EAC
Member Communication Committee
Report on Thesis Survey
February 2006

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Background
In April 2005 the Toronto branch approved guidelines for the ethical editing of doctoral theses. In December 2005 the national executive council asked the Member Communication Committee to survey the membership re: establishing national guidelines based on the Toronto policy.

We developed a questionnaire and on 27 January 2006 sent it out via email to approximately 1450 English-speaking members, with a deadline for response of 17 February.

Response to the questionnaire
See page 3 of this report for a summary table (a detailed summary is appended as a PDF file: ThesisSurvey_Results.PDF). Eighty-two members answered the questionnaire. At less than 6 percent, this response seems weak, but it may in fact reflect the proportion of members who edit and are interested in editing university theses. Many of the comments from respondents express enthusiasm for this initiative; it has clearly struck a harmonious chord with a number of members.

For purposes of this report, all responses are anonymous. Each respondent has been assigned an identification number so that correlations between responses to different questions can be made if desired. For those interested in such details, 80 responses were submitted by email (7 in email format, 73 in MS Word format), one by fax and one by post. We also received one questionnaire from a non-member (not counted in the summary results).

Question 1 asks about experience: two-thirds of respondents claim experience in editing theses (10 percent claim "lots" of experience).

Question 2 asks respondents about their concern for the ethics of editing theses: fully 94 percent expressed concern (49 percent very concerned, 45 percent somewhat concerned).

Question 3 asks whether having guidelines in place would benefit editors: 87 percent of those responding (80) to this question felt they would benefit. Of those who see no benefit for themselves, most refer to their own special circumstances but agree that guidelines could be useful to others. Forty-one respondents wrote comments regarding the benefits of having guidelines. Quite a few state that they would feel a lot more comfortable taking on thesis jobs with clear guidelines and understanding between parties.

Questions 4 and *5* ask about how satisfactorily the draft guidelines and permission form deal with the subject. A large majority agree that they are satisfactory, and 21 percent of respondents offered suggestions and comments for each of the guidelines and permission form.

Question 6 asks whether the draft guidelines would be suitable for non-doctoral theses. The response was overwhelmingly in favour of using the same guidelines for master's theses (59 of 74 responses), certainly insofar as the ethics are concerned. Many respondents do feel, however, that the guidelines would not necessarily be appropriate for undergraduate theses.

Question 7 asks for comments in addition to responses to the previous six questions. Of the 35 respondents who took up the offer, a number wrote in the "thanks for doing this" and "this is important" vein, but at least one-third of the comments are substantive in that they pose queries or make suggestions.

As one would expect from a self-selecting group of editors, responses to this survey deal with all aspects of the subject, from copyediting niceties in the draft itself to substantive suggestions, from process to discussion of ethics. Comments throughout are wide-ranging, some certainly contradicting others, but a few themes emerge:
· ESL students comprise a growing class and demand special consideration.
· References to *Professional Editorial Standards* (PES) may be problematic for non-editors, and different ways of handling definitions are suggested.
· Who bears the onus for ethical behaviour vis-à-vis editing theses – the student, the supervisor, the editor?
· How can the editor maintain a purely editorial relationship (as opposed to supervisory)?

Where to now?
We have deliberately not done a lot of categorizing of comments and suggestions. We assume that responses to this survey will be used by whoever develops draft guidelines for use nationally. Therefore we have merely accumulated them in five groups corresponding to questions three through seven and identified by respondent number (see pages 4–30 of this report).

Doug Linzey
Chair, Member Communication Committee

Table 1: Statistical summary – thesis editing survey

		# responses	% of total	% of responses
Q1 Experience	lots	8	10	
	some	47	57	
	none	27	33	
Q2 Concern	very	40	49	
	somewhat	37	45	
	none	5	6	
Q3 Benefit to editor	yes	70	85	87
	no	10	12	13
	comments	41	50	
Q4 Satisfactory guidelines draft	yes	74	90	92
	no	6	7	8
	comments	17	21	
Q5 Satisfactory permission form draft	yes	66	80	87
	no	10	12	13
	comments	16	20	
Q6 Should guidelines apply to all types of thesis?	comments	74	90	
Q7 Other comments	comments	43	52	

Comments
The following five sections contain all the comments sent in by respondents to the survey. They are organized by question number and respondent identifier.

Q3 Comments re: benefit to editors' work
Do you think having guidelines and a permission form endorsed by the EAC membership would be beneficial to your work?

1. The guidelines and permission form would have been very helpful had I had them when I was editing doctoral theses in the past. They would have made me feel much more secure that I was doing an acceptable type of editing of the students' papers, and that the students' departments approved of me doing so.

2. Although I have not edited doctoral theses, I have edited undergraduate papers, and I would find a permission form to be useful for these as well.

3. It is very rare for a Ph.D. student to expressly inform his or her supervisor of any editorial help. I think it is understood that most graduate students receive assistance with their dissertations and theses, and it is really up to the student and editor to draw the line in terms of integrity of ideas and ownership of content.

5. … if I were to edit doctoral theses again, which I haven't done in several years.

6. In my case, I work with known departments and supervisors. I've already worked through many of these issues. However, I think the guidelines may be very useful for editors (especially less experienced ones), students, and faculty who are new to the task. I hope that the document retains its function as guidelines and doesn't morph into rules or narrow prescriptions because of the variety in academic situations and applications in which dissertations are edited.

7. The lack of just this guidance has stopped me from accepting thesis projects in the past.

12. This issue really isn't even on the horizon, to my knowledge, at the local university in my city or at some universities in the U.S. and abroad from which I've received theses to edit. As well, the EAC simply doesn't have that high a profile; the fields I work in are pure and social sciences – for the most part, in these fields, endorsement by the Council of Science Editors would carry more weight. However, from an editor's point of view, I do find the guidelines interesting, and thought provoking.

13. Having never edited a thesis, the guidelines seem reasonable

14. Yes I do. However, I do edit work for students who live in Hong Kong. I suspect that, because their first language isn't English (and/or for other reasons), they have lifted section of the thesis from books & other references. When a student can't write an email message without making many errors & then presents a well-written, scholarly thesis, it is clear that the student has not written the thesis entirely by him or herself. What should I do in a case like this? Do EAC guidelines & permission apply to students overseas? These students are asked by the supervisor to have their paper copy edited, because the supervisor can't understand what the student is saying. I also had a student in the US, whose first language wasn't English, and who kept saying she administered her questionnaire in the fall of 2004. I was editing her paper in March 2004. I questioned her several times about the date, but she didn't reply. Finally, when the thesis was finished, she said that she'd forgotten the date she'd administered the questionnaire, a highly suspect explanation. What do I do in a case like this?

17. I not only think it beneficial but also necessary for both editor and student.

18. It would help a little, in a few cases, to help identify/clarify the editing limits that a supervisor feels is appropriate.

20. The only reason it would not be beneficial to me personally is that I've sworn off theses for the rest of my life: won't touch one with a barge-pole. This has more to do students' high demands and expectations versus low ability to pay than anything else. If I were to lose my mind and accept work of this type again, it would only be with the guidelines and permission form available and accepted by the student and advisor.

23. Having an official policy and documentation will make it easier to justify asking the client to obtain permission from his/her thesis supervisor.

25. I am a new editor and have edited an undergraduate thesis. I would like to continue to work on theses, so this issue is of concern to me. I think the guidelines are clear and would help eliminate confusion of the editor's role.

26. I could be editing my first two (master's) theses in upcoming months. Having never done it before, I found the guideline and permission form to be extremely helpful, even though they were directed to theses at the doctoral level.

27. Marginally, to me personally. However, I have a son who is beginning his doctoral studies and will likely edit his thesis. I am grateful that work has been done on guidelines, for everyone's sake.

28. But I think these guidelines would have been very useful at an earlier stage in my editing career, and I'm sure they would be extremely useful for the student and the professor. I suspect it's rare that the need for editing is recognized early enough, and it's done almost as an aside, after frustrating and wrong-headed attempts by advisors to correct glaring errors themselves, but in an unhelpful manner.

29. The guidelines and permission form will serve as an instrument of record and help prevent misunderstanding and misinterpretation of roles, responsibilities and expectations of all parties involved. It may even prove useful in the event of legal issues.

30. I am not involved in the editing of theses, but advocate for the development of ethical guidelines.

31. I have no intention of editing theses.

32. How will the existence of this policy be communicated to supervising professors? Is there any way such a policy might be applied to any student seeking editorial assistance from an EAC member?

41. I think it only necessary to establish that EAC requires permission from a thesis supervisor and that the type of editing that will be allowed by the supervisor is carefully spelled out. Each case will be different.

42. To date I have not pursued work editing theses because I was not sure what was acceptable practice. I have edited a couple of papers for an acquaintance in a postgraduate professional program. Her professor agreed to editing within specified limits.

43. Not to my own work, because I'm not editing theses now. If I were, it would be very beneficial to clarify the role of the editor in this process and also to emphasize to faculty advisors that evaluating the content and organization of student papers is their role, and it should not be delegated to an editor.

45. I think having the guidelines is very helpful. I am less certain about the use of the permission form. I think this will present logistical problems for some students, and I am uncomfortable with the need for the editor to be verifying what seems to me to be entirely the student's responsibility for compliance with institutional policy. In the same way that the student is responsible for not plagiarizing, he or she is responsible for adhering to the institution's policy respecting the use of editors, and I am having trouble seeing the editor as responsible for verifying the student's compliance with institutional policy. I think it is sufficient for the editor, in the course of clarifying the nature of the work the editor will be doing, to ask the student about the institution's policy.

50. Although I've not yet edited any doctoral theses, it is possible that I may be requested to do so in the future. I think having a set of guidelines like these would be very useful.

51. I would endeavour to use the guidelines and form as a way of opening discussion with the student and the university department about the ethics of editing, the limits required, and the role of the editor. Even if we did not end up with a signed document at the end, it would help me greatly to point out the existence of an accepted standard rather than just tell them my personal point of view.

54. I not do this kind of work, but I have seen cases where people, usually foreigners but not always, with poor language skills obtained degrees on the basis of work edited by other people, and I think it is detrimental to our university system to give degrees to people whose English is so inadequate. We all benefit indirectly from higher standards.

60. As an editor I would find it beneficial knowing what the limits are to editing a thesis. Since a thesis is intended to demonstrate the abilities of a student, I would feel that I have helped a student cheat if I thought that my editing made a substantial improvement to it.

64. Although I have not edited theses, I work as an editor at a university. I have long been uneasy about editing theses. Since I am occasionally asked to recommend editors to thesis writers, having guidelines for EAC members and for students makes me easier about an editor's involvement. I also think it conveys a strong reminder to faculty that they have a responsibility that I sometimes think they try to pass along to editors.

65. As an ESL teacher, and sometimes editor, I think these guidelines and permission forms would greatly help to clarify what the student himself does or does not clearly understand.
It is also a necessary protection for editors, so that the expectations of what they are responsible for are clear to the student (perhaps even his/her parents, who may be paying the student's way through university), and the thesis supervisor.
A caveat is that guidelines and permission forms may help, but will probably not eliminate students from pressing editors to do a lot more than what is officially agreed to on the forms.

66. Even though I don't edit theses (at least to date), the guidelines are a good reminder of how to deal with all clients. I think they will be invaluable to those editors who do work on theses, and hence valuable to the profession.

67. Especially when it comes to high security information thesis. i.e. banking/financial IT management, strategic internal infrastructure implements

71. I have only edited Masters theses, and proofed one PhD thesis at the request of the thesis supervisor. However, I find these guidelines very useful in thinking how to work with graduate students, and how to

clarify what help I can provide. I think the same questions apply to the Masters level, but perhaps are not as critical at that level.

72. Many students don't bother to edit theses at all, so I'd prefer to see guidelines set that address common ethical considerations, but which are not so stringent they will discourage students from seeking editorial help

73. Due to the working experience I have amassed, I think I'm doing fine without EAC guidelines, but I would like to have them, for two reasons: to confirm (I hope) that I am on the right track, and for other editors who may be starting out and have concerns and questions; however, I don't think the permission form is required.

74. Having guidelines and a permission form would support the editor's work and comments on the student's work, adding significant clout. It would also clarify any ethical questions as well as the degree and nature of the editing. Having published support like this from the recognized national editing body gives both the editor and EAC more profile and authority.

76. I imagine that the forms might be beneficial for students and thesis supervisors who need to clarify between them the limits of an editor's role. As a professional editor, I understand the limits of my role and have been able to communicate these limits clearly to my clients.

78. Too many editors give little or no thought to the ethical implications of editing theses and where the line is between doing the student's work for him/her and providing appropriate assistance. I think these guidelines would serve as a wake-up call to all editors and prove useful for those who currently work with university students and faculty.

79. I have some experience editing master's theses. I suspect the questionable ethical practices at this level of scholarship are widespread. I would appreciate having guidelines I could adapt or refer to in these cases.

81. In my experience, there are many lazy and manipulative academics who expect the editor to do the actual writing!

Q4 Comments re guidelines
Do draft guidelines and suggestions for their use satisfactorily cover the subject?

1. In my limited experience, most of the demand for thesis editing came from ESL students, so I wonder if it wouldn't be helpful to begin the document with the point about why these guidelines apply equally to editing the theses of both ESL and non-ESL students.

5. They seem pretty exhaustive, to the point where I wonder how many supervisors would actually read the fine print, but there may be no escaping this.

11. Add: Addressing style guides and any University requirements. An editor should know the style that needs to be followed, and there should be some kind of an agreement to follow that style.

Change: Why does the editor have to query if a citation can be corrected? Why can't citations be corrected if the editor has enough information to do so? (Refer to middle of page 2.)

16. The guidelines put the onus of discovering whether or not the university itself has a policy regarding professional editing of student work on the supervisor's shoulders. Knowing how busy professors can be, and how few of them read university policy in full, this may be slightly unrealistic. One suggestion would be to ask for confirmation that university policy has been checked. [It's not only the faculty that may prohibit/encourage professional editing.]

22. Suggested Addition: to GUIDELINES, point 4: Add a clause to the effect that if the student's research falls under the University's ethics protocol (that is, if human subjects are involved in the research and ethics approval has been obtained), the Editor must be made aware of the requirements of the study's ethics protocol. The Editor must be provided with a copy of the ethics approval, and of any amendments to the ethics protocol that are subsequently requested and/or approved by the student and by any researchers working on the same project.

Suggested Clarification: GUIDELINES point 5: "and the non-grammatical portions" should be changed to "and the portions of B1c that do not pertain to grammar."

24. Perhaps a bit more detail on ESL situations, if there is any available.

29. As a test case, a couple of doctoral students and university administrators / supervisors could be asked to review this version of the draft document and provide the EAC with their comments and feedback.

32. I was uncertain what section C14 actually said. Clearly, I must not be qualified to edit dissertations. Still, if I don't understand it, how will ESL students make sense of it

34. They are much too elaborate. Short summary statements would be more appropriate. One can cite a link to the EAC web site for the supervisor who wants more detail. Academics are busy people, too.

51. I would be inclined to offer more explicit explanation in the guidelines themselves of the different standards, rather than leave them to the Appendix. People glaze over with all the letters and numbers and don't tend to read appendices. I'd have no problem with repetition in the guidelines and permission form to make everything absolutely clear and offer a basis for discussion that is all self-contained in one clear document.

Items A 14, 15, and 17 make me very uncomfortable, as I think they cross the line from editing to supervising. It is the thesis supervisor's job to help with the content and there is a danger that

encouraging/allowing an editor to do this can let the supervisor off the hook or shift responsibility for oversight away from the academic department, where it properly belongs. I'd strongly suggest the documents emphasize even more strongly that the editor will not participate in content-related work in any way – ONLY raising questions if something doesn't make sense but not participating further in the analysis or revisions. (I know the guidelines talk about this but I would really urge a strengthening of that point.)

53. The section on references. Most universities have reference software (such as Endnote available to every member of the university. Student just has to specify required style. In my view it's important to proofread citations and References. this is based on approx. 15 years of editing academic journals and books as well as doctoral dissertations.

72. Guideline 2. It seems as though the last sentence of guideline 1 is more connected to guideline 2 than 1. Perhaps the guideline might begin: "The written permission should specify what the editor is [and isn't] expected to do. The editor must be assured…(etc.)"

Guideline 3. I appreciate you quoting your sources (Prof. Ed. Standards) in guideline 3, but why not simply refer to Appendix A. I looked up C1, 2, 5-7, etc. online (and others might as well) and discovered that the online version of Stylistic editing standards is not numbered.

Guideline 5. I heartily agree with this guideline. However, if you show it to a would-be client, they may balk at the specific references to B1bii, B1Biii, etc. Why not end sentence 2 after "standards" or even better, "mechanics"? The rest of the guideline is clear, and fine.

Re: Suggestions for Editors' Use
The second and third bullet points are valid, and important. Perhaps as part of educating the public about editing, the EAC might consider producing an easy-to-read, easy-to-look-at brochure or downloadable information sheet that describes the differences between copy editing, proofreading, stylistic editing, etc.—or perhaps even a brochure or white sheet for each.

Bullet point 6 was most useful for me to read. This is how I've treated citations in the past, apart from looking up acronyms or abbreviations online to ensure consistency and correctness. I wonder, though, whether this is where hiring an editor might erroneously be seen as cheating; i.e., as though you can "pay someone" to check your citations "for" you. Another point of education (another brochure or fact sheet?), perhaps.

Point 7 is an excellent and necessary reminder for editors to keep it simple; glad to see it included, especially the wording "What you are watching for are the silly errors" (followed by examples).

73. I think the guidelines are good, although perhaps too detailed, and too much about qualifying stylistic editing. I think the macro guideline statements are most useful.

76. The preamble to the guidelines should clarify that it is the author's responsibility to ensure that they operate within the ethical framework of their faculty, including the faculty's policy on what role an editor might play in preparing the thesis. The current preamble seems to put the onus on the editor to ensure that she is not allowing the student to cross those ethical lines. Editors are not the ethics police. It is clearly not ethical for a student to ask for help with substantive editing or research or development of their thesis. It is ethical for editors to offer substantive, structural or research services. That is what we do.

Edits needed on points 4 and 5 of the guidelines:

4. The agreed limits should be the basis of the editor's contract with the author; it {{ Unclear pronoun reference: does "it" mean the agreed limits or the contract? The problem is created by the repetition of "should," which leads the reader to connect "it" with the agreed limits.}} should also require…
5. The editing must never affect the student content or structure {{ Confusing: "Student content or structure" should read "content or structure of the thesis."}}…

80. I find the "student's own words" criterion under stylistic editing to be too strict; most of the theses I edit are for non-native speakers of English, and sometimes they just use the wrong words! I'm not talking about the jargon of the discipline here, but about their grasp of standard English.

81. The Guidelines should, in my opinion, directly address the issue of academic dishonesty and manipulative behaviour. For example, it should be clearly stated that the editor should not, under any circumstances, complete half-baked thoughts, improve poor argumentation, or "fix" muddle-headed thinking. In some cases, a "scholar" will present the editor with a messy pile of disconnected and rambling half-thoughts and fragments, and expect the editor to turn a pile of gibberish into good prose. In many cases, academics essentially do not know what they're talking about, but expect some kind of clairvoyant intervention from the editor. This may sound harsh, but I'm speaking from experience. Perhaps the Guidelines should clearly spell out what the editor cannot, and must not do! For example, if the academic asks the editor, "What am I trying to say here?"—the editor should run in the opposite direction.

82. Point 4: Editor's name & acknowledgement should be a separate point.
Point 5: Along with queries, the editor can also make suggestions. Both of these topics should be attached, not written on the theses itself.

Q5 Comments re forms
Does draft permission form satisfactorily cover the subject?

2. Only one suggestion: Regarding references, should the editor check for accuracy, such as whether Web links are still valid, the spelling of authors' names are correct, and the titles of works are accurate?

8. I would like to see space on the permission form for the student's academic advisor to add anything or specify anything particular to the student's work.

11. I would include spelling, punctuation, and mechanics in proofreading. A proofreader must correct any errors/mistakes that a copyeditor has missed, and many of these fall into these categories. Note: this would not include changes for improvement, only changes to correct something that is wrong.

17. – first part (page 5) – Be careful with this. I would avoid agreeing to this at all. This opens the editor up to liability issues if he/she misses anything that is legally troublesome. The social acceptability part is O.K.

22. The choice of words should be carefully re-worked to suit a broad academic audience. For instance, the word "idiom" means something entirely different to most Linguistics scholars.

28. I wonder if it is clear enough what the material in curly brackets represents. I know it's outlined in the last sentence preceding the head "Proofreading," but how about adding, "{thus}" (The advisors and students reading this are likely to miss that sentence, since they'll be reading it in a hurry no doubt.)

In the sentence, "The following proofreading standards may or not be appropriate," is a "may" missing? (may or may not . . .)

Under "Copy Editing," I wonder if "B2: Apply the desired style to citations and references;" is in conflict with the earlier suggestion ("The styling of citations needs care") that editors of theses should point out failures to apply the desired style, but perhaps not actually correct them. Isn't the application of such styles usually part of the thesis challenge?

I wonder if there ought to be a bit more acknowledgment that, while the copy editing standards listed here are desirable, few students or advisors would be able to approve of the time or cost involved in having the editor actually fix such things as citations, and so forth. At least more acknowledgment of the huge cost attached to such correction (usually badly done, even in professional writing by the professors themselves, which they often don't recognize, don't even notice when a careful editor has done that work in an article published by the professor).

31. The permission form, as well as the contract, should stress that the student is responsible for the final product.

45. I question the need for the permission form. As indicated previously I consider the student to be wholly responsible for ensuring he or she acts in compliance with institutional policy.

51. See comment for Q4 about changing the focus in the area on stylistic editing. There are days when I simply don't believe that anyone outside of the editing world understands the difference between different types of editing. I think most people figure we just fix typos, and they are surprised and delighted when they get back a document with a lot of "value added." But in the case of academic writing, we must protect ourselves and, more importantly, the student, from the danger of crossing the line, becoming more

involved in the content, and so affecting the student's output, and – more importantly – their learning process and independence.

55. I think it's well done, but worry that there may be too much detail for someone who hasn't worked with editors. Maybe the PES standard needs to be put into plainer language for this purpose! (Professors themselves aren't necessarily the best writers, and are often ESL writers as well.)

67. A clause re: copyright of intellectual material, and the editor's position there.

72. Why not quote PES standard references on the form as footnotes or as a second Appendix, or even in parentheses after the described standard? Since "C1" or "B1d" will be meaningful only to EAC editors, perhaps they can be less emphasized, e.g. [Copy Editing, italicized line after par. 1:] yes / no / standard; [1st line:] "Correct errors in spelling (PES-B1a)." [or, "Correct errors in spelling. (PES-B1a)]

73. I believe the onus is on the student to get permission from their advisor, to have an editor at all, and as to what is specifically allowed and/or disallowed.

I think the matter of permission does not involve the editor. The advisor should tell the student what is appropriate, based on the advisor's understanding of the student's weaknesses and what they deem permissible in terms of employing the services of an editor. Then, when the student seeks out an editor, it is the responsibility of the student to request editing in keeping with the recommendations of the advisor. I'm picking up from the guidelines and the permission form that editors of theses are in need of protecting themselves, and I don't think editors should ever feel fearful that they will get in trouble. (I'm thinking of section 6, "Indemnity," of the Standard Freelance Editorial Agreement.) The onus is on the client, in this instance a student at the doctoral level. By the same token, it is important as an editor of theses to hold back what he or she would do for a non-student client. That temptation is something that could be included in the guidelines.

74. It would be good if the student were also to read and sign the permission form to indicate an understanding of the level of editing and what is involved in terms of changes or corrections needed as a result of the editing.

Perhaps the permission form should also have a line for the name of the editor and the editor's signature. This would show that the editor understands the expectations and the boundaries for the editing. If necessary, it could help the thesis committee evaluate the work, as well as serve as evidence in case of a dispute.

76. Given the primary concern with avoiding inappropriate levels of editing in the academic context, this form should include a brief list and examples of the types of editing that are not offered under the contract.

80. I feel it does cover the subject well, but I suspect some students might find it a bit intimidating. I have not been accustomed to getting students to sign a contract or anything, although I do stress the importance of getting their supervisor's permission before the thesis is edited. (In many cases, the supervisor has specifically told the student to have the thesis edited; in some, the prof even pays for the work out of his or her grant (since the student is pretty well broke by that point)!

One point: I have done some work for students in other countries who want to write their thesis in English; getting everyone's signature on the form could take some time in these cases (although PDFs, etc., might come to the rescue).

Q6 Comments re applicability to other types of thesis
From your experience, would this policy be suitable for other kinds of theses (masters, undergraduate, etc.)? Could one form fit all, or would it be best to have separate guidelines and forms? Is this an important issue or not?

1. I can't see any reason why this policy and permission form couldn't be used for master's theses or undergraduate theses. I feel this is as important for all levels of theses, both for the student and the editor.

2. Yes, this is an important issue. And, yes, I think one form could fit all, and the editor could adapt it, if necessary, to individual situations.

3. Separate guidelines are probably a good idea since each academic level requires different performance criteria

4. I think it even less of an issue for Master's or undergraduate students, and even more unlikely that these students are going to approach a supervisor for permission to have their work edited. Where a student would like permission, the forms for Ph.D. students are adequate.

5. Not sure.

6. More flexibility would probably be needed for guidelines for other levels of theses and especially for the issue of ESL students.

7. I can't comment from direct experience, having none, but I do wonder whether the policy could be given broader application. I've heard of editors being asked to edit all kinds of academic papers, not just theses, especially by adult students doing night courses in business programs. Heaven knows much of their writing desperately needs editing, and students who are already in good jobs have the money to pay editors, so there seems to be a growing market here. It would be helpful if EAC members with knowledge of academic protocols could apply the principles of this policy to the full range of academic writing.

8. No experience yet editing theses, although I do have someone who has talked to me about it. But as long as the academic advisor has read and signed the permission form, and added anything he/she feels is necessary, then the form should be fine.

9. Best to use the same approach to all scholarly work, to the extent practical. For instance, PhD theses have to involve original work; other theses and papers may just review existing published work and therefore not involves as much original work.

10. I don't think having separate guidelines is necessary or even an issue. Those doing undergraduate or masters theses need to adhere to the same code of ethics as doctoral thesis writers.

11. This would likely fit the bill for any thesis.

12. Leaving aside my comments above, I think the guidelines/form could be applicable to other kinds of theses….but I'm not convinced that this is an important issue universally.

13. How does editing (or proofreading) apply to a college paper, or term paper for a university student? Will similar structure and guidelines be used? A different form seems appropriate. Should we not also ask college students for permission from their professors/teachers? Do English as a Second Language considerations apply here too?

Separate forms for college. As I have edited my daughter's university term papers, I applied similar guidelines, mechanical editing and checking for flow of ideas, querying inconsistencies and cutting verbosity. I believe that these guidelines would work for this level of education as well, but with a different form.

A director of a private college I approached last fall said that editing for spelling and grammar, and such mechanical errors is perfectly acceptable.

14. I think the policy would be suitable for other kinds of thesis. The guidelines seem to apply to all types, but perhaps someone who's edited undergraduate papers would be more knowledgeable. It's an important consideration.

15. Both the guidelines and the form are suitable for masters' theses as well, but in my opinion, it is not appropriate to edit undergraduate work at all.

16. I'm sure that the form would be suitable for masters theses and other graduate-level work, but I'm not convinced that undergraduate-level work (research papers, essays, even fourth-year "theses") should be included. I have, in the past, worked with undergrads in much the same manner that a university writing centre would – as more of a mentor than editor. In all but one instance, these undergrads have been ESL students/students with learning disabilities.

17. I think it is important. Possibly, one form could fit all.

18. Although this sort of thing isn't as important for masters or undergraduate degrees, I think the policy is still useful for those levels.

19. Yes, yes, no, no

20. Not sure. It seems like it could work for everything, but who knows what cans of worms I'm ignoring?

22. Give this one form a trial run on all types of thesis, and ask EAC members to notify you of any insufficiencies.

23. This form can probably be used for all types of thesis.

24. Not sure—probably. Guidelines for undergraduate theses could possibly be somewhat less stringent
.

25. I think this form would be of benefit for editing masters theses, but I am less certain about undergraduate theses. These tend to be less formal, and may not require such stringent guidelines. (Still, this may depend on the faculty.)

26. I have no experience in theses editing, but I would suspect that this policy would be suitable for theses at the undergraduate and master's levels too.

27. Yes, I think it would be more than adequate for undergraduate papers, and certainly adequate for master's theses.

28. It is an important issue. Perhaps if students at an early stage were given the benefit of such careful editing, there would eventually be more professors with a sensitivity to the issues. I don't see why there

would have to be different forms for the different levels, but perhaps some guidelines would be appropriate as to the depth of editing required for the different stages (of course, only the professor or the department would be able to judge that point).

29. It is best to have separate guidelines and forms for each of the different categories for classification and tracking, as well as to eliminate any ambiguity in the nature and scope of the assignment or work involved.

30. I believe this to be an important issue, as many academic processes may influence guidelines and standards. What are the current communication structures between the editing community and governing educational communities?

32. Separate guidelines might be useful. Not an important issue at this stage of development.

33. I think it could equally well apply to MAs.

35. Yes—one form fits all—same principles apply. Separate guidelines would be confusing to editor and student.

36. I have edited both Master's and doctoral theses, and the process seems pretty much the same. Having different forms seems an unnecessary complication.

37. One form rarely fits all in any case. Have separate guidelines, and modify them as suggestions come in from actual usage.

38. I think this policy would be suitable for other kinds of theses. I think one form could fit all, with individual editors modifying as necessary.

39. I think it would be better to have one form fit all: academic integrity is the issue at both the undergrad and the graduate levels.

40. I think this policy would suit a master's thesis, but undergraduate work would require stricter guidelines.

41. For undergrad papers, the editor's inclination might be to proceed as though they were a fellow student asked to "proofread" the paper, as a favour, before submission. I think many students rely on each other for this type of checking, and depending on the language skills the checker has, the paper will either receive a cursory reading for the most obvious typos or a more careful analysis of grammar, style, etc. If anything beyond correction of or alerting to the most obvious typos is needed, perhaps this would signal to the professional editor the time to ask the student if more intensive editing is desired and alert them that you would need to check with the teacher/supervisor as to the degree. At this stage a simple, generic explanation of the types of editing that might be required, from which the editor would indicate what he/she felt was needed, which the teacher or supervisor could allow or reject.

42. I think any student who wishes to have a thesis or other academic paper edited should have the permission of his or her professor and that the professor should set clear limits as to what is permitted. For me, the most acceptable would be the mechanics of writing, pointing out errors such as missing dates in citations, and bringing to the student's attention areas of the paper or thesis that do not flow or read well.

This form could be used for other kinds of theses with some minor changes. If the form is accepted for other uses, some indication of the level needs to be added to the form.

43. This is an important issue. I think the policy should apply to any writing on which a student will be graded if the possibility exists that the student could present an edited paper as her or his own research and writing. The mark or degree a student receives should not be influenced or determined by that student's ability to hire a competent editor.

44. Yes.

45. I think the guidelines are applicable to all levels of student papers. The important issue for me is being clear about what I will and what I will not do in a student paper, and the guidelines are helpful in thinking through my position. The permission form is another matter. I question the need for an editor to take on this verification, and I believe this form will pose logistical problems for students especially distance education students.

46. As far as I can see, it would be useful—although it may be a little more sophisticated than is really necessary.

47. I think this policy is would be broadly applicable to all theses—it is important that editors do not facilitate the attitude that one is entitled to academic accreditation by virtue of having paid for someone else to do the "dirty work." I particularly like the idea of having to seek permission from thesis advisors, so they are aware that the student has some level of assistance with the final work.

48. Ethics vital issue. Policy needs to be adaptable to all academic editing.

49. I think it would fit all kinds of theses.

50. I think the policy would be useful for other types of theses. While most of the material in the forms will be the same, I think it could be useful to have separate guidelines that incorporate any differences. (My experience is limited to editing two masters' theses in the past year.)

51. I think the basic structure in this form, with the changes I hope will come, would work for other academic projects. I think it would be best to start with one form and see how usage evolves, and based on feedback and results over a year or two it would then be possible to decide if separate tools were required.

52. I am a self-employed editor. In my experience, this form would be suitable for working with master's theses as well as doctoral dissertations. I have had considerable experience working with both.

54. Probably one form would be adequate for all, but somebody who does this kind of work regularly would be in a better position to judge.

55. I think this is a very important issue, and one that would require more research/discussion with academics. Technically, I think it should be the same across the board, but I don't know whether academics would agree. The ethical issues are essentially the same, but perhaps the writing standards (expected at the different levels) are different?

56. This form would be appropriate for all (PhD, MA, BA, etc.)

57. Yes. One form could fit all.

58. One form should fit all.

59. Yes, one form could fit all

60. As I have no experience on the matter, I can only venture to say that one form would be suitable for other kinds of theses. I do not see the need for separate guidelines either. Using the same guidelines and forms makes the point that the editor is concerned about the ethical issues related to editing any work done by students.

62. I think it is quite comprehensive and would be suitable for all kinds of theses. I think it's probably best not to have separate guidelines. Standards are standards.

63. Separate guidelines aren't needed.

64. Absolutely. I think the problem is the same regardless of the level of the work.

65. Yes, I think this policy would be suitable and helpful all the way through university. As a recent graduate of an MA TESOL program, and having many years of experience in teaching ESL adult learners, my opinion is that it would be beneficial to implement this policy right from the first year of college/university, and to begin introducing it to ESL students in the EAP courses that they take prior to university entrance. The form and guidelines could be simplified at the lower levels.

This issue is largely cultural. If we want to maintain our western standards of integrity and trust in professionally qualified people, we must start by ensuring that they are not passed through the university system with other people doing their writing for them.

67. I think it is suitable for either.

68. One form should suffice.

69. This policy would be suitable.

70. I have only edited a post graduate assignment so far, for which this policy and form could have been suitable. Therefore I think it may be possible to use one form for all occasions.

72. It's an important issue. One size will not fit all, and I think editors have much to offer and should have a flexible, not an all-or-nothing, attitude.
I have edited only one Master's thesis to date, and the principle considerations for the content of that thesis were clarity, flow, and mechanics. I can see offering various levels of thesis editing, from copyediting only to substantive; citing sources accurately is an area unto itself and might perhaps be addressed separately. I like the idea of having individual fact sheets that inform, in a simple and direct way, about each level of editing (see Suggestions for Editors' Use, first comment, below).

73. Yes, this would be suitable; they all have the ethical issue in common.

74. Yes, I don't see why student work at other levels should be treated any differently.

75. I think it would be applicable to masters theses, but I would be concerned about applying it to undergraduate work. Not sure how many undergrads hire editors, though!

76. These questions seem to confuse the policy with the form. A policy is only as good as the authority that stands behind it. In this case, policies are presumably already in place in each university, to guide the actions of students as well as professors. If students do not wish to respect the ethical guidelines already in place, an EAC "policy" won't make a difference.

I wonder if the committee considered the limits of editing a professor's work. Do universities consider it unethical ("cheating") for professors (who are also evaluated and promoted based on the originality and accuracy of their work) to obtain the services of a professional editor? Why do we care about one category of ethical consideration and not about the other?

77. I think it is suitable as a talking-point with student and thesis advisor.

78. This policy would be suitable for masters theses, but I'm not sure about undergraduate essays.

79. I think the issue is important. I can't think how there could be different degrees of ethical behaviour.

80. I think the same policy could definitely apply to master's theses; I don't know anything about undergraduate theses so I can't comment.

82. In my opinion this form should cover all. Most important, professor on supervisor must know that an editor has been hired.

We also received a response from a non-member:
I think you would need separate guidelines because many younger students, especially undergraduates, would not bother with getting permission. The guidelines outlined for the doctoral theses would simply put FEAC members out of the business of editing undergraduate papers, since there are many people available to edit and even ghostwrite such papers.

Also, it might be appropriate to make the guidelines for editing papers for English departments stricter than for editing them for, say, science and commerce departments. Business students from Asia have told me that their professors at UBC have suggested that they hire an editor to go over their papers and make the grammar perfect, but I am sure that professors in the English department would be more interested in seeing the students' own work. Perhaps the Commerce professors are assuming that their students will someday have secretaries to fix their grammar.

Q7 Miscellaneous comments

1. I wonder if there are any issues about payment that are particular to this type of editing that it would be useful to address in the guidelines.

2. I think words such as "tactfully" (final item in copy editing list) and "diplomatic" (penultimate item in stylistic editing list) should be deleted. These are more like private notes to editors—not necessary for the student's supervisor to approve.

5. It is not clear from the PDF itself what is meant in Guideline 5 by B1bii or B1biii.

7. The EAC members who have developed this policy have done an excellent job of clarifying a murky subject and have done both students and editors a great service. This sort of work is a credit to EAC.

9. In reviewing the permission for thesis editing, I am unclear about the process. If a busy academic supervisor has to fill in this detailed a form for many of the students, you could end up with a bottleneck and non-cooperation by the university.

Might work better to encourage the candidate to get an overview permission signature first from the thesis supervisor, then fill in the form with the chosen editor-proofreader; then provide the completed form to the thesis supervisor who could quickly scan what would then amount to a contract between the student and the editor-proofreader. Asking for that permission signature and then a quick-scan approval signature seems more likely to succeed than the more detailed analysis and paper-pushing contemplated if the thesis supervisor has to fill in the entire form.

Another possibility would be to require editors to be guided by the permission form, in other words to make this permission an EAC-guideline for situations where editors are asked to assist a student by proofreading, and-or editing a PhD thesis. That would encourage editors to focus on guidelines; but not require too many steps seeking permission from thesis supervisors.

Since after all, these are students – not huge publishing corporations. I believe that the EAC should focus on helping editors understand how to ethically cooperate with students on a fair and reasonable basis, but not make it so costly, time-consuming or complicated that no editor would ever want to help or even ever get to help university students.

10. I think this would be an enormously useful tool. I usually work for writers whose first language is not English and their expectations actually fall in line with what the EAC is proposing. They absolutely do not expect substantive editing (and I could never pretend to be able to offer it for the subject areas I work on). A form and guidelines would help make my position in university departments clearer and more legitimate. Thank you!

11. Will all editors belonging to EAC be required to follow the guidelines? If they want to use these with some variation, will they need permission from EAC? For example, if checking for spelling, punctuation, and mechanics is not included in a proofreader's responsibilities, I would be adding these.

14. This is a very important matter, & I'm glad to see guidelines have been drawn up. I've edited quite a few theses for students at the master's & at the doctoral level, so I think the policy would be very helpful for all concerned. I don't know if the guidelines & permission could or would apply to students overseas.

16. Will there be guidelines for the ethical editing of French language theses at the doctoral level?

18. Thanks to everyone for the work in putting this together. I have no problem with editing theses to a degree agreed to by the supervisor. The limits suggested in the policy seem to me to be reasonable. I especially agree with the suggestion that difficulties in meaning or reasoning be approached via open query (e.g., "please clarify this sentence", or "I don't understand the point here," or "I don't understand the flow of your logic here.") rather than via a suggested rewrite.

19. I think that this document is a good idea.

23. The amount of assistance that editors are permitted to provide will likely vary greatly with the thesis writer's discipline, but I think the policy you have here should work for most situations.

24. I have edited only one thesis (masters level) — that of a Chinese student whose command of English was very poor and who did not have a solid grasp of the structure of a thesis, or even how sources should be referenced. I wish I had had these guidelines to give me some direction, instead of having to figure it all out on the fly!! I was not even sure if contact with the thesis supervisor would involve some sort of breach of confidentiality, so reading the documents that EAC has prepared has been most enlightening. I think these guidelines are badly needed.

28. This is a great idea, very needed, I think. A lot of careful thought and work have gone into this draft. Congratulations to all who worked on it. It deserved a more in-depth study than I've been able to give it, but I hope my little comments may be helpful nonetheless.

29. Would the inclusion of timelines for completion of the work help keep the assignment on track and help all parties involved?
Will the various universities have access to the guidelines and the form or will it be set up for online access from the EAC website?
Will there be any controls to ensure the integrity and authenticity of the guidelines and the form?

30. I would like to gain information within the global editorial community on the development, or lack of development, in the area of theses editing. For example, what other standards exist, and what was the outcome of such protocols?

I am a recent graduate with limited experience in the editing community. I hope my comments are useful, and look forward to the development of these editorial guidelines.

31. The Toronto Branch has done excellent work on this delicate topic. The idea of editing a thesis makes me very uncomfortable because the writing and editing capacities of the student are – or should be – judged as well. Obviously an editor can be of great help to a doctoral candidate, but respecting the limits will be very tricky.

32. I appreciate your reminder about the deadline. This looks very worthwhile.

33. The guidelines do not cover simply inputting corrections and changes for the author.

34. A disproportionately large number of students wanting editorial help are likely not to be native English speakers. It is important that the supervisor (or other responsible person indicate whether conversion into colloquial English is permissible.

35. Happy to see this guideline—a very necessary step forward in editing.

36. Thank you for doing this. It is important and helpful.

Having all of us follow the same procedure would be great. Then everyone — professors, students and editors — would all know the rules, and we wouldn't have to keep fighting the same battles, such as "Why do I need to get written permission from my professor?"

It seems to me that a significant information campaign is important after the guidelines are approved – so that professors are aware of the services we offer and their limitations. Ideally, the guidelines should be approved by the university teachers' association.

Written permission from the professor is essential since otherwise students can say they have the professor's permission when they don't.

I have been trying to look at the form from a professor's point of view. It looks quite complicated and technical. For a professor in a discipline far removed from editing, such as science or engineering, it might require a half-hour to read and fully understand the form. Many professors won't want to take that much time. Somehow it has to be simpler. At the least, could we outline the tasks that are "normally" done by an editor and ask the professor to only indicate items he/she does NOT want done?

39. However detailed this form ends up being, the issue of editorial "advice" is certainly an important one and I'm glad EAC is dealing with it. Among many students the idea of learning as an individual accomplishment seems to be vanishing. There seems to be more of a willingness to rely on "communal approaches" to education, so someone has to set the boundaries between form and content. Editors have as good an idea as anyone about where to draw the line.

41. I have edited only one doctoral thesis to date, some years ago, and do not feel qualified to critique the proposed permission and definitions provided.

42. I think it is vital that all parties understand that an editor does not question the content of the student's work—the editor does not "pre-approve" the thesis—but does point out problems such as confusing or ambiguous words or statements, etc.

The "fresh" eye of the editor will save even the best writers who make silly word processing errors that can be missed when you are over-familiar with your text: for example, cutting a paragraph from one place and inadvertently pasting it twice.

43. I m glad you re doing this guidelines were definitely needed! I have edited PhD theses, but only for students whose original language was not English and who would not be teaching or working in English. I made sure the students' advisors were aware that the theses would be edited; in two cases, professors had contacted me on behalf of their students. For ethical reasons, I limited my work to copy editing, which was extremely frustrating because substantive editing and rewriting were often required – this is one of the reasons why I no longer edit theses.

44. I ran these guidelines past my husband who is a university professor and researcher and who of course supervises master's and PhD students, as I wanted to find out what he thought about the ethical aspect of editing theses. (We'd discussed this issue before but in a general way, without the benefit of the details spelled out so clearly in the background document you sent.)

I realize that these guidelines are strictly for internal use for the time being, and that EAC is the copyright owner of this particular document. However, my husband was so impressed by the document that he asked me to forward the following request: "I'd like to know what restrictions there are on sharing and

possibly modifying the document, for possible use as a discussion document and/or a set of guidelines, at the departmental and/or university level."

45. I support the development of a national policy on this matter.

50. In addition to the guidelines, I would have found it useful to have contact with someone with thesis-editing experience, as I did come across a few things I wasn't sure about and found the university's guidelines somewhat conflicting.

51. I think this is an important issue that should be tackled and wish you very good luck with your work. I do a lot of university teaching (in editing and other fields) and regularly encounter students and their theses and academic papers. I strongly believe that it is up to a student to be responsible for his or her academic work, but I also know that a GOOD editor, who is as much a teacher as an editor, can help a student learn how to communicate their ideas more clearly and produce better written work. So I am in favour of limited and judicious editing, and absolutely against the editor becoming involved with the content of the thesis. I am delighted at the idea that there could be a formal mechanism for raising the issue with students and their supervisors, and I would go so far as to announce such a tool within academia, so that university professors and administrators knew about the tool and could consider their own policies re: editing. It happens more and more and the time is ripe for universities to address head on what levels of editing should or should not be acceptable; if EAC can encourage that discussion and an open dialogue, so much the better.

52. Thanks for doing the survey. As you will read, I am an experienced academic editor. I am very comfortable working with doctoral master's candidates and much less comfortable working with undergraduate students.

I have found the thesis guidelines very useful in the last number of months. As well as guiding me in my work, I find that they add to my professional credibility. I tell potential customers that my professional association provides guidelines for editing their work, and that is something they all like to hear.

I think the practice of having one's thesis or dissertation edited is becoming far more common. Many academics who have come to me do so because their supervisor has advised them to find an editor. I have even heard this from undergraduate students.

At this point, I would advise aspiring academic editors to use a great deal of caution in deciding whether to take on undergraduate assignments. I have had some negative experiences working with undergraduate authors, which has made me loath to take on their papers unless there are exceptional circumstances. In one such exceptional case, I agreed to work on a year-long project with a mature student. It was for an undergrad course, but the amount of work involved, and what was at stake for the student, were at the graduate level. Some undergraduates who contact me ask if I do research. If I hear this question, I do not accept the assignment. One undergraduate posed as a graduate; I only found this out after I had edited the paper. Later, when his supervisor told him how much work was left to do on the paper, he asked me if I did research. I responded in the negative, and I will not do any more work for that person.

A caution about checking a student's credentials could appear in the preamble to the guidelines. As pointed out in the guidelines, some people do not understand the difference between copy editing and proofreading. There are those who fail to understand the difference between editing and actually writing the paper. There are unscrupulous people out there who will do that. Members of the EAC do not.

55. Thanks for doing this; I think it's really important. I may be completely off-base here, but in my experience, at the doctoral level, the document is a dissertation; a thesis is at the masters level.

61. I think that overall, EAC guidelines to edit theses would be a good idea. However, judging a thesis on the quality of the editing might exclude certain Ph.D. candidates from being evaluated on their academic merit. Although I agree that a thesis at this level should be well-written and easy to read, applying "standards" to the editing of theses sounds exclusionary to me.

62. I think this is a valuable undertaking. There's no point ignoring the fact that people with brilliant ideas sometimes need help with their documentation. Better edited than condemned to the rubbish heap of academia.

63. Thank you for your work.

64. Good work in Toronto branch.

I hope this will help clarify roles for students and editors and draw attention to the fact that too many academics are not fulfilling their roles as advisors. And somewhere along the way, the notion seems to have developed that a thesis should be at the level of a book or publication. I think this development has partly been driven by technology (remember the day when theses were prepared on typewriters and some hand corrections allowed?), academics supervising too many students, a larger population of ESL students, and a decline in the teaching of grammar and writing. The latter point is now as much a problem for a significant number of younger academics as it is for many students.

68. This issue is important, and I am glad that EAC has addressed it. I feel strongly that, in the context of an examination, candidates should not receive assistance without the full knowledge and approval of the degree-granting institution and the particular supervisor.

71. Thank you for all this work!

72. It's nice to see a point that discusses ESL-student thesis considerations in particular. Such students are perhaps more likely than non-ESL students to be interested in hiring an editor.

Plagiarism: Since we're talking ethics, here, one area noticeably not addressed is plagiarism. How should editors treat this delicate topic? How do we become bloodhounds for stolen copy, and how should we respond if we discover it?

73. In my experience, students for whom English is not their first language
require the most help; many of the students I have edited for have been told
by their advisors to consider seeking professional editing.

Although I disagree with the need for a permission form, perhaps some editors
would find it appropriate and useful. I would rather frame it as a
form/checklist to be used by the editor when discussing requirements with the
student (e.g. What style of referencing? MLA, APA, Turabian ...), as the
style requirements of their department/advisor may be a combination of styles.

I don't think that it matters much to make the distinction between proofreading and copy editing to students. It is our job to review their papers and make appropriate corrections and suggestions. I find it just bogs them down to explain.

When I send my completed editing to my student-clients, I send them a Track Changes copy for them to review and finalize. I believe it is their property; they have paid for it. And if they would like to, or have

to, submit this edited version to their prof or advisor, they can certainly do so. Again, I don't think the editor should be involved in the process of permission.

74. Thanks for the careful work. Having such guidelines that editors, supervisors, and students can refer to is a significant contribution to any written work in academia. In my experience, editing of theses is usually last minute, so deadlines are, of course, too short so in the time allowed the amount and level of editing is less than ideal. The students are not always interested in the mechanics of the editing, only the final results, i.e., a better paper and so a better outcome for them. Ideally their having to work through the permission form would make them better understand what is involved in improving their work and, for another time, help them write a better paper.

76. Thesis editing guidelines may be a useful tool for students and editors to discuss the limits of their relationship, just as any contract between author and editor can help clarify roles. Perhaps their usefulness resides more in the discussion and awareness they generate than in actually using the form (although I'm sure some editors will find the form useful!).

 I hope that this guideline generates good discussion about other areas in which editors should be aware of the limits of our role, not necessarily because the ethical questions are solely our responsibility. The recent publicity surrounding James Frey's book A Million Little Pieces suggests that editors and publishers should be having this conversation. What is the editor's responsibility with regard to ensuring that authors behave ethically?

 For the most part, the draft guidelines seem adequate to the task of ensuring that editors and students alike are better informed about what we can do for them. I have offered a few suggestions in the attached survey.

78. I think this is a great idea that is long overdue.

79. I question whether it should be up to the editor to ensure that the writer has obtained written permission to be edited. The main point should be that the editor have a code s/he can include as part of the contract. What the writer does with it is his/her business. I look on the editor's contribution as an opportunity to teach clear and accurate expression through writing.

80. This point is covered but I think it needs to be stressed: the most important thing is to be sure that the student's supervisor, department and university accept the idea of having a thesis edited.

82. Thanks to all for including our work in suggestions. Thesis editing is important, but neglected for too long.

We also received a few comments from members who did not complete the questionnaire:
Great idea - thanks for working on this.

Thanks for asking me. I have read through the guidelines and the questionnaire. But my experience is with editing papers that are going to publication (by students and professors). So I have dealt with the authors and not with any supervisors.

Though I do not have enough experience editing theses to answer your questionnaire (and the experience I have had was at the Masters' level), I want to say that I am very pleased that EAC is taking a stand on this subject. When I attended the EAC conference in Toronto a few years ago the subject came up, and it was evident that there was a great diversity of opinion among members. I look forward to seeing your

completed report as I feel quite strongly that there are ethical issues involved, and where to draw the line is a challenge.

Sorry, I do not have experience editing theses and cannot help. Nevertheless, I will appreciate knowing the results of the survey

And one response from a non-member:
Although I am not currently a member of FEAC, some years ago I was active in the Vancouver chapter. [X] sent me this survey because she knew I was concerned about the issue of editing student papers, and I have filled it out. This policy would protect the reputation of FEAC, but I don't think it reduce the number of students who have their papers rewritten.

Appendix 1: Text of soliciting email

Dear EAC member,

The attached survey will be of interest to those EAC editors who edit, or are interested in editing, university theses.

The object of the survey is to determine whether you think EAC should adopt national guidelines for the ethical editing of theses. The Toronto branch developed and adopted a set of guidelines in April 2005, and has kindly offered them as a template. If the idea meets with your approval, a package will be prepared and put to the membership for approval at the 2006 AGM.

This survey comprises two parts:
1. a background document consisting of a statement of guidelines and suggestions for use and a permission form (attached as a PDF file);
2. a questionnaire (attached as an editable Word file).

We ask that you examine the background document, answer the questionnaire, and return the completed questionnaire to the Member Communication Committee: <mcc@editors.ca>.

Note: You might also want to consult EAC's Professional Editorial Standards. If you do not have your copy handy, you can view the publication at <www.editors.ca/pubs/pes.htm>.

The Member Communication Committee will collect and analyze members' questionnaires and report back to the EAC national executive council. The report will be posted to the members' section of the EAC website. Respondents' names will not be given in the report.

We would like to wrap this up expeditiously, so we ask that you submit your completed questionnaire by Friday, February 17, 2006.

Thank you,
Member Communication Committee

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Editors' Association of Canada/Association canadienne des réviseurs
Member Survey on Guidelines for Editing Theses
January 2006

On behalf of the EAC national executive council, the Member Communication Committee invites you to help determine whether a national set of EAC guidelines for the ethical editing of university theses would be desirable. We ask you to review the draft guidelines and permission form in the file EAC_ThesesEdit_Draft2006.pdf and answer the questionnaire below.

You'll notice that this draft refers to doctoral theses only. The working group that crafted the guidelines adopted by the Toronto branch talked specifically with editors who edit doctoral theses and with professors who supervise and evaluate doctoral candidates.

When you have examined the draft, please answer the following questions:

****
1. How much experience do you have editing theses?

lots	___
some	___
none	___

2. How concerned are you about the ethics of editing theses?

very	___
somewhat	___
not very	___

3. Do you think having guidelines and a permission form endorsed by the EAC membership would be beneficial to your work?

yes	___
no	___

Comments:

4. In your opinion, do the draft guidelines and suggestions for their use satisfactorily cover the subject?

yes	___
no	___

If not, what would you change or add?

5. In your opinion, does the draft permission form satisfactorily cover the subject?

yes	___
no	___

If not, what suggestions do you have?

6. From your experience, would this policy be suitable for other kinds of theses (masters, undergraduate, etc.)? Could one form fit all, or would it be best to have separate guidelines and forms? Is this an important issue or not?

7. Please make any other observations or comments not specifically addressed by the questions above.

****

Thank you for your participation. Please return this questionnaire by email before Friday, February 17, 2006, to <mcc@editors.ca>.

Appendix 3: Associated files

Draft guidelines and permission form:
EAC_ThesesEdit_Draft2006.pdf

Questionnaire:
ThesesGuidelines_Survey-26Jan2006.doc

Detailed summary of survey responses:
ThesisSurvey_Results.PDF