How to Check a Paper for Plagiarism
Blackboard 9.1 SP 2014

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This Quick Reference Guide discusses how an *instructor* can check a student's paper for plagiarism, how the originality report can be reviewed and downloaded, and how it can be sent to other staff members. The tool Turnitin is used for these purposes. The instructor should be enrolled in a Blackboard course.

1. Creating a Turnitin Assignment

1. Navigate to the Content Area you would like to add the assignment to (e.g. Assignments).
2. Click **Assignments** > **Turnitin Assignment**.
3. Select **Paper Assignment** (default), and click **Next Step**.
4. In the next window, add an Assignment Title. Ignore the dates, since these only apply to submissions by students.
5. Click **Submit**.

2. Submitting an Assignment in Turnitin

1. Navigate to the Content Area where you created your assignment.
2. Below the concerning assignment, click **View/Complete**.
3. A new window appears, called **Submit:…** For uploading a single file, make sure you choose **Submit: Single File Upload** (for information on how to upload multiple assignments at once or other options, see chapter 5 from the Turnitin Manual on our website).
4. Next, select the **Author** (if the student is not enrolled in the course, choose **Non-enrolled student** – default setting), **First Name**, **Last name** and **Submission title**.
5. Choose whether you want to upload the file from your computer, from your Dropbox or from your Google Drive.

> **Note**: There are several requirements the file must meet: it must be less than 20 MB and no more than 400 pages. Larger files may be reduced by Turnitin in size by removal of non-content. If the file contains a lot of images, we advise you to compress them. When submitting a ZIP-file the maximum size is 200 MB (of max. 1000 files). Allowed file types are Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, WordPerfect, PostScript, PDF, HTML, RTF, OpenOffice (ODT), Hangul (HWP), Google Docs, and plain text.

6. Finally, click **Upload**.
7. After uploading the paper, you will be asked to confirm that you want to submit that specific file. If you do, click **Confirm**.

3. Viewing Papers and Downloading the Originality Report

1. Navigate to the **Control Panel** > **Course Tools** > **Turnitin Assignments** and select the specific assignment to enter the Assignment Inbox.
2. Click the **similarity icon** (percentage and coloured beam) in order to view the Originality Report for a paper.
3. The Originality Report appears in a pop-up window. The similarity index is shown at the top

> **Note**: Turnitin needs time to process the paper and create an Originality Report. If you cannot see the Similarity Icon, this means it has not yet finished. Just wait and try again later.

right (for more information about the interpretation of the index, see section 4).

4. In order to download the Originality Report, click on the printer icon in the lower left corner and select **Download PDF of current view for printing**. The PDF file will be downloaded to your computer and can be sent to other staff members like any other document.
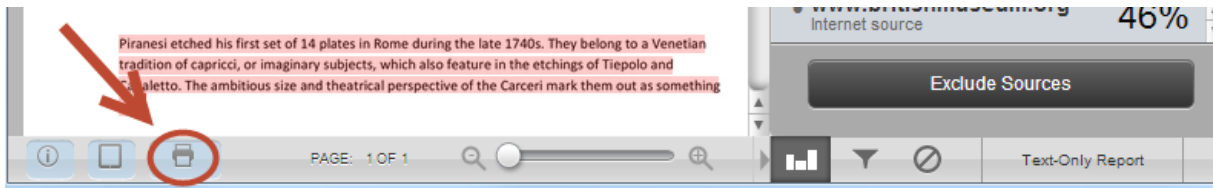
4. Reading and Interpreting the Originality Report

The lay-out of the downloaded Originality Report differs from the online version. The text itself will appear the same, including the highlighted sections. On the last page you will find the actual originality report, including the similarity index and primary sources.

4.1 The Similarity Index

Blackboard/Turnitin gives the following advice about interpreting the amount of matching in a paper (with default settings):

- *Scores below 15 per cent:* These papers typically include some quotes and few common phrases or blocks of text that match other documents. These papers do not require further analysis, as there is no evidence of the possibility of plagiarism in these papers. You could try to exclude small matches and quotes to see if Turnitin can eliminate these matches and try to improve the similarity score (see subsection 4.2).
- *Scores between 15 per cent and 40 per cent:* These papers include extensive quoted or paraphrased material or they may include plagiarism. These papers should be reviewed to determine if the matching content is properly attributed.
- *Scores over 40 per cent:* There is a high probability that text in this paper was copied from other sources. These papers should be reviewed for plagiarism.

4.2 Changing Filters and Settings

You can try to exclude small matches and quotes by clicking the filter icon (▼) on the bottom right. Change the settings to your preference, click **Apply Changes** and finally, click **New Report**. A new report will be created (this, again, may take some time). Download the new Originality Report by selecting **Download PDF of current view for printing.**

> **Note:** Please keep in mind that the Similarity Index is only an indicator of what percentage of the submitted paper matches existing sources. Therefore, papers should always be reviewed to see if the matches are properly attributed. Vice versa, even if the Originality Report comes back 'clean', please still be aware of the possibility of plagiarism! For although Turnitin has a very large database to check papers against, it *is* limited.

> **Note:** A paper should only be submitted to Turnitin once, since the second time it will be marked as plagiarism. There is however a possibility to check drafts for plagiarism without submitting them to the repository – for information, please see chapter 3 in the Turnitin manual on our website.