Wayne State University
Policies and Procedures Proofreading Tip Sheet

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide proofreading tips for Wayne State University policies and procedures. Proofreading is done to find and correct all mechanical, grammatical, and typographical errors.

When to Do It

Proofreading should be done prior to submitting policies to Office of the President, HR Associate Vice President's Office or Office of the Provost for review and approval.

Common Errors to Look For

- Uppercased 'U' in university. University should be placed in lower case when used as a common noun. Example: We have a special responsibility to promote an informed public understanding of the university, the value of its research, the talents of its people and its value to Michigan. The 'U' in university should be uppercased if you to Office of the President, HR Associate Vice President's Office or Office of the Provost are talking about Wayne State University; the same applies when you shorten the name of the university in a text. For example: Wayne State University has a large campus. The University also has a state-of-the-art math laboratory.

- Usage of "i.e." which means that is" as oppose to "e.g." which means for example. Always use e.g. if your reference(s) is/are not comprehensive. Use i.e. if your reference(s) is/are comprehensive.

- Transposed letters, as in "recieve"

- Duplicate letters, as in "sendiing"

- Omitted letters, as in "numbrs"

- Substitute letters, as in "commemt"

- Personal puzzlers, as in spelling ("accommodate") or in usage ("lay" versus "lie")

- Usage of acronym without a previous reference. Always spell out first reference. Follow spelled-out version with abbreviation only if acronym will be used in the same document.

  - Example: The College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts (CFPCA) offers programs for creative students. Musicians, dancers, actors and writers take classes through the CFPCA.

- Misplaced commas. In a list, do not use a comma before the final item, unless that item contains a conjunction.

  Examples of correct comma placement:

  - *Our flag is red, white and blue.*

  - *The barbeque is sponsored by the Dean of Students Office, the Office of the President, and the Office of Special Events and Services.*

How to Do It

1. Make several passes: Focus on a different aspect on each pass: spelling, grammar, punctuation, typographical errors. Segmenting helps concentration.
2. Read backwards: There are a number of ways to do this. You can read backwards paragraph-by-paragraph, sentence-by sentence, or word-by-word. Going word by word is extremely time-consuming, so I (many other proofreaders do to) prefer to do it sentence-by-sentence. Some proofreaders prefer to read backwards by section or page (I've used this method too and found it effective).
3. Read out loud: Reading aloud forces you to slow down. You must pronounce each word and observe each punctuation mark, and you are more likely to catch the small mistakes in "insignificant" words (like "of", "the," "and").
4. Read with a partner: It's effective for the same reasons as reading out loud, but it doubles the ability to catch mistakes.
5. Read diagonally: This helps you check for word divisions, hyphenation, and repetition. Start at the end of the line (on the right-hand side of the page) and go to the beginning of the next line (on the left-hand side of the page).
6. Turn the page upside down: This helps you check for capitalization, which tends to stand out readily when the page is upside down.
7. Scan vertically: This helps you check for spacing, outlining, and alignment. Look for any odd clumps of white space, including "rivers" of white.
8. Read in three-to-six word clusters: Limit the amount of material the eye and brain take in at one time. It prevents the brain from looking for ideas and focuses on details.
9. Use "free-proofing": This helps you catch major problems when you have a limited time or large volumes of material. Read quickly, flagging anything you sense has a problem. Go straight through without stopping. Then go back and look at only the marked items in detail.

Marketing and Communications Resources

Editorial Style Guide: http://mac.wayne.edu/print/manual.php

Identity Manual: http://mac.wayne.edu/print/identity.php

Web Publishing Recommendations: http://wcs.wayne.edu/publishing/index.php