

Turnitin—A guide for CQUniversity staff

Document purpose

This document is an overview of how Turnitin is currently able to be used at CQUni. It is intended as a “user guide” for CQUni staff to help them understand how they can use Turnitin as a tool to assist in checking the originality of student’s electronically submitted work.

In addition to this document there is a staff video and a student video that can be viewed at: <http://learning.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=12912>

The student video can be embedded in your Moodle course web site should you wish to do so.

This document and the videos should be used in conjunction with the university’s “Student Misconduct and Plagiarism Policy” available at http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy_list.do

What is Turnitin?

Turnitin is used for checking originality and preventing plagiarism by comparing student submissions with other information sources.

What Turnitin is NOT?

Turnitin is not a plagiarism checker. Turnitin does not determine if plagiarism has occurred. This is a decision for the Lecturer to make. Turnitin serves only as a guide to help the lecturer determine where a student’s work may have been copied, or sourced from.

What sources does Turnitin compare student submissions with?

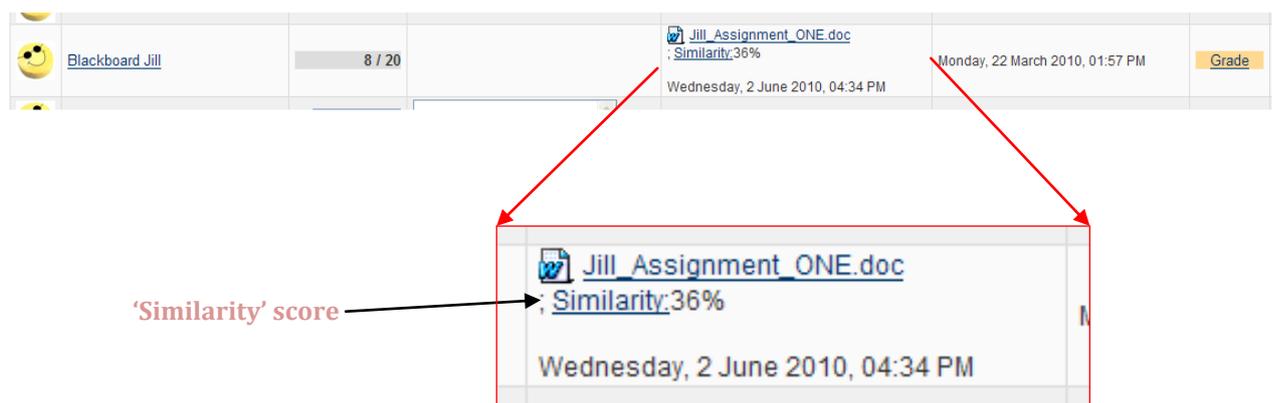
Students’ submissions are compared against Turnitin’s database which includes:

- millions of published works from journals, periodicals and publication databases
- millions of previously submitted student papers
- submitted student work from different courses and campuses at CQUniversity
- millions of publicly accessible Internet pages.

How does Turnitin assist?

Turnitin displays a linked similarity score as a percentage in the Moodle Grades area for each student's assessment item. This score is only available for assessment items that have had the Turnitin option activated for that item.

Below is an image of a section of the Grades area for a particular assessment item and student.



The similarity score—what do the numbers mean?

The percentage value on the originality report indicates the amount of text in the submitted document that matches text elsewhere. A higher score does not necessarily mean that plagiarism has occurred. The score may be due to:

- Reference lists
- Quotes (correctly referenced)
- Template headings or structure
- Group work—students in the same group will have similar work
- Assignment question included
- Footnotes
- If the Course Coordinator allows students to submit to Turnitin to check their scores and amend before final submission, the assignment will show a high percentage of similarity when submitted for marking.

The Turnitin report—some of the features

The report is available in three modes as follows:

- **Show highest matches together:** This is the default view. The header or top part of the report contains the student details and some statistics, word count etc. The left hand side is the student's submission whilst the right hand side lists the linked, likely matching source addresses.
- **Show matches one at a time:** Displays the matches between the submission and a specific selected source in the Turnitin databases. Contains a complete list of all matches.
- **Quickview (classic report) mode:** A clear list of the matches found, followed by the submission with colour coding to indicate matching areas

If the lecturer clicks the 'similarity' score, an originality report generated by Turnitin (not CQUniversity or Moodle) will appear in a new window (see next section).

The report provides a breakdown of the overall similarity score with individual scores for each matching source or location. The lecturer can identify what percentage of work is matched and possibly, from what source.

The report uses colour coding to link matching text from the students submission with potential matching sources.

Exclusions—how to discount a particular match from the report

The report does provide functionality to remove particular matches, as follows:

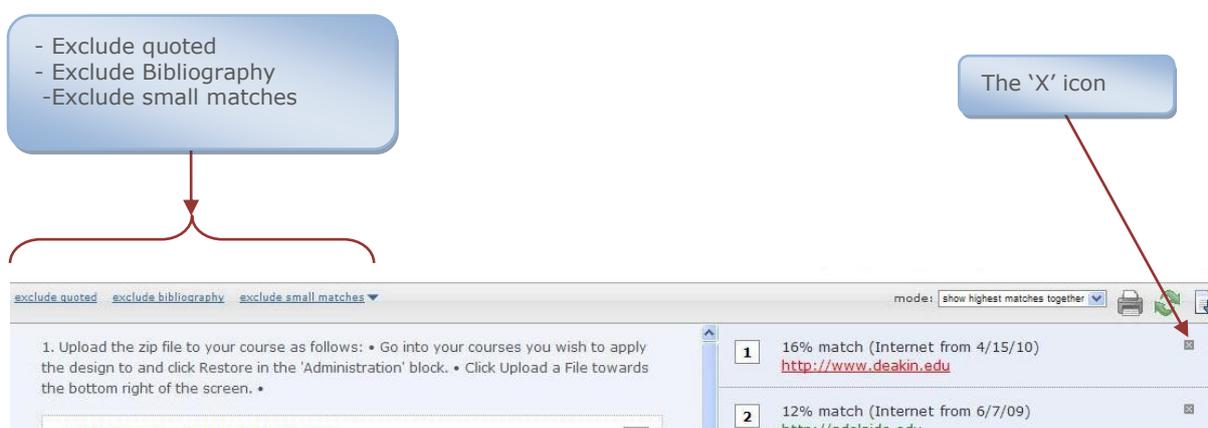
Exclude quoted—This will remove text between quotation marks ("example") from the matching percentage result.

Exclude Bibliography—This will remove the Bibliography or References list as long as the list is titled as either 'References' or 'Bibliography'.

Exclude small matches—This will remove common phrases. Options allow for the small match to be determined either as a word count or as percentage compared to the text on the overall submission.

The **'X'** icon—This option exist next to each matched location Clicking the 'X' icon removes that source from the report. This allows the report to be viewed with a particular source discounted.

The diagram below indicates the location of the exclusion links on the originality report.



Sample screen shot of the originality report (default view)

Left hand side - Student submission including colour coded matched content.

Header - Student details and submission statistics

Right hand side - Linked locations where content may have been sourced

Probably OK

Possibly requires further academic investigation

View: Mode switching

Colour matching helps identify where matching text was found. Some matches, as indicated in orange above, should not cause concern as in this example, a common phrase has been identified. The red match, however, indicates a high chance of copying. The higher the number of matches found is indicated by the number of entries in the right hand column and the number of different colours used.