

Guidance for Staff on Interpreting Turnitin Originality Reports

What is the Originality Report?

The University uses an electronic system, Turnitin, to identify similarities between text in a submitted assignment and that in other sources, to assist staff in identifying potential plagiarism.

An Originality Report is generated.

The Originality Report provides a summary of matching or highly similar text in a submitted assignment with text in Turnitin's repository of previously submitted work, active & archived internet information & electronic periodicals & journals.

Any match found will be highlighted on the Originality Report. This will result in an overall % score as well as a % score for the text attributed to individual sources. The % scores are calculated from the number of words taken from a source compared to the total number of words in the assignment.

The Originality Report is **NOT** a plagiarism report. Originality Reports *help you* readily locate potential plagiarism.

Academic judgement must be used to determine whether or not the highlighted text in the assignment has been correctly cited and referenced. Highlighted text in the Originality Report is just unoriginal.

Many resources are not in the Turnitin repository and you should use the Originality Report in conjunction with traditional methods to detect suspected plagiarism.

This Guidance should also be read in conjunction with the University's Regulation 11B

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating>

The University's definition of academic misconduct is:

misconduct if:

- the matched text is the key idea/conclusion from a longer piece of work.
- paraphrased or summarized work is used without acknowledgement.

Higher % scores require further investigation because they MAY indicate:

- poor academic writing.
- a mere lack of knowledge and understanding of how to cite sources properly.
- overuse of quotations.
- Plagiarism.

You should look to see if the matched text is properly cited, referenced and in an appropriate academic style.

Things to note:

The University's Regulation 11 states 'cheating' means an attempt to benefit oneself or another, by deceit or fraud. This shall include reproducing one's own work or the work of another person or persons without proper

• Turnitin does not look beyond the first source it finds (best match), which might not be the original source material. Putting the passage into a search engine usually helps identify the potential original source.

• Turnitin finds it difficult to recognise

matches where many small changes have been made to the copied text.

- Turnitin does not always find everything.

% Score

Originality Reports need to be carefully interpreted; they are simply a tool to help you find sources that contain text similar to the submitted assignment.

The % scores are colour coded for ease; however there is no target % score to look for. 1% matched text in a 12,000 word dissertation would contain the same number of matched words as 12% matched text in a 1000 word essay.

Low % scores do not necessarily mean that there is no plagiarism; high % scores do not necessarily mean that the assignment contains plagiarism.

Substantial quotes used in an assignment may increase the % score, even if these are properly cited and referenced.

Low % scores MAY mask academic

Poor Academic Practice or Plagiarism?

'A single instance of the copying or close paraphrasing of two or three sentences of perhaps no more than 50 words in total of someone else's material, without direct acknowledgement, or the reproduction of a single unacknowledged diagram should not necessarily be regarded as plagiarism.

These might better be described as

'poor academic practice', rather than misconduct. In such cases, students should be informed by way of feedback why they fall below the standards required, and should then be penalized accordingly through appropriate assessment criteria, which explicitly mention the need for the use of quotation marks, referencing and the provision of a full bibliography.

Similarly, it would be unhelpful to classify one or two unsubstantiated results in an extended series of otherwise verifiable results as evidence of falsification or fabrication. Students should be made aware of the need fully to document all programmes of investigation and research and an appropriate penalty, if merited, should be imposed through normal assessment procedures.

In coming to a professional judgement in cases of possible academic misconduct, it is appropriate to consider both the nature of the assignment and the year of the student in question; assignments subject to formative

assessment only should be used constructively to encourage good academic practice and first-year undergraduate

students may expect a greater degree of understanding compared to final-year or postgraduate students.'

Things to consider in deciding if work is poor academic practice or plagiarism

1. has the student attempted to reference the source?
2. does the reference list match any of the sources in the Originality Report?
3. are there long sections of completely unreferenced text?
4. are there inconsistencies in style, layout, font or writing style?

Turnitin Originality Checks

Turnitin % Match	Comments
0 - 19% With less than 5% from one source.	High scores from a single source in this range would normally be considered to reflect poor academic practice. This is unlikely to be considered 'plagiarism' unless a significant proportion of the text has come from a single or very limited number of sources. You should mark the assessment as seen taking account of poor academic practice if appropriate.
20 - 40% with less than 10% from one source	This score would suggest poor academic practice and would require some further consideration. We would normally expect some reflection of poor academic practice in the mark awarded for the piece of assessment. The feedback for the essay should include some reference to poor academic practice and give students an indication of how to improve their practice in the future. If you are
20-40% with at least 10% from one source	Papers where the % of matched text is between 20 & 40% and at least 10% comes from one source should be marked and then forwarded to your Exam Officer who will
>40% with at least 10% from one source	Where there is clear evidence that more than 40% of the paper is not original and at least 10% comes from "one or two" sources, the paper should be referred to the
If in doubt	Contact the relevant exam secretary or the Director of Teaching and Learning.

What do I do if I suspect academic misconduct?

Administrative steps to be adopted in the event of suspected cheating in a University test (Regulation 11)

1. If a 1st marker finds that Turnitin reports, or their own suspicions and investigations, suggest unacceptable levels of copying from published sources or the web, they alert the 2nd marker to their findings, and provide them with the evidence.
2. If both markers agree that there has been an unacceptable level of copying in a student's work, such that cheating has potentially occurred, they contact the relevant exam secretary with the evidence (which might be Turnitin reports and/or actual sources that have been copied). The marker is also required to provide a one page summary report of their concerns/findings. Without the summary report, the exam secretary may not proceed with the case.
3. If the exam secretary agrees there is sufficient evidence to justify a formal allegation to be put to the student they alert the Departmental Administrator (Teaching and Learning) and Chair of the Plagiarism Committee.
4. The Departmental Administrator (Teaching and Learning) also asks convenors of other modules taken by the student to look (again) at all other work to see if there is further evidence of copying. This might include work of a previous academic year.
5. The Departmental Administrator (Teaching and Learning) formally writes to the student to advise them that their work is being investigated for potential copying of text, identifies the relevant module(s) and provides them with a copy of the Turnitin report. The student's personal tutor will also be informed, and all documents and evidence will be provided to the personal tutor. The student will be invited to attend a formal hearing, at which their personal tutor (or some other person of the student's choosing) can also be present.
6. A hearing will take place with the Chair of the Plagiarism committee, exam secretary, personal tutor & student. The student will be shown an annotated copy of the assessment(s) in question and, where appropriate, copies of the sources from which the student is alleged to have copied. The student will be given the opportunity to make representations about the evidence and their practice.
7. The student and personal tutor withdraw, and the Chair of the Plagiarism committee and exam secretary consider all the evidence presented, including the student and personal tutor representations, and any pertinent personal circumstances. Each individual case will be assessed to decide on an appropriate outcome:

No case - evidence of potential copying has been shown to be misleading or erroneous, or

Negligence - careless or incompetent academic practice, or

Misconduct - action of the student was deemed to have been deliberately intended to deceive

8. If the outcome is deemed to be **negligence** then the marker will treat the work as of a poor academic standard; any unacknowledged copying will be reflected in the mark awarded. However, depending on the student's circumstances, a more lenient approach may be adopted including:
 - Allowing resubmission of the original work with revised referencing; the work to be marked in the usual way;
 - Allowing resubmission of the original work with revised referencing for a reduced or capped mark;
 - Allowing resubmission of another piece of work on a different topic, the work to be marked in the usual way;
 - Allowing resubmission of a new piece of work for a reduced or capped mark.

9. In instances of *misconduct*, where the Department judges the actions of the student to be deliberate with intent to deceive, the following may occur. Again this depends upon circumstances and the nature and degree of the misconduct
- Resubmission of the original work with revised referencing; for a capped mark;
 - Resubmission of another piece of work on a different topic, the work to be marked normally;
 - Resubmission of a new piece of work for a reduced or capped mark;
 - A reduction in mark, to a maximum of zero, for the piece of work in which the plagiarism has occurred.
10. Once the student has been informed of the outcome of the meeting, the student has a choice of either accepting the penalty or appealing to the University Investigating Committee within ten days. This will be explained in the letter sent to the student informing the outcome of the meeting.
11. A copy of all correspondence relating to this matter will be kept on the students file.

While implementing the above process all staff involved in the process are reminded of the University's statement on Equality stated as follows:

"The promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion concerns all of us and is the responsibility of all members of our community. It is expected that we will all contribute to ensuring that the University of Warwick continues to be a safe, welcoming and productive environment, where there is equality of opportunity, fostered in an environment of mutual respect and dignity.

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognising our individual differences. We understand that simply having diversity in our work force and student body is not enough; we must create an inclusive environment where all people can contribute and reach their full potential.

Inclusion is engaging the uniqueness and talents, beliefs, backgrounds, capabilities and ways of working of all individuals, joined in a common endeavour, to create a culture of belonging, in which people feel valued and respected."

For additional information please refer to the University's Equality and Diversity website at <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/equalops/>