Turnitin® Guidelines for Instructors

What is Turnitin®?

Turnitin® is a text-matching tool that is commonly used to help detect plagiarism, but it can be integrated into course activities as an educational tool to help students practice proper scholarly writing skills.

Check

Turnitin® compares submitted documents to its database and sources on the web.

Add

Submitted files are housed on the Turnitin® server, which is based in the U.S., and on our local LEARN server.

Report

For each submission, a similarity report is generated which provides information about matched text.

Should I use Turnitin®?

I’m looking for a scholarly writing tool. Student and instructor sees similarity report for student submission.

Draft submissions’ similarity report helps students implement proper scholarly writing skills for final submission.

I’m looking for a text-matching only tool. Only the instructor sees similarity report for student submission.

Single submission does not allow students to make revisions based on the similarity report.

Considerations and Limitations

- Does not verify authorship
- May require extra marking time
- May not work for graphs, images, or tables
- For privacy and security reasons, must provide alternate assignment, e.g. scaffolded/annotated

Preparing Students for Turnitin®

- Provide rationale for Turnitin® use
- Discuss discipline-specific citation conventions
- Introduce the concept of original thought
- Clearly define plagiarism within the context of your discipline
- Discuss academic integrity and provide resources

1. May require extra marking time
2. May not work for graphs, images, or tables
3. For privacy and security reasons, must provide alternate assignment, e.g. scaffolded/annotated
Implementing Turnitin®

Enable Turnitin® in the Turnitin® tab of the dropdown folder.

To use Turnitin® as a scholarly writing tool, create a ‘draft’ dropdown and a ‘final submission’ dropdown. Enable Turnitin® in both dropdown folders. In the ‘draft’ folder, select ‘Allow students to view Similarity Reports’ under ‘More options in Turnitin®’.

Scholarly writing tool

- Number of submissions set by instructor
- Ungraded

Text-matching only tool

- Single submission
- Graded
- Single submission
- Graded

Interpreting Turnitin® Reports

Check
Check Similarity Report for percentage of common phrases.

Review and Assess
Review and assess the highlighted text within the document for originality and proper citation.

Grade
Grade assignment as usual.

Simularity Index
A percentage representing the number of words found in common with database content, divided by the total number of words in the file.

- Light Blue: <0%
- Dark Blue: 1% to 24%
- Yellow: 25% to 49%
- Orange: 50% to 74%
- Red: 75% to 100%

Note: There is no “safe” colour or percentage: no percentage or colour in similarity report can fully evaluate whether text has been plagiarized.