

Interpreting the Turnitin Originality Report in studentcentral – staff guide

The Originality Report is an effective way to check that your students have properly cited their sources in an assignment and have not simply copied text without appropriate referencing.

The screenshot shows a Turnitin Originality Report interface. At the top, it says 'INBOX | NOW VIEWING: NEW PAPERS'. Below this are 'submit paper' and 'export' buttons. The main area is a table with columns: AUTHOR, TITLE, SIMILARITY, GRADE, RESPONSE, and FILE. The SIMILARITY column is highlighted with a red box. The data in the table is as follows:

AUTHOR	TITLE	SIMILARITY	GRADE	RESPONSE	FILE
Minnelli, Liza	Liza	0%		*	
Beckham, Victoria	Victoria	3%		*	
Gale, Dorothy	Dotty	5%		*	
Kubrick, Stanley	Stanley	6%		*	
Middleton, Pippa	Kate's sister	13%		*	
Jones, Vinnie	Vinnie	19%		*	
Cole, Cheryl	Chezza	21%		*	
Cowell, Simon	Simon Cowell	27%		*	
Nightingale, Florenc...	Flo	57%		*	
Johnny Depp, Demo Si...	Johnny Depp	100%		*	

The Originality Report does not attempt to judge whether plagiarism has occurred, it highlights text that matches another source. The decision of whether this is plagiarism remains your academic judgment. Because of this, it is not simply a matter of reading the percentage scores against a paper and saying, for example, anything above 25% is plagiarism. In the [video that accompanies this document](#) we discuss how to interpret the report and score.

What is the Originality Report?

The Originality Report is an indication of similarities found between the submitted work and the:

- Internet, including archived web pages,
- A database of work submitted by other students,
- And other online sources, such as books and journals.

It shows the amount of matched text that the system has found; highlighting the matching text and identifying the source of the match in the submitted work.

What doesn't the Originality Report show?






The Originality Report only checks text. Any images, drawings, diagrams or plans included in the assignment will not be picked up by the Originality Report but they still may need to be referenced.

Turnitin won't pick up every match – for example the database does not contain the contents of all books and journals. So even if the score is low, you still need to check the assignment to ensure nothing has been missed.

What percentage of matches is “safe”?

There is no ideal percentage to look for since, hopefully, the work is bound to contain some words from other sources. The percentage will vary depending on the type of assignment and the requirements of the work involved.

The Similarity Score is a traffic light system.

	blue (no matching text)
	green (1 word-24% matching text)
	yellow (25-49% matching text)
	orange (50-74% matching text)
	red (75-100% matching text)

Blue indicates a matching score of zero. This could mean that the work has no references at all and that there is little or no use of direct quotes. Depending on the nature of the assignment this is not necessarily an issue but a Blue score is worth checking just in case the student has simply submitted a paper with text that Turnitin cannot recognize.

Green indicates matches between 1% and 24% and is the most common. While a Green score might suggest the document is OK, it is simply an indication of the amount of matched text, so potentially, up to 24% of the document could still have been copied without referencing.

Yellow indicates matches between 25% and 49%. The score then becomes **Amber** which matches 50% to 74% and finally **Red** which matches 75% to 100%

Higher percentage matches may indicate :

- Relying too much on direct quotation as a result of poor academic writing
- Cutting and pasting from other sources

A 100% match means the assignment has previously been submitted to Turnitin. This can happen if the student is making a re-submission of their work and the file had already been submitted to the Turnitin database. This could be a student error – they submitted to another assignment area by mistake, or a re-submission of work after a previous failed mark. A 100% match might also indicate collusion or copying an essay from a student from a previous year or another institution.

Types of frequently found ‘acceptable’ matching text

There are certain types of matched text that it is normal and acceptable to find. These include:

- **Quotations:** Properly referenced quotations can be ignored. These can be excluded using the filter as will be explained later
- **References and Bibliography:** Other students will have used the same references at some point and these will show up
- **Matching formats:** e.g. the same essay title
- **Tables and Charts** showing shared or copied data or statistics

- **Appendices** may also have a large amount of matching text as other students may well have used the same sources
- **Small matches:** The Originality Report will highlight short phrases in a sentence and these can be commonly used terminology particular to a subject
- **Paraphrasing:** The Originality Report will highlight words in paraphrased text that matches a source. The source needs to be cited but, again, this remains an academic judgment as to whether the text has been suitably paraphrased. Matches cannot be avoided by simply changing a few words from the source. The report will still pick it up

Navigating to the Originality Report

In the Inbox, click any of the % links in the Similarity column to open the assignment in the **Originality** view

In the right hand column is a list of **all the sources** that have been matched with an individual percentage

These sources are colour coded with the highlighted text in the assignment which makes it easy to match the source with the text

Rank	Source	Percentage
1	www.jaccforenet.ac.uk	11%
2	student.tilton.ac.uk	9%
3	Submitted to Universit...	3%
4	online.library.wiley.com	2%
5	www.aphg.org	2%
6	Timothy Champion	2%
7	L. Kerawalla "An empl...	1%
8	Submitted to Coventry...	1%
9	Submitted to	1%
10	en.wikipedia.org	1%
11	www.opma.org.au	1%

You can also click on the small Funnel icon down the bottom of the screen that allows you to **filter** out properly referenced Quotations and the Bibliography from the report.

In the top right of the page the **overall percentage** match is displayed.

turnitin	SIMILARITY INDEX	GRADE
	35%	--
		OUT OF 0

Examples of the Similarity scores

Blue scores

As explained earlier, this would indicate no references or no matches. It is uncommon to see this and would possibly warrant closer investigation and reading the text in full.

In the example below, the student simply created and submitted a document full of made-up words. This generated a 0% score.

The student has submitted a series of words (completely made-up) which satisfies the 20 word limit of Turnitin but which generates a 0% score.

So not all 0% scores are OK

Green scores

These could be one entire match or made up of numerous small matches.

In the example, the assignment received a score of 15%. Looking at this closely it can be seen that the 15% is made up of several 1% matches.

Match Number	Source	Similarity Score
1	www.medicinchest.co.uk Internet source	1%
2	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	1%
3	Submitted to Liverpool... Student paper	1%
4	www.ac.wvu.edu Internet source	1%
5	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	1%
6	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	1%
7	www.aissg.org Internet source	1%
8	Submitted to The Unive... Student paper	1%
9	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	1%
10	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	<1%
11	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	<1%
12	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	<1%

When the quotes and bibliography were filtered out from that example, the score reduced to only 5%. On investigation, those that remained appeared to be referenced appropriately.

The screenshot shows a document with a 5% match score. A red speech bubble points to the text: "After filtering quotes and bibliography the score reduced to 5% and only 9 matches remain. On investigation these are all correctly referenced". The document text includes: "unauthorised intrusion, respect is regard for the feelings and rights of others and dignity is the quality of being worthy of respect." Woagara (2001) states how respecting a patients privacy is essential when providing holistic and individual care and an environment where a patients privacy is protected also grants them dignity and creates opportunities for the patient to have a greater sense of confidence and".

The 'Match Overview' sidebar lists the following matches:

Match Number	Source	Match Percentage
1	www.medicinechest.co.uk Internet source	1%
2	Submitted to Liverpool... Student paper	1%
3	www.ac.wvu.edu Internet source	1%
4	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	<1%
5	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	<1%
6	Burris, S.. "Stigma, e... Publication	<1%
7	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	<1%
8	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	<1%
9	www.nursingtimes.net Internet source	<1%

Another green score example gave a score of 21%. In that example 16% came from a single source.

The screenshot shows a document with a 21% match score. The 'Match Overview' sidebar lists the following matches:

Match Number	Source	Match Percentage
1	en.wikipedia.org Internet source	16%
2	www.mathpost.com Internet source	1%
3	Submitted to Cardiff U... Student paper	1%
4	www.diabetesuffolk.com Internet source	1%
5	www.ciao.co.uk Internet source	1%
6	www.answers.com Internet source	<1%
7	www.examiner.com Internet source	<1%
8	www.jeanhailes.org.au Internet source	<1%
9	healthsolutions.com Internet source	<1%
10	www.wmpho.org.uk Internet source	<1%
11	Submitted to Glasgow Student paper	<1%
12	www.helpondiabetes.com Internet source	<1%

Using the **Full Source View** shows this very clearly.

The image shows a Turnitin Originality Report interface. On the left, a snippet of text from an internet source is displayed, with a red box highlighting a match. A red arrow points from this match to a larger 'Full Source Text' window on the right. This window shows the full text from the source (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diabetes...), with a 16% match percentage. A red speech bubble points to the text in the 'Full Source Text' window, stating: 'Viewing in Full Source View shows the match in the right hand column and displays how the student has simply copied and pasted large amounts of text'. The text in the 'Full Source Text' window is mostly red, indicating a match with the student's work.

Yellow scores

Expanding an example score of 27% shows that it is also largely made up of 1% matches but there are a couple of bigger matches. This could need further investigation before you can make a judgment on copying.

In this example, even a 1% match can show you that the student has included the reference for a source but failed to format this correctly as a quotation

Rank	Source	Match Percentage
1	www.kingsfund.org.uk Internet source	8%
2	Carolyn Hicks. "A tria... Publication	4%
3	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	2%
4	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	1%
5	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	1%
6	Submitted to De Montfo... Student paper	1%
7	www.brit-thoracic.org.uk Internet source	1%
8	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	1%
9	Submitted to Cardiff U... Student paper	1%
10	Bateman, N.T. Leach, Publication	<1%
11	Submitted to Universit... Student paper	<1%
12	Ird.yahooapis.com Internet source	<1%

the mask and will pull it off leaving half of the medication to be evaporated into the

Publication [Full Source View](#)

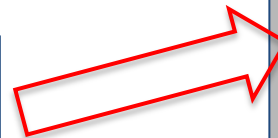
su [Bateman, N.T. Leach, R.M.. "Acute oxygen therapy. \(ABC of Oxygen\)", British Med...](#)

mc oxaemia but at risk of tissue hypoxia, oxygen should be stopped when the acid-base state and clinical assessment of vital organ function are consistent with resolution of tissue hypoxia. Summary **Oxygen is a life saving treatment. It should be treated like any other drug; it should be prescribed in writing, with the required flow rate and the method of delivery clearly specified.** Failure to correct hypoxaemia

Wl ([Pao.sub.2] [is greater than] 8 kPa) for fear of causing hypoventilation and carbon dioxide retention is unacceptable clinical practice. Careful monitoring of treatme

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treat the low oxygen content in the blood. **Oxygen is a life saving treatment. It should be treated like any other drug and must be prescribed, with the required flow rate and the method of delivery clearly specified.** (Bateman and Leach, 1998)



Amber scores

In the example used, a score of 57% shows that there is a considerable amount of copying from other sources. There are 4 main matches. It would appear that these sources have also not been cited in the paper.

The main 37% match, even if it had been correctly referenced, would show an over-reliance on a single source by the student



The screenshot shows a Turnitin Match Overview report. At the top, the Turnitin logo is on the left, followed by a similarity score of 57% (SIMILAR) and a status of -- (OUT OF 100). Below this is a red header bar with the text 'Match Overview' and a small bar chart icon. The main content is a list of 9 matches, each with a red number, the source name, the source type, and the percentage match. A red box highlights the first four matches.

Match Number	Source Name	Source Type	Match Percentage
1	www.macmillan.org.uk	Internet source	37%
2	en.wikipedia.org	Internet source	10%
3	www.cancerbackup.org.uk	Internet source	5%
4	www.gerd.e-	Internet source	3%
5	www.webook.com	Internet source	1%
6	online-cancer-informat...	Internet source	<1%
7	www.rarercancers.org.uk	Internet source	<1%
8	Xia Wen Shui. "Antidia...	Publication	<1%
9	"NEW TREATMENT	Publication	<1%

Red scores

In the example used, a 100% match, 90% seems to be matched with a single piece of work submitted to the University of Brighton. If you were an instructor in the study area that work was copied from, then you get the ability to view the copy. If you were not an instructor you do not get to see the original work because submitted papers remain the intellectual property of their authors. But you can request to view the paper by clicking a link which emails the instructor.

Match Number	Source	Similarity Score
1	Submitted to University of Brighton Student paper	90%
2	www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov Internet source	10%

Student paper

Submitted to University of Brighton

Because submitted papers remain the intellectual property of their authors, instructors, and respective institutions, we are unable to show you the content of this paper at this time. If you would still like to view this paper, please use click on the link above to submit a permission request to the author's instructor.

Because submitted papers remain the intellectual property of their authors, instructors, and respective institutions, we are unable to show you the content of this paper at this time.

If you would still like to view this paper, please use the button below to submit a permission request to the author's instructor. We will send the instructor an email detailing your request and include any information the instructor will need to respond if your request is accepted.

Please specify a reply-to email address:

[send a request to view this paper](#)

As these examples show, Turnitin can be a useful tool in the 'toolbox' of approaches a tutor can employ to enhance academic integrity of their course.