

Fiona Watson: Editor

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Major skills

I am a conscientious and enthusiastic editor who has been working in the publishing industry for more than 20 years. During this time, I have worked on educational, trade and specialist titles in a wide range of subject areas and media and in a number of roles.

As both an in-house and freelance editor and proofreader, I have worked on a variety of print and multimedia materials, including websites, full-colour magazines, books, newsletters, posters, publicity materials and CD-ROMs. I have been responsible for:

- editing, restructuring and rewriting copy to ensure it is appropriate for the audience and media
- editing both on hard copy and using Microsoft Word's tracking changes function
- working closely with writers and clients to ensure content is clear, accurate and appropriately structured
- writing headlines, introductions and photo captions for magazine/journal articles
- proofreading final copy and cutting to fit where necessary
- researching and checking content and writing/rewriting copy where necessary
- liaising with writers and clients to obtain feedback on suggested changes and making necessary amendments to documents following client approval
- developing and applying style guides and working with project managers and clients to guide the editorial direction of project materials
- ensuring procedures are in place to maintain editorial quality and consistency in ongoing projects, including those involving more than one editor
- advising on the formatting of content to ensure it is appropriate and effective for the audience
- providing written and verbal reports on the best way to write and deliver content for multimedia products
- ensuring electronic media products conform to the principles of accessibility and best practice.

As project coordinator/manager, I have been involved in the complete production process for a wide variety of materials. I have been responsible for:

- developing preliminary ideas for projects and working with project managers and clients to develop appropriate briefs
- ensuring projects are completed on time and within budget
- prioritising and coordinating workflow and managing my time to ensure that deadlines are met – often when working on multiple projects or for more than one organisation
- monitoring and reporting on the day-to-day workflow of both internal staff and external contractors
- developing and implementing procedures to manage workflow, including developing project schedules and creating tracking sheets to ensure projects can be simply and effectively managed
- briefing and commissioning external authors
- sourcing and commissioning illustrative material
- liaising closely with designers, desktop publishers and web developers to ensure formatted material is both attractive and user-friendly
- writing page planners and ensuring colour sections are appropriately placed
- passing materials to press and checking and approving proofs.

I receive regular feedback from writers who feel their work has been improved by the editorial changes I have suggested:

- 'Fiona's editorial suggestions were really, really, really good. The piece is now stronger than it was originally.'
- 'Please pass on my compliments to Fiona. It's absolutely blush-making when you see how many ungracefully constructed sentences the editor has managed to pick up!'
- 'I would like to express my thanks over the excellent job you did in editing and formatting the parking policy. It looks great.'

Employment history

June 2011 to August 2014: Team leader/senior editor: Curriculum into the classroom project – Department of Education, Queensland

My role on this project has involved extensive coordination and overseeing as well as editorial work. I have been responsible for managing the workflow of up to 10 editors and formatters and overseeing and tracking the progress of individual units from receipt of manuscript through the complete production process (editing, formatting, uploading, online review).

Key responsibilities have included:

- recruiting and training editors
- checking the quality of their work and providing feedback where necessary
- liaising with members of the writing team to ensure editorial queries are addressed
- making sure copyright processes are being followed
- keeping track of where individual units are in the production process (there can be up to 30 units in production at a time) and reporting on this to management teams
- working closely with members of the formatting and illustration teams to ensure all required artwork has been supplied and to resolve any outstanding issues affecting formatting
- ensuring production timelines and targets are met
- developing style guides and procedures documents and ensuring these are being followed
- advising key stakeholders on how to solve problems and improve processes
- editing and proofreading units.

January 1998 to June 2011: Department of Education, Queensland

I joined the Department of Education as an editor with the Distance Learning Unit and remained with this section through its various incarnations, moving into the position of Senior Editor after a number of years.

My initial role involved editing and proofreading a wide range of lesson booklets for students of distance education, across senior, junior and primary subjects. I was also responsible for ensuring that all copyright material was cleared for use and properly acknowledged, liaising with artists and designers and ensuring that deadlines were met.

Following departmental restructures, our unit became responsible for a wide range of projects, including curriculum resources for teachers, professional development resources for all department staff, online student courses, and other websites, CD-ROMs and one-off client publications.

My main responsibilities during this period were copy editing the original manuscript and proofreading and checking layouts and websites. I worked extremely closely with in-house and external writers to ensure that all written content was as clear as possible and all illustrative material appropriate. I was also responsible for providing advice on how best to deliver and present content.

During this time, I became responsible for a small team of editors. In this role, I would work closely with new editors to introduce them to our style guides and the unique nature of editing educational resources. I found it a rewarding process to be able to pass on tips that I had learned from more experienced editors earlier in my career.

May 2001 to May 2002: Queensland School Curriculum Council (QSCC)

In May 2001, I was approached by a former manager who was now working for QSCC. She needed an editor and invited me to work with her on a part-time basis. During my time with QSCC I worked on a number of policy documents and a wide range of curriculum materials, primarily in the areas of Studies of Society and Environment and The Arts. My main responsibilities were copy editing and checking manuscripts, proofreading documents and liaising with in-house writers to ensure that all written content was as clear as possible. Subsequently, I was approached by other managers within QSCC and continued to work with the organisation on a freelance basis.

February 1994 to October 1997: Hobsons Publishing, England (leading publisher of educational resources in the UK)

I joined Hobsons Publishing primarily to work on *The Holiday Care Guide to Accessible Travel*, a major new consumer title launched by the company. This was a full-colour UK travel guide for people with disabilities. I was responsible for seeing the book through from initial copy to finished publication. This included copy editing; proofreading; photo research; compiling and checking an extensive index; liaising with the client we were publishing for; overseeing freelance writers, designers and proofreaders; and producing promotional material for the title.

On completion of the book I worked on a range of magazines. This involved extensive liaison with clients; commissioning copy; ensuring tight deadlines were met by external editors and in-house and freelance designers; copy editing; proofreading; checking and adjusting Quark Xpress layouts; and photo research. I was also responsible for arranging and chairing meetings; checking chromalins; and liaising with various in-house departments, as well as handling general administration and ensuring that titles were produced within budget.

Following a departmental restructure I moved into the role of deputy chief sub-editor. In this position I worked across the full range of 25 titles produced by the magazines division. My responsibilities included subbing, proofreading and cutting copy; writing headlines, introductions and photo captions; checking facts; and amending layouts. I was also responsible for the subs' desk in the absence of the chief sub, which involved managing staff, ensuring all deadlines were met and passing final page proofs to press.

September 1991 to February 1994: European Christian Booksellers Association (international trade organisation based in the UK)

I initially joined this organisation, which publishes a monthly trade journal, in the position of secretarial assistant, but quickly moved into the role of editorial assistant.

At the beginning of 1993 I was promoted to the position of editor and took over responsibility for all editorial matters. This included commissioning and writing articles, copy editing, proofreading, obtaining artwork, conducting interviews and compiling news items. I was also responsible for liaising with, assisting and advising the design department.

Education and qualifications

1988–1991: University of Manchester, England

BA (Hons) Theology and Religious Studies (2:1)

References

Available on request