Proofreading checklist

Pre-design text proofing

- As well as reading the text yourself, it's helpful to ask someone who has been less involved with a document to proofread it.
- Read once for sense and flow, and then a second time purely to check accuracy.
- Check consistency of language e.g. use of capitals, format of numbers, etc. – see [Writing at Warwick house style](#).
- Spell check, but beware American spellings, and look out for 'real' wrong words, e.g. 'hen' for 'when'.
- Check spelling of names, even when they seem obvious (e.g. Catherine or Katharine?)
- Ensure the correct formatting is used consistently e.g. italics for the names of reports, books etc., initial caps on first word only for headings unless it's the name/title of something.
- Have you used the same word multiple times within one paragraph? If so, try to swap one of these for an alternative word that means the same.

Design proofing

The designer will send you a pdf proof to check. You may go through this process more than once, especially with a large document

- Are you happy with the overall look and feel?
- Check the copy is in the right place, in the right order, with no omissions or duplications. Doing a paragraph count and checking the first and last word in each paragraph match the word document you send to the designer will help with this.
- Check your illustrations and picture captions.
- Ensure pages are numbered correctly and internal page references are accurate.
- Look out for 'widows' and 'orphans' (words that sit on a line on their own) and get rid of these if possible.
- Have any of the paragraphs you sent to the designers as text gone missing?
- Check carefully page headings, subheads and section tabs/headers/footers (particularly if these run vertically) – it's easy to miss an error when the typeface or positioning is different.
- Check that text hasn't been split awkwardly from one column/page to the next i.e. avoid a single line of text on its own at the start of a column or page.
- Re-check formatting such as italics has been carried over in the designed pages. Sometimes, designers may accidentally forget to copy these from your word document.
- When reading for accuracy, some people find it helpful to read pages out of order or to start with the last paragraph on a page and work back to the first, as this can help stop you getting absorbed in the narrative content.

Print proofing

You will also get to see a further proof from the printer. This is your final chance to catch any errors. Give it one last read through (bearing in mind that typos, etc. should have been picked up at either

text/design stage because you may be charged extra for amends at this stage), and then make the following final checks:

• Pagination – Make sure the pages are in right order (you may need to ask your printer for a 'book proof', as print proofs often arrive in large sheets with the pages positioned for cutting, so they won't be in consecutive order).
• Colour – Does the colour look as you were expecting? Are the images clear and crisp?
• Column endings – Make sure the text is complete; occasionally, technical issues at pre-press stage can make the final line of text drop out!