



FRAMEWORK FOR MARKING OF LANGUAGE EDITING ACCREDITATION EXAMINATIONS

Editing is not simply a matter of correcting spelling and the occasional grammar error. The following matters all need to be considered:

Sense and style

The content of the text needs to be clear and comprehensible and a single style must be maintained throughout.

- Principles of clear language must be applied.
- Ambiguity, repetition and verbosity must be avoided.
- Clear connections must be used between phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and sections.
- Texts/sentences must be complete and contain all the necessary information.
- Unnecessary information or distractions in the text must be minimised.

Consistency

- There must be consistency in the way texts are marked up, so that the client/marker is easily able to see what changes or corrections are being made.
- There must be consistency in the way texts are laid out, e.g. the use of bold, italic, etc. for headings and subheadings.
- There must be consistency in the implementation of conventions, e.g. use of capitals, spaces with measurements, the use of figures or the writing out of numbers, etc.

Logic

Texts must be well organised. There should be logical structural links between paragraphs, sections and ideas.

There must also be logic in the structure of the physical aspects of the texts, i.e. the use of headings and paragraphs, the way in which headings and subheadings are indicated (use of bold, italic, etc.)

Language usage

- Accepted conventions related to the citing of sources must be used.
- Editors must show sensitivity to non-inclusive or potentially offensive language.
- Editors must be aware of conventions related to the expression of foreign and historical currencies and units of measurement and the conversion of these figures where necessary.

Grammar, spelling and punctuation

Punctuation must be properly used to ensure clarity of meaning and ease of reading. Editors must be aware of conventions governing grammar and syntax in English, as well as established conventions of spelling and punctuation.

The following should be considered:

- Rules related to capitalisation
- Punctuation with bullets and the display of lists
- Conventions governing the expression of numbers, dates, percentages, measurements and statistical data
- Conventions governing the use of italics, hyphens, symbols and shortened forms
- Conventions governing quoted material

Pass or fail?

It is difficult to quantify a pass or fail in an editing exam. A client who employs an (accredited) editor expects a product completely devoid of errors or imperfections and our exam standards need to reflect this. However, we can still distinguish between major and minor errors, on a similar basis to the distinction used in translation, although fewer errors are regarded as minor in editing:

- **Major errors:** *text that is misleading or unclear; amendments that change the meaning of the original; deletion of vital information; insertion of information without a basis or that changes the meaning; errors of grammar or syntax; spelling errors that would not be picked up by a spell checker (e.g. from for form); inconsistencies; non-adherence to accepted conventions.*
- **Minor errors:** *Missed errors or improvements that render the text slightly less elegant but do not affect its message; minor spelling errors that would generally be picked up by a spell checker.*

Candidates fail the exam if –

- There are five or more major errors in the paper as a whole or two or more major errors in a single question
- There are more than 10 minor errors in the paper as a whole or more than five minor errors in a single question