



Association of Freelance Editors, Proofreaders & Indexers of Ireland

## **Code of Practice**

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose**

This code of practice is intended for the guidance of Members and Associates of the Association of Freelance Editors, Proofreaders and Indexers of Ireland (AFEPI Ireland). (Hereafter, the term ‘member’ will be used to refer to both, unless explicitly stated.) Its purpose is to establish and maintain standards of best practice.

### **1.2 Document history**

This document was adapted from the 2009 AFEPI Ireland Code of Practice, based entirely on the SfEP’s Code of Practice, for which permission was obtained. It was further adapted in 2014, and again in 2017.

### **1.3 Constitution**

This Code of Practice is enshrined in the Association’s Constitution (March 2017), Clause 19.

## **2. Duties to the profession**

### **2.1 Competence**

**2.1.1** Members should take all reasonable care to ensure, by virtue of their skills, training and experience, that they are competent to fulfil the expectations implied by use of the words ‘editor’, ‘proofreader’ or ‘indexer’. Clients must be able to approach potential members in the confidence that this is the case.

**2.1.2** Members should maintain standards of work and conduct consistent with their professional status in all working relationships and must not act in such a way as to bring their profession or the Association into disrepute.

**2.1.3** Members should uphold the reputation of the profession and seek to improve professional standards.

### **2.2 Continuing professional development**

Members should make every reasonable attempt to maintain, improve and update their skills and knowledge, especially where new technology creates changes in publishing practice. This includes reading trade journals and reference works, requesting feedback from clients, seeking advice from colleagues and attending training courses and conferences.

## **2.3 Integrity**

- 2.3.1** Members should give a true and fair representation of their qualifications, experience and skills when advertising or describing their services. Members should not accept any job which they believe they cannot carry out to an acceptable standard, for whatever reason. Such reasons could include:
- The client allows inadequate time or remuneration for the amount of work required to complete the job to an acceptable standard.
  - The member has insufficient time available to accommodate the amount of work required.
  - The member has inadequate skills or knowledge for the type of work involved (although a member may accept such work on a ‘trainee’ basis, with the explicit agreement of the client).
- 2.3.2** If a member accepts a job in good faith but subsequently discovers that they cannot carry it out to an acceptable standard, the client should be informed as early as possible, and the member must be prepared to negotiate a settlement.
- 2.3.3** Members are accountable for their services: they are responsible for making the best use of the time available for a job and expediting its completion to the required standard within the client’s specified schedule, whenever possible. The member should make every reasonable effort to deliver completed work to schedule and must inform the client promptly if circumstances arise that make delay likely.
- 2.3.4** Members should present their work in a professional manner consistent either with normal trade practice or with a convention agreed with the client. Correspondence, additional text, lists of queries, cover sheets, illustration lists, invoices, etc., must be typed; any handwritten notes or corrections must be neat and legible. When handing over the work the member must detail any material still outstanding and provide a sheet of style points specific to the work.
- 2.3.5** It is recommended that copies of completed work sent to the client be retained in electronic format for at least six months after the publication date of the work.
- 2.3.6** Files supplied by a client must be virus-checked upon receipt and before return. The client’s original files must not be overwritten, but copied and renamed before editing.

**2.3.7** Members working on academic material for undergraduate and postgraduate clients, whereby the material is to be submitted for assessment by a third-level institution, should request that their client provide written confirmation from the relevant institution granting permission to the client to use proofreading and/or copy-editing services. Specifically, members should not provide the following services:

- advice on structure;
- checking calculations or formulae;
- compiling of reference lists/bibliographies;
- correcting information;
- development of ideas or content;
- ghost writing;
- reformatting and layout;
- re-labelling of figures, diagrams or illustrations;
- re-writing;
- translation.

## **2.4 Communication**

**2.4.1** Members should establish that the client understands the distinctions between the different types of editing and is aware of what proofreading entails (see Appendix 1, p. 7.). Clients should be clear from the outset about what they are paying for (and not paying for).

**2.4.2** In all dealings with clients, members should recognise that they bear equal responsibility with the client for effective communication and for the successful completion of any job undertaken.

**2.4.3** It is the member's responsibility to raise any initial queries with the client and they must be proactive in doing so. If any matter in the brief or other documentation or in matters under discussion with the client is unclear, the member must seek clarification as early as possible in the process.

**2.4.4** While a job is in progress, members should keep clients informed of their availability, giving alternative access numbers where appropriate. Urgent communications must be made by telephone, to avoid the risk that emails will remain unanswered.

**2.4.5** It is the member's responsibility to keep the client informed of progress as appropriate.

## **2.5 Feedback**

Members may expect to be given constructive feedback from a client on the quality of and level of satisfaction with the completed work. This feedback may be sought following a first assignment from a new client, following an assignment of a different nature from an established client, or at any point in the working relationship where the member and client agree it would serve a useful purpose. In the event that feedback is negative, members engage to keep communications professional and courteous.

## **2.6 Confidentiality**

### **2.6.1 Relating to clients**

In the course of dealings with clients, members may be privy to confidential information and have access to sensitive unpublished material, whether contained in a text or in discussions and correspondence. Members should at all times respect these confidences and under no circumstances disclose any such information to a third party without the express authorisation of the client. In all dealings with third parties, members must bear in mind that, in fulfilling their editorial obligation, they are acting as their client's representative. Members may be required to sign confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements.

### **2.6.2 Relating to publishers' authors**

Members should respect the confidence of the author and refrain from discussing individual authors by name, except with the client (when the client is not the author), before publication of the material.

It is in the interest of both members and clients for the member to build up satisfactory and mutually respectful working relationships with authors on whose texts they are working and to respect their sensitivities. Members should recognise authors' rights, including moral rights, and must use their best attempts to avoid overstepping reasonable levels of editorial intervention within the context of the level of edit agreed with the client.

### **2.6.3 Relating to documents**

Members should take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safe keeping of documents and original material belonging to or held on behalf of clients and, where indicated, must use the method of dispatch suggested by the client. They must keep copies of query lists and important correspondence with third parties, including emails and records of phone conversations, for at least six months after publication, and must make these available to the client on request.

Members should take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safe disposal or return of confidential documents, either on paper or in electronic format, including copies.

## **2.7 Legal**

**2.7.1** Members should be familiar with the main provisions of the current legislation relating to libel, obscenity, blasphemy, incitement to racial hatred, plagiarism and the reproduction of copyright material belonging to third parties. They should ensure that these provisions are adhered to and bring any suspected infringement to the attention of the client. Note that liability remains with the author, and it is worth reminding them of this fact and recommending that they engage a lawyer to read their text for potential issues.

**2.7.2** Members should be aware of their responsibilities with respect to personal data under the Data Protection Acts (1988–2003).

## **2.8 Self-employment obligations**

**2.8.1** Members should take full responsibility for the running of their businesses and for their obligations to Revenue and other official bodies.

**2.8.2** Members should seek to ensure that they have an environment in which they can work efficiently and with appropriate concentration, away from shared or family areas in the home, and that they have access to the necessary equipment (including both computer hardware and software) and reference material for the type of work undertaken.

**2.8.3** Members should also make themselves aware of the health and safety legislation that applies to their working environment, and office equipment must be chosen and arranged with long-term health and safety in mind.

## **2.9 Agreement of terms and fees**

**2.9.1** In their own interests, members should ensure that the terms on which they accept a job are clearly defined at the outset, either by the member or by the client, and agreed between the parties, preferably in writing. Any terms and conditions beyond those which ordinarily apply must also be agreed at the outset.

**2.9.2** Any agreement should include:

- the date(s) for delivery of the job, or instalments thereof, to the member;
- the date(s) for delivery of the completed job, or instalments thereof, to the client;

- an estimate of the work required, including due allowance for time spent assimilating the brief, preparing handover notes and correspondence, as agreed;
- the proposed fee for the job, or alternatively the rate per hour or per page or per 1,000 words and, where possible, an estimate of the total;
- which expenses (e.g. postage, paper, copying, travel) are to be borne by the client and, where possible, an estimate of their amount;
- any special dispatch requirements for material belonging to or held on behalf of the client by the member;
- the payment period from invoice date and any arrangement for payment by instalments;
- whether or not the copy-editor's or proofreader's work will be credited and a complimentary copy of the published work is to be provided.

**2.9.3** Members should make every reasonable attempt to adhere to the agreed budget and schedule for a job. Whenever circumstances arise which make it fair and reasonable that the agreed terms be renegotiated (e.g. where the work received is not of the standard, length or complexity envisaged), the member must inform the client at the earliest opportunity to agree on a strategy for completing and re-costing the work.

## **2.10 Briefing**

Members should try to obtain a clear and adequate brief for any job undertaken. The brief must set out the tasks to be carried out and the limits of the member's responsibility. While the onus rests on the client to supply essential information, members must seek clarification of any points not covered by the brief.

## **2.11 Subcontracting**

Members should not subcontract work to others without the knowledge and consent of the client. When subcontracting work, members must satisfy themselves that the subcontractor is competent and reliable. Members remain responsible for the terms they agree with the client and for the quality of work supplied to the client.

# **3. Duties to the Association**

## **3.1 Treatment of colleagues**

- 3.1.1** Members should treat their professional colleagues with due consideration and respect and must cooperate with them.
- 3.1.2** Members should respect the confidence of colleagues and refrain from discussing them by name with third parties (except with permission, e.g. if asked to provide a reference).



### **3.2 Use of the Association name and logo**

Members are encouraged to make their membership of the Association known to clients and colleagues. Members may use the words 'Member of the Association of Freelance Editors, Proofreaders and Indexers of Ireland'; Associate Members may use the words 'Associate Member of the Association of Freelance Editors, Proofreaders and Indexers of Ireland'. Both Members and Associates may use the Association's logo on their stationery, CV, websites and social media profiles.

## Appendix 1

### Definitions

The **proofreader** reads page proofs after edited copy comes back from the typesetter or desk-top designer. Their job is to make sure that text, illustrations, captions, headings, etc., are properly placed and complete; to check that design specifications have been followed; to check running heads; to ensure that captions and legends match artwork; to ensure that pagination matches the Contents list; to check end-of-line breaks; to proofread preliminary pages and end matter (e.g., the index if there is one); to fix incontestable errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar that have slipped through the net during copy-editing; and to query inconsistencies.

The **copy-editor** reads a text to make sure, among other things, that grammar, spelling and punctuation follow standard rules and the publisher's house style (if supplied); that the language and style are appropriate for the audience and genre; that spellings of unusual names are consistent; that the author doesn't promise five examples and give only four; that figures in a table add up correctly; that headings and sub-headings are marked correctly for the typesetter; that inconsistencies are queried with the author or publisher; and that references to illustrations are clear enough for the typesetter to place them correctly.

The **editor** (who may also be the copy-editor and project manager) considers the overall structure, organisation and content of the manuscript. The editor may be asked to read a text and help decide whether it is publishable. The editorial brief may also cover substantive editing, such as re-organising the structure, suggesting the removal or addition of material, all in liaison with the author or commissioning editor.

The **indexer** analyses the text of a document so that users can find information on a particular topic; return to passages they remember reading; scan the index to see what the document is about; find out how particular themes or ideas are developed. The indexer analyses the meaning and significance of the entire content in detail, and identifies underlying themes and concepts. The indexer then has to consider the terms the reader is most likely to use and relate them to the language chosen by the author. Indexing is usually done towards the end of the production schedule. The indexer compiles an 'analytical' index in order to produce the most efficient navigation tool for the text. A good index is not just a list of keywords; keyword-based retrieval systems pick out far too much information to be usable and far too little to be reliable.