

# University of Wales

## Use of Text-Matching Software at Collaborative Centres

### Principles:

The use of text-matching software at collaborative centres policy is developed on the following two principles:

1. The University of Wales sees the primary use of text-matching software such as Turnitin as a formative developmental tool for good academic practice, which seeks to reduce the risk of submitting plagiarised work in assessment for students.
2. The University of Wales asserts that the use of text-matching software is not a substitute for the monitoring of plagiarism by a collaborative centre.

This policy should be used in conjunction with the *Taught Degrees Handbook: Exit Phase*.

### Introduction

The University of Wales (the University), as a degree awarding authority, makes available to its collaborative centres delivering programmes leading to a University award, the use of the text-matching software programme Turnitin (<http://www.turnitinuk.com/>). The University acknowledges that collaborative centres may use alternative text-matching software programmes. This policy makes specific reference to Turnitin but its general principles can be applied to the use of alternative text-matching software.

### Expectations of Collaborative Centres

In all cases, collaborative centres are expected to provide discipline-specific guidance on good academic practice to inform candidates of: correct citation techniques; avoidance of plagiarism; and distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable collusion.

Collaborative centres should ensure they make guidance available and accessible to all candidates through the inclusion within student handbooks and intranet platforms. All collaborative centres should ensure that candidates are suitably briefed at the outset of their studies, and that there is sufficient support to candidates provided subsequently in order to enhance understanding of plagiarism issues and the development of good academic practice.

Collaborative centres are responsible for ensuring that assessments are designed appropriately to minimise the opportunity for plagiarism to take place.

### How Turnitin Works

Turnitin is recognised as an industry standard resource, through which an individual is able to submit a body of text which is compared against an international database of academic articles, active and archived web pages, and a repository of works previously submitted to Turnitin. This produces an Originality Report which identifies portions of text which may be matched to an existing body of text as either identical or paraphrased.

The programme, operated by iParadigms, is presented as plagiarism reduction software and is widely used throughout the higher education industry. The application is made available to ensure that candidate work is protected, and that its integrity is continually assured.

Each collaborative centre has a listed Turnitin administrator who can add instructors to their account. Instructors are able to create classes in Turnitin and upload candidate assignments or provide a join password to candidates for self-submission.

The Originality Report created after submitting a paper provides a summary of matching or similar text, and results in a colour coded Similarity Index. The following list outlines the colour representation of the Similarity Index:

Blue	No matching text
Green	One word to 24 % matching text
Yellow	25 %-49 % matching text
Orange	50 %-74 % matching text
Red	75 %-100 % matching text

The Originality Report provides the opportunity for individuals to review any published matching text within its original context, while identified unpublished material is highlighted, although the unpublished text may only be accessed through permission of the author.

### **Limitations of Turnitin**

The University recognises that, while Turnitin is a useful tool for detecting plagiarism, it does not offer a complete solution to the matter. Centres are therefore strongly encouraged to ensure that all candidates are given guidance to establish good academic practice and bibliographical techniques from the outset of their studies.

Turnitin is a product of the technological age, and therefore is limited by its inability to:

- detect plagiarism from books or sources not on the internet;
- detect the plagiarism of ideas;
- search databases that are password protected such as essay banks;
- search all electronic journals / e-books;
- detect sources that are translated from another language;
- detect material that is presented outside of a text format (e.g. graphs / images / equations);
- differentiate between original and 'ghost-written' material.

The Originality Reports generated by the Turnitin software are also resource intensive for institutions, and collaborative centres must remain aware that a high Similarity Index does not necessarily confirm acts of plagiarism, but indicates the similarity to the material which the database has at its disposal for comparison.

Collaborative centres must remain aware that a high Similarity Index may be indicative of correctly referenced quotations / a bibliography / common phrases or series of words. Therefore, a Similarity Index of 75 % may be indicative of 75 instances of 1 % matches, or one 75 % match. It is therefore important that academic judgement is exercised when reviewing an Originality Report. Furthermore, a document submitted once to Turnitin will automatically generate a 100 % match if it is submitted again, unless a system administrator removes the work from the database.

### **Intellectual Property and Data Protection**

The use of Turnitin does not affect the intellectual property rights of the uploaded material which will remain with its owner (normally the student, unless designated otherwise).

In order for the service to work, a candidate is required to submit an assignment to the Turnitin website, which will be stored together with a Turnitin assigned ID number, email address, course details, and institution name.

Once the assignment has been uploaded, it is stored electronically in the database and compared against work submitted from this or any other department within the institution, or from another institution who subscribes to the service.

If a student from one institution submits an assignment which matches an assignment uploaded by a student at another institution, Turnitin will highlight the match and the name of the institution that uploaded the original assignment but will not display the student's name or personal data.

Under data protection law, collaborative centres are obliged to inform students if their personal data will be used for any purpose not already set out in the policies of the institution. It is recommended that students are pre-warned that their assignments may be uploaded to Turnitin. It should also be noted that Turnitin's Privacy Pledge ([www.turnitin.com/en\\_us/about-us/privacy](http://www.turnitin.com/en_us/about-us/privacy)) explains how it makes use of personal data and the choices users have with the way their personal data is collected and used. Additionally, Turnitin have employed the European Commissions "model clauses" – a set of standard contractual clauses to further legitimise the transfer of data outside of Europe, now that the EU-US Safe Harbour framework is an insufficient guarantee that the personal data entrusted to US based companies would be protected.

### **Turnitin Training**

In line with its recommended use as a formative, development tool, it is good practice to teach students how Turnitin works, and how to interpret an Originality Report. Collaborative centres may wish to ask students to sign a statement to indicate that they understand the process. This should highlight whether the collaborative centre has chosen to submit all assignments to Turnitin, if they have chosen to sample assignments or to submit assignments to Turnitin only for suspicious cases.

### **Use of Turnitin by the University of Wales**

The University reserves the right to request copies of Originality Reports in cases where there is suspected plagiarism.

**UW**  
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