

TOM ALBRIGHTON (ABC COPYWRITING) ACADEMIC EDITING SERVICES

I offer an editing service to help academic authors improve their articles ready for (re-)submission to academic journals. This document provides details.

If your question isn't answered here, please get in touch with me at tom@abccopywriting.com.

Who I am

I have a bachelor's degree in English Literature (class 2:1) and have been writing and editing professionally for almost 25 years – first in publishing houses and agencies, and for the last 15+ years as a freelancer.

Since some of my work is writing marketing materials for commercial firms, I position myself as a copywriter (trading as [ABC Copywriting](#)). However, my original background was in non-fiction publishing and editing rather than advertising.

I co-founded [ProCopywriters](#), the UK alliance for commercial writers, and ran it for four years before handing it on to a new director.

I have written and self-published [six non-fiction books](#): *Copywriting Made Simple* (which has been included on several advertising course syllabuses), *How to Write Clearly, AI Can't Write But You Can*, *The Freelancer's Business Brain*, *The Freelance Introvert* and *One for Joy*.

You can view my full cv at [LinkedIn](#).

Who I've worked for

I have worked for academics and business managers at the following institutions.

Institution	Location
Aalto University	Finland
ARMINES	France
BI Norwegian Business School	Norway
Bocconi University	Italy
Brunel University	UK
Ca' Foscari University of Venice	Italy
Cambridge University (Hughes Hall)	UK
Catholic University of Portugal	Portugal
École Polytechnique	France
EHL Hospitality Business School	Switzerland
Erasmus University	Netherlands
ESSCA School of Management	France
ESSEC Business School	France
Federal Reserve Bank of New York	USA

Ghent University	Belgium
Hamburg University of Technology	Germany
Hanken School of Economics	Finland
Harvard Business School	USA
HEC Montréal	Canada
IESE Business School	Spain
Imperial College London	UK
INSEAD	Singapore
Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz	Germany
Johannes Kepler University Linz	Austria
Linköping University	Sweden
London Business School	UK
LUISS Guido Carlo University	Italy
Lund University	Sweden
McGill University	Canada
McMaster University	Canada
MINES ParisTech/Télécom ParisTech	France
Norwich Business School (University of East Anglia)	UK
Pompeu Fabra University	Spain
PwC Strategy& (Austria) GmbH	Austria
Rotterdam School of Management	Netherlands
San Diego State University	USA
Stanford Graduate School of Business	USA
Stockholm School of Economics	Sweden
Stockholm University	Sweden
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich)	Switzerland
Technical University of Munich	Germany
TÉLUQ Montréal	Canada
Temple University	USA
UNINA	Italy
University at Albany/State University of New York	USA
University of East Anglia (corporate and student communications)	UK
University of Lisbon (DINÂMIA'CET Centre for Socioeconomic and Territorial Studies)	Portugal
University of Lucerne	Switzerland
University of Oldenburg	Germany
University of Oslo	Norway
University of Southern Denmark	Denmark
University of St. Gallen	Switzerland
University of Sussex	UK
University of Zurich	Switzerland
Utrecht University	Netherlands

I have worked on articles ultimately published in journals including *Organization Science*, the *Strategic Management Journal*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Management Science*, *Nature*, *Research Policy*, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *Energy Policy*, *Organization Studies* and many others.

What I do

My full editing service comprises two stages: an on-screen edit and a proofread from a paper printout.

Stage 1

Copy-editing on screen

During the first stage, I will work through your Word document on screen and:

- Bring the English up to **native-speaker standard** – either American or British English, as required by you or your target journal. (Most of my academic clients have English as a second language.)
- Ensure that **spelling, grammar, punctuation, abbreviations** and so on are correct and consistent, based on the **style guide** of your institution or target publication if required.
- Make the **writing style consistent** – for example, if multiple authors have contributed.
- **Improve the sense** so that ideas are communicated as clearly as possible.
- **Improve the structure and flow** of the text. I will often reorder points within a paragraph, or across a few paragraphs, to make the argument flow better. I don't usually do major restructuring unless you ask me to.
- Suggest **new ways to express the same ideas**, e.g. by streamlining the language to make it more forceful, or by adding commonly used English idioms to make the tone more conversational. This is often useful for qualitative or mixed-methods papers that include lots of interview quotes. As a UK national, I have a better command of idioms in British English than American English, but I will do my best for both.
- Alert you to potential **inconsistencies, omissions or logical flaws** by commenting – subject to the limits of my knowledge. I'm not a subject expert in any area, and my services cannot substitute for a peer review by a suitably qualified academic. Therefore, while I will raise any points about your logic or argument that seem relevant, this is a 'bonus' rather than a core part of my service.
- **Raise queries** about points that I cannot clarify, or things you may wish to add or change. These will be added as comments. I will also query my own amendments if I am not 100% sure that they are correct or desirable (for example, 'Is this what you meant?').
- **Explain my own changes** with comments where I feel this is helpful. For example, if my change raises some point of English usage that I feel it would be helpful for you to know,

I will explain it in a brief comment. Or I might emphasise that the original text definitely will not work, so you must either accept my change or make another one of your own.

- **Make cuts** to the document – see ‘Reducing length’ below.

I can also check references if you wish, but most clients either do this themselves, or use automated software. Reference checking is at extra cost to the basic rate quoted below.

Stage 2

Proofread from paper

During the second stage, I print out the entire text, re-read it from paper and make any additional corrections to the text that are needed.

Reading from paper is the best way to catch minor errors and inconsistencies that are easy to miss when reading from a screen (for a review, see [Kong, Seo, & Zhai, 2018](#)).

I also make any additional changes and comments that seem necessary at this stage. Often, parts of a document can be seen in a different light once the entire text has been read through once before – for example, internal references between early and later sections.

There is also the simple psychological benefit of returning to the text after a day or so, which often allows me to identify new areas for improvement. I may even revert my own changes if, on reflection, I realise they are not needed after all.

Once your paper is accepted, I can also check the final proof that you receive from the journal, if you wish. However, please bear in mind that as I work repeatedly on the same text, and become more familiar with it, it becomes progressively more difficult to spot mistakes and weaknesses. Therefore, you may prefer to work with a specialist proof-reader for this stage.

One stage or two?

For important submissions, most clients choose a two-stage edit, which offers the highest quality and accuracy.

If you prefer, I can carry out just the first stage. I may miss some minor errors, or potentially even introduce some of my own, if I am doing intensive editorial work or heavy cutting.

However, some clients find that a single pass is enough for some projects – for example, if the paper is at a relatively early stage and not about to be submitted, or for material that will only be published in an online appendix.

Most clients also choose one-stage editing for response letters to editors/reviewers, because 100% technical accuracy is not so vital.

The end result

The final deliverable is a copy of your original Word document with tracked changes and comments for you to review.

The level of intervention obviously depends on the original text and what you asked me to do. However, many papers end up with one or two amends per line (perhaps 1500–2000 changes in a 15,000-word paper) and 50+ comments throughout the document. Comments may range from simple, one-word queries through to extended commentary on specific meanings or potential inconsistencies in the argument.

If you have minor queries and changes following my edit, I will be happy to follow up on them.

You have the final say

All my suggestions are yours to use, adapt or overrule as you see fit.

As long as I help to improve your work in one way or another, and increase your chances of publication, I am happy.

Reducing length

I can reduce the overall length of your paper or target specific sections you choose.

I can aim for a designated target length or simply try to cut as much as possible. Sometimes I can even exceed your target, which gives you a choice between accepting the shorter paper as it stands or reverting selected cuts to restore details you'd prefer to keep.

With papers that have not been edited before, I can usually cut around 10% without removing anything substantive from the content. Fifteen percent is usually the maximum. Cutting beyond 15% may mean losing some detail – but all my changes are tracked and can be reverted if you wish. However, at this level, it is often better to consider cutting entire sections, or moving them to an appendix, rather than harming the whole paper by trying to cut too hard throughout.

I usually reduce length by making many small cuts throughout the document, and only rarely by deleting entire sentences or passages. If I think a longer section could perhaps be cut, I will say so in a comment.

I will never cut text that includes citations. Instead, I will add a comment suggesting that the text could be cut, focusing particularly on sections where you are citing works you already cite elsewhere.

Please note that citations themselves increase the length and may be essential, which means that it is inherently difficult to condense citation-heavy sections (such as literature reviews).

‘Revise and resubmit’

I am often asked to help with articles at this stage, and with covering letters.

Within the limits of my expertise, I can help you confirm that you have complied with the requests of editors and reviewers.

I can help you strike the right tone in your responses to editors and reviewers, particularly where you have decided not to act on the feedback or want to ‘push back’ against their arguments without causing offence (or jeopardising your chances of publication).

If you wish, I can edit only the parts of a paper that you have revised. You can let me know which parts by highlighting them in the document. However, this does raise the risk of editorial inconsistency if I have not edited the rest of the paper before, or if you amend the text and decide not to ask me to look at it again.

Subject areas covered

I am happy to edit a text on any subject to the best of my abilities. I have edited many papers on strategy and management, and related disciplines such as management psychology and decision-making, so I can often engage more deeply with the content of papers in those areas.

Please note that I have no expertise whatsoever in statistics or econometrics, so I can’t verify the accuracy of any mathematical models or statistical results. If I raise any queries in this area, it will probably be because a result or description seems inconsistent to me as a lay reader.

Document formats I can work in

At present, I can work with documents in Microsoft Word and Overleaf, but not LaTeX.

This is because the LaTeX software does not natively support either track changes or comments, which are my two main means for conveying my changes to you in a flexible, reversible and legible way.

The only possible workaround is to export a version of your paper in Word format from LaTeX, which I then use for my edit. However, you would then need to replicate all the approved changes in the original LaTeX file, which raises the risk of errors or omissions. Also, the export from LaTeX to Word seems far from perfect; formatting often gets corrupted, which makes the document unwieldy and further increases the risk of error. Overall, I do not recommend this approach, but I will use it if you are willing to accept its inherent risks.

Tables and diagrams

I can check tables and diagrams as part of my edit, particularly those that present qualitative data (e.g. tables of quotes from interviewees).

I can edit diagrams directly if you provide an appropriate file format (Word, PowerPoint, etc). If an editable file is not available, I may suggest my changes in comments or a separate file – but if the changes are extensive, it is quicker and safer for me to make my changes direct.

Please note that PowerPoint and Excel do not track changes very precisely, so it is best to provide textual information in Word if you can.

Use of AI technologies

For the avoidance of doubt, and to help with the relevant disclosures for journals, I do not use any AI writing technologies (ChatGPT, Copilot, etc) for any aspect of my work.

Specifically, I do not use AI technology to produce new text (e.g., an abstract or executive summary), check for linguistic accuracy, rephrase existing text, fact-check, compile references or carry out any other tasks involved in my editorial work.

I can check or edit content that you have produced using AI writing technologies, but with the disclaimer that the risks of using such content will remain even after I have carried out my work. These risks include, but are not limited to, factual inaccuracies and plagiarism/copyright infringement.

By the same token, I cannot guarantee to make text ‘AI checker-proof’ or remove any obligation to disclose the use of AI writing tools to your target journal.

Writing from scratch

I can write content from scratch based on your notes, a Skype conversation, etc.

Most clients find this more useful for shorter and/or more accessible pieces, such as case studies for executive education and articles for the popular business press, rather than full academic articles.

Timescales

I can usually advise timescales for your specific project when you get in touch.

At the moment, I usually require a lead time of four weeks for an average-length academic article. I may be able to offer a better timescale if another project is delayed or cancelled.

The actual work usually takes three to four days, or perhaps less if you opt for a single-stage edit only.

I also take advance bookings, if you know that your article will be ready on a particular date.

I appreciate that projects involving multiple co-authors are hard to schedule. If timescales slip, I will always do my best to accommodate your work. If you have booked in advance, please let me know as soon as you can that the paper will not be arriving when planned.

Costs

My basic rate for academic editing is GBP85 per thousand words, for the standard two-stage service.

If you require just one pass, the rate is GBP65 per thousand words.

VAT @ 20% will be chargeable if the paying institution is located in the UK.

Invoicing and payment

Nature of the relationship

I trade as a limited company based in the UK (ABC Business Communications Ltd, registration number 5654005, VAT registration number 876 5097 76). ABC is a one-person company.

Therefore, my relationship with your institution is that of a company providing a service – **not** an individual employed on a temporary or contract basis.

Registering on supplier databases

I am happy to register on your institution's supplier database if necessary. I would be grateful if this process can be initiated as soon as possible, to avoid delays in payment.

Invoice format

I submit my invoice electronically, in PDF format, when the work is completed.

I can format invoices in some other languages if that is helpful to you. This is a feature of my accounting software; I do not do the translation myself.

Splitting invoices

If you wish, I can split larger invoices between two or three individuals, institutions or departments. I prefer not to split invoices for smaller amounts (< GBP500) since bank charges can make it uneconomical.

I may vary the amounts on the various invoices slightly, rather than making a perfectly even split, as it can be difficult to track multiple invoices for the exact same amount, all issued on the same day.

Currency and international payments

Since I trade as a UK company, my invoice will be denominated in GBP and my bank account is in the UK.

If you are outside the UK, your organisation will need to arrange an international bank transfer to make payment. The actual amount paid in your own currency will depend on exchange rates at the time of payment. Your bank may charge a fee to make the payment (as my bank charges a fee to receive it).

I can submit quotes and invoices in other currencies, but only by prior agreement, because this exposes me to exchange rate fluctuations after the price is agreed.

If you are paying as a private individual, one of the easiest ways to make an international payment is through PayPal. You do not need a PayPal account and you can use your normal credit or debit card (e.g. Visa).

Company status for tax purposes, VAT (IVA), EIN

Please note that for the purposes of invoicing, payment and tax, I am a company acting as a supplier to your organisation, *not* an individual employed on a temporary basis. All the relevant taxes are my own responsibility and paid in the UK.

My company is ABC Business Communications Ltd, registered in England and Wales No. 5654005, VAT No. 876 5097 76. My official role is Director, but it is a one-person company.

If your organisation is located within the EU, I will need its VAT (IVA) number so that I can submit an invoice without VAT added. I can also provide copies of a Certificate of Residence if required.

If your organisation is in the USA, I already have an EIN from the IRS to allow for payment to be made (98-1206272).

Payment terms

Payment is due within 30 days of the completion of the work.

After the 30 days are up, my accounting system will send you automatic reminders until the invoice is paid.