**Statement on editorial help for postgraduate research theses**

This document must be read in conjunction with the *Code of Practice on Academic Integrity*, in particular Appendix A.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Theses submitted for examination at the University of Birmingham must be solely the work of the postgraduate researcher (except where University Regulations permit the inclusion of appropriately referenced collaborative research or work – see Regulation 7.4.1[[2]](#footnote-2)). Therefore, postgraduate researchers **may not** employ ghostwriters to write all or part of their thesis, nor may they use generative AI for this purpose.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Postgraduate researchers **may** employ third-party editors, or make use of generative AI, for the purposes of proof-reading and improving the style and presentation of the thesis. The use of third-party editors or generative AI for editorial help must be explicitly acknowledged in the thesis.

Editorial help with the following is **permitted**:

* spelling and punctuation
* formatting and sorting of footnotes and endnotes
* ensuring the thesis follows the conventions of grammar and syntax in written English
* shortening long sentences and paragraphs
* changing the voice (passive to active, or vice versa) or person (third to first, or vice versa) of verbs, as appropriate
* improving the positioning of tables and illustrations and the clarity, grammar, spelling and punctuation of any text in or under tables and illustrations
* ensuring consistency of page numbers, headers and footers

Editorial help with the following is **not permitted**:

* changing the text of the thesis so as to clarify and/or develop the ideas and arguments
* reducing the length of the thesis so it falls within the specified word limit
* correcting information within the thesis
* changing ideas and arguments put forward within the thesis
* translating the thesis into English

Where editorial help is provided by a **third-party editor**, the editor must be provided with a copy of this Statement and must complete a Third-Party Editor Declaration, indicating the extent of the editorial help provided. The postgraduate researcher must include in the acknowledgements section of the thesis a description of the third-party editor’s contribution.

Where editorial help is provided by a **generative AI tool**, the postgraduate researcher must include in the acknowledgements section of the thesis (i) the name of the generative AI tool, (ii) a description of the editorial remit given to the tool, and (iii) confirmation that the editorial contribution made by the tool did not exceed this remit.[[4]](#footnote-4)

1. <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/legislation/documents/public/cohort-legislation-2024-25/cop-academic-integrity-24-25.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/legislation/documents/public/cohort-legislation-2024-25/regulations-24-25-section-7.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This does not preclude the use of a scribe where verbatim dictation is required as a reasonable adjustment. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See also the section headed ‘Student use of Generative AI tools’ in the Student Guidance here: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/libraryservices/asc/student-guidance-gai.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)