Staff guide: Turnitin originality reports

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1. About this guide
This short guide is for staff. It covers how to access Turnitin originality reports and provides tips and ideas for working with them.

2. Accessing reports
1. Log in to Blackboard and click on the relevant course or organisation.
2. In the Control Panel at the bottom left, click on Course Tools (or Organisation Tools), then Turnitin Assignments. Click on the relevant assignment.
3. You will come to the Assignment inbox. Colours in the ‘Similarity’ column broadly indicate the amount of matching text (which is not necessarily plagiarism): click on the % to access the originality report.

3. Considerations and tips
1. Turnitin does not itself identify plagiarism – it highlights matching text. Reports need to be interpreted, and this is most effectively done working with them online.
2. Turnitin has limitations – for example, it only checks against electronic sources.
3. Quotes are only recognised if enclosed in double quote marks.
4. Graphical materials such as diagrams, images or equations are not checked.
5. For bibliographic materials to be excluded (when this option is selected), students must add one of the following headings before their references, on a new line and not followed by any punctuation: Bibliography, References or Referenced Works. The heading should not be in a header or footer.
6. Bear in mind:
   a. The type of assignment; for example, if it is textbook-led or has been set before then you may expect higher levels of matching text.
   b. The length of the work; 1% of a thesis is different to 1% of a short essay.
   c. The kinds of supporting evidence students will use; personal reflections or print-only sources are likely to produce fewer matches.
   d. What level the students are at and what their expected competency is with regard to referencing, appropriate use of sources, etc.
7. If reviewing reports for a cohort, look at the distribution of the originality scores first, from the Assignment inbox. You can click the ‘Class Stats’ tab to see a statistical breakdown of all the Turnitin matches for a Blackboard course, enabling comparison across different assignments. Submissions falling outside of the cohort average may be a good place to start checking.
8. Turnitin reports can include false positives (eg discipline-specific phrases if writing up an experiment). First exclude these where you can. You can apply filters and exclusions to individual assignments, to exclude quoted text, small matches (above 10 words), or specific sources (such as a previously-submitted draft). You can also choose filters and exclusions for all assignments, but this has to be done when a submission point is set up.
9. A pdf of the ‘current view’ of the report can be downloaded for local storage or printing by clicking on the “printer” button towards the bottom left of the report viewer. However, this report is in black-and-white, and does not have any of the interactivity of the online report.

For more information see: https://www.bristol.ac.uk/digital-education/support/tools/turnitin/