. Proofreading services include checking the document to ensure that all document elements are complete and consistent. This includes verifying and correcting, as necessary, the following: the integrity of all parts of the publication; consistency in use of style, terminology, etc.; grammar, punctuation and spelling; referencing; illustrations and tables; and format and layout. See the *Standards* for full details of what is involved in copyediting and proofreading (Introduction, 'The fundamentals of editing', and Parts D and E).

What services will a professional editor not provide?

Professional editor should not advise or make corrections to the substance or structure of your thesis (*Standards* Part C), though they may draw any such problems to your attention. It is expected that your supervisor will have covered matters of substance and structure with you.

Can I provide my work to the professional editor in hard-copy or onscreen format?

Yes, you can provide either (unless your institution stipulates that editing should be carried out in one format rather than the other). You should discuss with the editor, at the outset, which format you will work in. According to which format is used, the editor will advise you on the process to be followed for the editing to be completed responsibly and efficiently.

What are my responsibilities in working with a professional editor?

You are responsible for providing the editor with a clean copy of your thesis in either onscreen or hard-copy form. You should also provide the editor with any style guide, manual or guidelines to which your thesis is required to conform. The editor will outline any other requirements of your role during the editing process. Most importantly, you are responsible for reviewing each change or correction suggested by the editor before accepting it. Bear in mind that this is your thesis and that the final responsibility for its integrity is yours.

What are my specific responsibilities when having my thesis edited onscreen?

You should not regard this editing method as a shortcut. As with hard-copy editing, you are responsible for checking each change individually before accepting it. Automatically accepting changes may introduce errors into your thesis and may undermine your ownership of and authority over your work. Your editor is advised to return electronically edited material to you in PDF format, to ensure that you consider and make each suggested editorial change to your own working copy.

Should the professional editor be acknowledged in the prefatory matter of the thesis?

Yes. The acknowledgement should take the following form: 'Professional editor, [editor's name], provided copyediting and proofreading services, according to the guidelines laid out in the university-endorsed national guidelines, 'The editing of research theses by professional editors'.

Will using an editor guarantee that all errors will be eliminated from my thesis?

The use of a professional editor should ensure that your thesis is expertly and thoroughly copyedited and/or proofread. However, it is impossible to guarantee that all copyediting and proofreading errors are eliminated. The final responsibility for the integrity of the thesis remains yours.

What kind of thesis is covered by the guidelines?

These guidelines cover any extended piece of academic writing completed at Bachelor,

Honours and postgraduate (including Diploma, Master's, MPhil, PhD and professional doctorate) levels.