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No loss of marks for spelling mistakes at UK university – 14th April, 2021

Level 0

A university said students will not lose marks for language mistakes. It thinks asking students to have a high level of written English is unfair to ethnic minorities. It is also unfair to poorer students with lower grades. The university wants to make tests fairer. It wants to stop poorer students from dropping out.

Asking for well-written English is unfair to people with dyslexia. They have problems using letters and words. It is harder for them to write with no mistakes. The university also said it could stop overseas students from going to university. Another university said it is fairer to focus on students' ideas and not their spelling.

Level 1

A university said students will not lose marks for language mistakes. It also said well-written English is mainly for white males and the elite. The university thinks asking students to have a high level of written English is unfair to ethnic minorities and poorer students with lower grades. The university wants to make tests fairer. It wants teachers to be more flexible when they grade students' writing. It hopes to stop poorer students dropping out.

The university said students can suffer because of their writing. People with dyslexia have problems using letters and words. It is harder for them to write with no mistakes. Dyslexia affects areas of the brain that use language. The university also said that asking for well-written English could stop overseas students from going to university. Teachers at another university were told it is fairer to judge students on their ideas and not their spelling and grammar.

Level 2

A university said students will not lose marks for making language mistakes. It said that asking for English with no mistakes is "elitist". It also said well-written English is mainly for white males and the elite. The university said asking students to have a high proficiency in written English was unfair to ethnic minorities and students who went to schools where grades were low. The university wants to make writing and tests "more inclusive". It wants teachers to be more flexible when they grade students' writing. It hopes to cut the number of poorer students who drop out.

The university said many students suffer in life because their writing has mistakes. This includes students with dyslexia. People with dyslexia have difficulty in using letters and words. It is harder for them to write with no mistakes. Dyslexia affects areas of the brain that process language. The university also said that requiring well-written English could discourage students for whom English is a second language from going to university. Teachers at another university were told it is fairer to judge students on their ideas and knowledge and not their spelling and grammar.

Level 3

A university in England has said students will not lose marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes. Hull University said that requiring English with no mistakes is "elitist". It said such a requirement could be seen as "homogenous, North European, white, male, and elite". Officials at the university said insisting on a high proficiency in written English discriminated against ethnic minorities and students who went to schools where average grades were low. The university said it wants to make writing and tests "more inclusive". It wants teachers to be more flexible when they mark and grade students' writing. It hopes to reduce the number of poorer students who drop out from university.

The university said many students suffer at school and in life because their written English contains mistakes. This includes students with dyslexia. This is a learning disorder that affects language. People with dyslexia have difficulty in relating to letters and words. This means it is harder for dyslexics to produce writing free of mistakes. Dyslexia affects areas of the brain that process language. The university also said that requiring well-written English could discourage students for whom English is a second language from going to university. Teachers at another university have been told it is fairer to judge students on their ideas and knowledge of a subject and not their spelling and grammar.