TURNITIN
at Western Sydney University

Instructional guide for students
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Why Turnitin?

The University values academic integrity and prefers an educative approach to the issue of plagiarism in order to foster ethical scholarship. This means we want to guide students to understand how to complete their studies with integrity.

One aspect of the educative and preventative strategy is the use of Turnitin, an electronic text-matching system. The Turnitin software will identify instances of matching text between all student submissions and the content in the Turnitin repository. The original submission is returned with matching text highlighted and links to the original sources. This is called the Originality Report.

Using Turnitin successfully

⚠️ The key thing to understand about Turnitin is that it is not the percentage similarity that matters! The reported similarity index is just a number – it’s important to review all the matches identified in the Originality Report and make changes where necessary before resubmitting your work, so allow time for this. Some matches are no cause for concern; others may identify areas where paraphrasing or referencing is not adequate.

⚠️ Be aware that where draft submissions are allowed prior to the due date, this means that comparison of submissions within the same Turnitin Assignment link will not take place until after the due date passes. This means that similarity to your classmates’ work will not show in the Originality Report prior to the due date. Reports are regenerated by Turnitin at the due date and therefore the percentage similarity may change at this time.

You’ll find additional information about using Turnitin on the Library website under the Guides menu > Turnitin and Feedback Studio.
In particular, the following short video presentations from the Library will help you understand the key aspects of Turnitin:

- Submitting a Turnitin Assignment (YouTube video, 2:09)
- Viewing and interpreting the Originality report (YouTube video, 2:59)
- Accessing assignment feedback via Turnitin (YouTube video, 1:54)
Some common questions about Turnitin and the submission process are answered at the Library’s Student FAQ page.

**Getting started**

Assignments are submitted to Turnitin via vUWS. Login to vUWS using your Western Sydney Account details, select the appropriate unit and find the relevant Turnitin assignment link (there might be more than one).

This is usually found via the Assessment folder on the left-hand menu; if you can’t find it, ask your Tutor or Unit Coordinator.

**Submitting an assignment**

**File properties**

If an assignment is set to ‘Allow any file type’, Turnitin will accept any file:

- less than 40mb;
- less than 400 pages.

If the assignment is set to allow only file types that Turnitin can check for originality, Turnitin will only accept files that can generate Originality Reports. Files must include at least 20 words of machine-readable text, and be any of the following file types:

- Microsoft Word* (.doc/.docx)
- OpenOffice Text (.odt)
- WordPerfect* (.wpd)
- PostScript (.ps/.eps)
- HTML
- Hangul Word Processor file (.hwp)
- Rich text format (.rtf)
- Plain text (.txt)
- Google Docs via Google Drive™
- Adobe® PDF
- Microsoft PowerPoint® (.pptx, .ppt, .pps, and .pps) (Speaker notes will not be included)
- Microsoft Excel® (.xls and .xlsx)

⚠️ Always check your Learning Guide, as there may be set requirements for the file type
acceptable for each assignment.
For further information about file types accepted by Turnitin, check the Library FAQ or review the Student Guide on the Turnitin website.
It's usually a good idea to ensure that you include your Student ID into the header or footer of your document.

**File submission**

⚠️ Assignments must be submitted as a single document. If you have multiple files for different parts of an assignment, you should combine these before proceeding.

To submit your assignment, click View/Complete for the correct Turnitin Assignment.

Next, click the Submit button.

Note that this screen contains information about the assignment, including the due date.

- Click the blue ‘i’ icon for additional information from the instructor
- Click the rubric icon to see if there is an attached rubric (marking criteria).

At the Submit: Single file upload screen choose the following options:
- Enter a submission title. It is recommended that you include your Student ID number in the title of the submission.
• Read the text of the Disclaimer. By continuing, you are indicating that you have read and agree with these statements.

• Choose the location of your saved file (e.g. saved on the Computer, Google Docs or Dropbox) and follow the steps to specify which file to upload.

• Click on the Upload button (if you have chosen the wrong file by mistake, click Clear file and repeat step 3).

![Upload process]

• The upload process will begin and the following on-screen notification will appear.

![Upload notification]

• A preview of the paper will be displayed. Check this carefully and choose the Confirm button to submit your assignment (if you have chosen the wrong file by mistake, click Cancel and repeat steps 3-5).

![Preview of assignment]

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• After the submission has been successfully completed, a digital receipt is displayed on-screen. A copy of this is sent to your Western Sydney University student email account. The receipt is your proof of a completed submission and you should keep it until you have received all your marks back.

![Submit Turnitin Assignment](image)

Congratulations - your submission is complete! This is your digital receipt. You can print a copy of this receipt from within the Document Viewer.

⚠️ At times, network issues may cause the screen at step 6 to ‘hang’ indefinitely. If the digital receipt is not shown on screen following a short waiting period, then it is unclear whether your submission has been successful. In this case, open a new browser tab and check your student email for the emailed version of the digital receipt. If you have the email, it is safe to close the suspended submission tab. If there is no digital receipt you should assume submission has failed and repeat the process from the beginning in a new browser session.

Submissions can also be checked by opening vUWS in a separate tab and accessing the Assignment Inbox via the View/Complete option. If the assignment was submitted successfully, the Similarity will either say ‘Processing’ or have a % already, and the option given will be Resubmit rather than Submit.
Re-submitting an assignment

To maximise the benefit of Turnitin, students should upload their assignment at the final draft stage to ensure they have time to review the report and make adjustments to their work (if needed). Most units allow students the ability to overwrite their previous submissions until the due date and time set for the assignment, but always check the Learning Guide first.

- To re-submit an assignment, follow the same steps as the first time submission to an assignment (p.3 – 5).
- Re-submissions will completely overwrite (replace) the existing submission. Note that papers can only be re-submitted until the assignment due date.
- If you believe re-submissions are allowed but you are unable to do so before the due date, please advise your Unit Coordinator, as the Assignment setting may need to be edited.
- If the setting does allow submissions after the due date, only students who have not yet submitted a paper will be able to submit. If a draft has been submitted prior to the due date, this is considered to be final once the due date passes.
Interpreting the Originality Report

An Originality Report does not detect plagiarism, it provides a summary of matching or similar areas of text found in a submitted paper.

The paper shown in the Originality Report is formatted as per the original document, including images and graphs.

Accessing the Originality Report

When you click on View/Complete for the Turnitin Assignment, the Assignment Inbox will display the status of your submission.

When the word ‘Processing’ appears in the Similarity column, this indicates that your paper has been submitted but the report has not yet been generated.

When a report has been generated, the similarity index and a colour coded bar are placed in the Similarity column. This percentage is the overall similarity index. In the example above, overall, 22% of the paper matches sources in the Turnitin repository.

The possible similarity index percentage ranges are linked to a corresponding colour:

- Blue: (no matching text)
- Green: (single word -> 24% match)
- Yellow: (25 -> 49% matching text)
- Orange: (50 -> 74% matching text)
- Red: (75 -> 100% matching text)

To open the Originality Report, click on the percentage and your reports (originality and grading, once available) will open in a new window entitled ‘Feedback Studio’.

Note: The generation of the Originality Reports for first submissions usually takes only a few minutes. For second and subsequent submissions of the same assignment, the report is available 24 hours later, although the digital receipt is sent as confirmation straight away. Unless stated in the Learning Guide, the originality report is not required as proof of submission.
Once Feedback Studio has opened, you will see a toolbar on the right hand side, which will allow you to access your originality report.

Click on the number that corresponds with your similarity percentage, and a match overview toolbar will open.

**Match Overview**

The **Match Overview** displays a list of all areas of the paper which have similarity to information in the Turnitin repository. Matches are colour coded and listed from highest to lowest percentage of matching word area to the submission. Only the top or best matches are shown; all underlying matches are visible in the Match Breakdown and All Sources modes (discussed below).

The Match Overview displays only one matching source for each block of text matched. It is important to remember that this may not be the source you remember using for your research, as decided by Turnitin’s matching algorithm.
Click the arrow to the side of the source to see Match Breakdown. This displays all the matching sources for a particular piece of matched text.

All sources are listed for the piece of matched text.

Direct Source Comparison

Direct Source Comparison, allows a user to quickly compare matching text to the source of the match in the Turnitin repositories.

To view matching content:

- Click on a highlighted area of text on the assignment.
- A pop-up window will appear above the highlighted text, displaying the matching text within the source. The open book icon (Full Source View link) in the top right of the pop-up window will allow you access to view the full text.

- Click on the Full Source View link to view the Full Source Text within the sidebar.
• If the source you are viewing contains multiple instances of matching text, you can navigate between these using the left/right arrows. The text in the paper will automatically line up with the source for easy comparison.

Navigation through multiple sources available via these arrows.

• To view matching text from a web source in its original web context, select the link listed at the top of the sidebar. This will open in a new browser tab.

• When you have finished viewing a source, return to the Match Overview by clicking the Esc key.

**All Sources view**

Switching from Match Overview to the All Sources view displays a full list of all matching sources in order of which source is the most matched.

Option to scroll through matches

All Sources icon

To navigate through all the paper’s matches to that source, use the left/right arrows.
What percentage matters?

There is no ‘safe’ percentage. The areas of matching text must be carefully examined to determine whether you have correctly paraphrased or quoted each source. It is considered to be academic misconduct if the work you submit includes plagiarised content. Submissions will match against commonly used phrases, assignment templates, and reference list entries. This is unavoidable and is not a concern.

A high percentage of matching text may indicate:

- Relying too much on direct quotation. Good academic writing should minimise the use of direct quotes.
- Cut and paste directly from sources

In this case, the student should review all matches and consider re-writing these sections with appropriate paraphrasing or summary, and ensure all are referenced.

A low percentage may indicate:

- Low use of direct quotes.
- Use of paraphrased or summarised text. Students should still make sure that all the sources they have used, including ideas etc., have been acknowledged accurately.

Good academic writing should minimise the use of direct quotes, however if the low percentage is due to absence of cited literature, it could mean argument is not well supported or explained. It depends on the assignment question and the context of the text matches. Seek assistance from your Tutor or a Library Study Smart Advisor if you are unsure.

Three questions to ask yourself:

- Have I written an original piece of work? Original does not necessarily mean you have to come up with a completely new idea. More so, it means you have expressed your argument or discussion of the topic using your own way, citing the research of others only to support and add credibility to your points.

- Are all my sources acknowledged in-text and included in my reference list? The Library provides Referencing & citation resources to help you attribute a quote or an idea correctly.
• Has any work in this assignment already been submitted to Turnitin?
You should be aware that it is considered self-plagiarism to submit work that you have done for a previous unit of study (at any institution) for a current assignment. When you submit electronically via Turnitin, part of the statement you agree to says that you have not submitted any part of the work previously, except where appropriately referenced, and with prior permission from the Lecturer/Tutor/Unit Coordinator for the unit. If you feel that it is appropriate for you to include work you have done previously, you must always discuss this with the Unit Coordinator before doing so.

Accessing Assignment Feedback

The buttons directly above the similarity function buttons in Feedback Studio allow you to access your assignment feedback.

By clicking on the feedback layer button, you can view your instructor’s comments over the text of your assignment.
By selecting the speech bubble icon you will open the instructor feedback toolbar.

Within this view, you will be able to view text comments, listen to voice comments, and view the assignment rubric.

Printing or Downloading Reports

- Reports can be downloaded as a PDF copy to save to your computer.
- Select the download icon at the bottom of the Feedback Studio Toolbar. This will give you the option of downloading the current view, digital receipt, or originally submitted file.
- If selecting the ‘current view’ option, you may select which layers to switch on: grading, similarity, or both. In the example below, the similarity layer is switched on (active).
- Save the file to your preferred location and print a copy if required.
- PDF versions of reports contain the list of links to matching sources at the end.
What happens if I have technical issues when submitting?

It is essential that you plan your time carefully and do not leave submission of your assignment until the last moments. It’s always a possibility that a network delay or Turnitin service outage could cause a delay resulting in a late submission.

To maximise your chances of successful on-time submission:

✓ Ensure the final version of your document is saved and readily accessible for upload.

✓ Complete the submission via a fixed, reliable internet connection rather than Wi-Fi.

✓ Reduce the number of browser windows and documents you have open during the submission process – this will reduce network load as well as minimise confusion.

✓ For technical assistance please contact the IT Service Desk via the MyIT portal.

If you are unable to submit successfully, or the system is not available, you are advised to contact the IT Service Desk and lodge a support ticket. It is helpful if you can provide screenshots or details of error messages or events that occur during the submission.

If your submission is late or unsuccessful as a result of technical issues you should also let your Tutor or Unit Coordinator know, and provide details of steps you have tried and issues experienced.

Can research students access Turnitin?

Eligible higher degree research students can access a designated vUWS site which contains a suitable Turnitin link. This allows repeated submissions of thesis drafts which are not retained in the Turnitin database. Please access this Library FAQ for details.