



Guidelines for Graduate Supervisors and Students involving an editor in student thesis and dissertation writing

The decision about whether a student can or should hire an editor during the final phases of writing the thesis or dissertation is made by each supervisor (or committee) on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the student. Students should not engage an editor before discussing with their supervisor.

If a supervisor (or committee) decides to allow or encourage a student to hire an editor, the following points should be taken into account:

- There is a difference between peer review and professional editing. Students may freely discuss their work and get feedback from friends, professors, colleagues, and peers, as long as the work remains their own and they follow nursing ethics (e.g., regarding confidentiality). However, if students wish to work with a professional (i.e., paid) editor, they should discuss this with their supervisor.
- The professional association, Editors Association of Canada, certifies editors. Certification recognizes an editor's knowledge and skill; thus to ensure quality and appropriate experience, supervisors may want to recommend students choose from the EAC's list of certified editors who have experience with academic writing.
- Editing of theses and dissertations brings ethical challenges. Students are expected to do their own intellectual work, which includes conveying their ideas in correct English and readable, well-organized prose. Furthermore, a graduate education includes the student understanding and mastering a bibliographic style, such as APA. Thus an editor's involvement should be relegated to suggestions on stylistic changes, copy-editing, and proofreading (definition of these terms can be found on the document linked below). In essence, editors can "polish" an already solid thesis or dissertation.
- To facilitate clear understanding of the limits to editing, supervisors and students may want to use a three way contract between the editor, student, and supervisor that lays out the agreed upon areas for change. EAC provides a blueprint contract in their document, Guidelines for Ethical Editing of Theses / Dissertations <http://www.editors.ca/hire/theses.html>
- The cost of a professional editor may be difficult or prohibitive for graduate students.
- Students whose first language is not English may benefit greatly from the process of working with an editor.