

# Guidelines for the Editing of Research Theses by Professional Editors

## Higher Degree by Research Students

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These Guidelines are intended to inform staff and students about the extent, and the nature, of professional editorial assistance that may be given in the preparation of a research thesis.

Universities, including Curtin, are often approached by professional editors for guidance in how much assistance they should provide to students who have requested help in writing their theses. In response, the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDoGS) have collaborated with the Institute of Professional Editors Limited (IPEd) to develop an agreed set of guidelines based on the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*, available at [http://iped-editors.org/About\\_editing/Editing\\_standards](http://iped-editors.org/About_editing/Editing_standards). This document has five standards covering the following topics.

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| Standard A | The publishing process, conventions and industry practice. |
| Standard B | Management and liaison.                                    |
| Standard C | Substance and structure.                                   |
| Standard D | Language and illustrations.                                |
| Standard E | Completeness and consistency.                              |

Standards A and B are not relevant to the writing of theses. All substantive and conceptual guidance should be given by the supervisory team. This is the area of editorial assistance covered by Standard C. The supervisory team is also expected to provide tuition with regard to the format of the thesis, that is, issues about clarity, tone, grammar, spelling and punctuation, illustrations and tables, and internal consistency. These are the matters covered by Standards D and E and assistance with them may also be provided by professional editors.

It is important that the editorial process is a learning experience for the student and may be regarded as part of their research training. Consequently, editorial assistance should be rendered on a hard copy of the thesis.

The Guidelines for Editing Research Theses has been jointly agreed by the DDoGS and IPEd and is posted on the IPEd website at [http://iped-editors.org/Resources\\_for\\_editors/Editing\\_research\\_theses.aspx](http://iped-editors.org/Resources_for_editors/Editing_research_theses.aspx).

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### The Editing of Research Theses by Professional Editors

Professional editors need to be clear about the extent and nature of help they offer in the editing of 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.

### Proof-Reading and Editing of Research Theses and Dissertations

It is expected that the **academic supervisors** of research higher degree students will provide editorial advice to their students. This type of advice is covered in Standards C, D and E of the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*:

- Standard C, Substance and Structure
- Standard D, Language and Illustrations
- Standard E, Completeness and Consistency

Students may use a **professional editor** in preparing their thesis for submission, but they should discuss this with their supervisor and provide the editor with a copy of this policy before they commence work.

Professional editorial intervention should be restricted to:

- Standard D
- Standard E

Where a professional editor provides advice on matters of structure (Standard C), exemplars only should be given.

Material for editing or proofreading should be submitted in hard copy. In electronic copy it is too easy for the student to accept editorial suggestions without thinking about their implications.

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 *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*, should be printed as part of the list of acknowledgements or other prefatory matter. 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 of the thesis.

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## Editorial Services

The Society of Editors (WA) website at <http://www.editorswa.com/> has the following information which may be of assistance.

- Need an editor?: <http://editorswa.com/clients/>
- Editorial services: <http://editorswa.com/clients/editorial-services/>
- Editing research theses: <http://editorswa.com/clients/editing-research-theses/>
- Quoting and rates: <http://editorswa.com/clients/quoting-rates/>
- FAQs: <http://editorswa.com/clients/frequently-asked-questions/>