



Navigating a Turnitin® Similarity Report

Have you ever wanted to understand the basics of accessing, viewing and navigating a Turnitin® (TII) similarity report?

Whether you are a marker, course coordinator, Academic Integrity Officer, or an Academic Services Officer, this **Guide** will help you to explore the functionality of a TII report.

It shows you where to find the Turnitin® report, how to understand the originality score, how to navigate the report and view text matched sources, and how to refine the outcomes through filters and settings.

In another Guide in this series, **Interpreting Turnitin® Similarity Reports**, we'll look at how to interpret the information provided in a similarity report and look at some teacher strategies for managing large class submissions.

What is Turnitin®?

The TII software used at UniSA is a text-matching tool. It compares text-based submissions with an online repository of internet sources and documents.

TII does not assess whether plagiarism or academic misconduct has occurred (see Mphahlele & McKenna 2019). It does flag some of the signs of potential academic misconduct and is an important source of information and evidence when plagiarism or other academic misconduct is being investigated.

TII is also an important teaching and learning aid. The TII report can be used, for example, as a developmental tool in courses to help students further their understanding of academic literacies and educational integrity (Katkins 2019; Rolfe 2011).

- See this guide for students: [How to use Turnitin](#), Referencing: Study Help, SEU, UniSA

What is a Turnitin® Similarity Report?

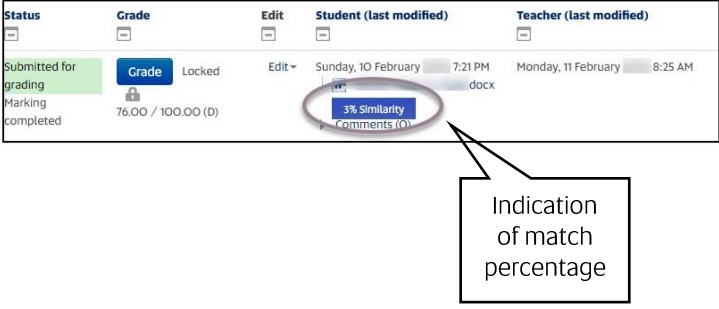

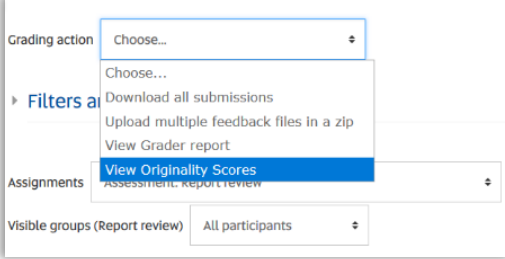
Whenever a student submits a text-based assessment via learnonline, TII compares it with millions of other documents in the TII database and on the internet, including

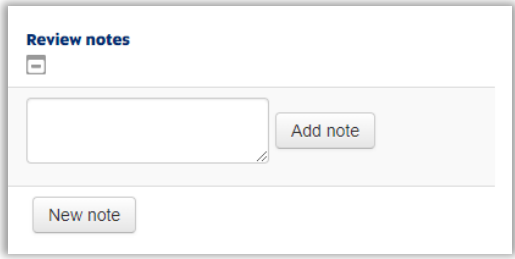

other assignment submissions at UniSA and other universities. This process generates a report that summarises the text matches identified.

- [The Similarity Report explained](#) Turnitin®
- For students, [Turnitin similarity report](#), learnonline student help, UniSA

Accessing a Turnitin® Similarity Report in learnonline

UniSA provides access to Turnitin reports via learnonline. Staff can also sign up to have an account with TII to submit and review reports through [the Turnitin website](#). Most commonly, however, you will access reports via your course learnonline site.

<p>Assessment submissions page</p> <p>From your course learnonline site, navigate to the relevant Assessment and view the submissions.</p> <p>The Student (last modified) column contains the file(s) students have submitted for assessment and directly below each you will see a colour graded button showing a similarity score (also called an originality score).</p> <p>Select this button to open the similarity report in TII.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewing Turnitin similarity report, learnonline staff help, UniSA
<p>Similarity score colour key</p> <p>Note the range of colours used to indicate the percentage range of the similarity score. The cooler colours indicate a lower similarity score but as you progress into the warmer shades, such as 'red', you'll notice a much higher index number.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarity score ranges, Turnitin®
<p>'View Originality Scores' page</p> <p>To view the scores in ranked order, click on the Grading action drop down box and select 'View Originality Scores'</p>	

<p>Review notes</p> <p>From the Originality Scores page, use the Review notes column to make notes for yourself or to communicate with your teaching team. Eg: to remind yourself that a high similarity score may be due to the use of a template, or to highlight an assessment which you think may need to be forwarded to an Academic Integrity Officer for investigation.</p>	
<p>I can't see a Similarity Report</p> <p>It may take 24 hours or more for a report to be generated after submission (or re-submission).</p> <p>Sometimes, a report is not able to be generated and an error box will appear. This may mean the student has uploaded an unsupported file type. Course coordinators can set assignment settings to only accept the specific file types which TII can generate reports for.</p> <p>There are a range of other reasons why an error message could appear (see the Turnitin® help pages).</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File requirements, Turnitin® • Why has the Similarity Report not generated?, Turnitin® Support Center

Key Features of a Turnitin® Similarity Report

To review a student's TII report, simply click on the coloured similarity index score. It will then open the online version of the report, known as **Feedback Studio**.

See an example report below

The screenshot shows a Turnitin report for a document titled "Intercultural Miscommunication" by Tamra Ulpen. The interface includes a top navigation bar with the Turnitin logo, document name, and page number (10 of 15). On the left, a sidebar contains page navigation thumbnails. The main content area displays the document text with highlighted segments and small red icons indicating matches. On the right, a sidebar contains controls for the similarity layer, including a toggle, match overview (78%), all sources, filter & settings, download, and submission information. Callout boxes with arrows point to these elements, providing labels for each.

Student name and assignment title

Page navigation thumbnails

Original assignment with matched text highlighted

Highlighted text that has been flagged by TII as matching another source. Click to see the matched text in the source material

Toggle – show similarity layer on/off

Match Overview 78

All Sources

Filter & Settings

Download

Submission information

Page: 1 of 3 Word Count: 929 Text-only Report | High Resolution On

The example above labels elements of the report which will be explored later in this Guide.



Match Overview

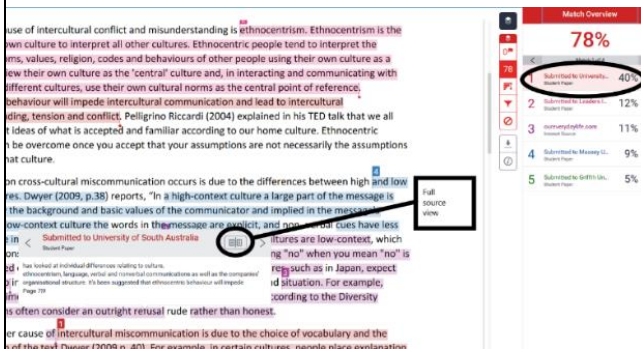
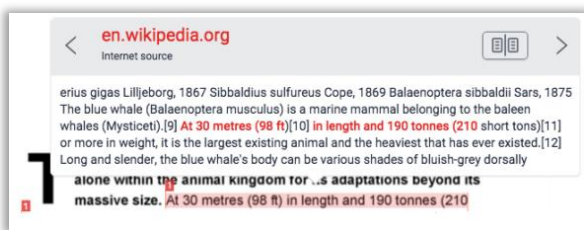
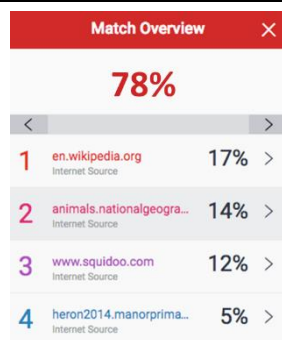
Clicking on the **Match Overview** button provides a breakdown of all the matches that have been found in a paper, ordered by highest similarity match to lowest.

These will be in different colours corresponding with their text matches throughout the assignment.

To find where a matched source appears in the submission simply click on any source listed. Alternatively, locate the source by clicking the red flag at the start of the highlighted text in the paper.

A source box will appear in the submission with the details of where in the matched source the text has been identified.

Click on the book icon to access the **full source text**. This will upload in the right panel and will highlight the sections of the original source that match with your student's submission. If the match is with an internet source, you can click on the URL identified to open another tab and be taken directly to the webpage.


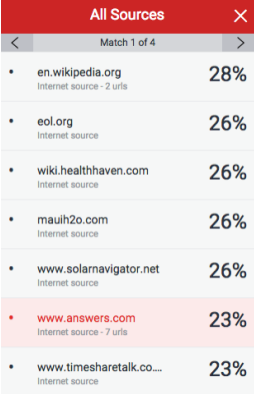
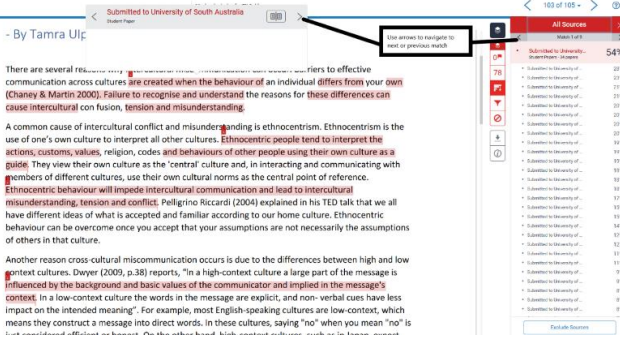



Match Breakdown

To obtain a breakdown with further details about a match, click the arrow to the right of the source in the Match Overview.

This will display a breakdown of all the sources which have some match in similarity.

- [Viewing similarity matches](#), Turnitin®

	<p>All Sources</p> <p>The graph icon in the right hand panel provides a detailed match breakdown of all the sources identified, sorted by highest percentage match.</p> <p>Clicking on any source will change the navigation bar at the top of the page, revealing the number of times that source has been matched in the paper.</p>	
	<p>It will also identify where that match has been found in the assignment.</p> <p>Use the arrows to navigate to the next or previous match.</p> <p>Remember, the book icon will reveal the original full source view which will load in the right panel.</p>	 <p>• Viewing sources, Turnitin®</p>
	<p>Download</p>	<p>The download button provides three options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current view (download a pdf version by of the report) • Digital receipt • Originally submitted file

Refining the Similarity Report

When reviewing reports, you can use the filters and settings to refine the similarity scores. You may wish to exclude sources that have generated a minimal match (according to a threshold set by you), direct quotes and reference lists, or exclude specific sources from the comparison altogether.


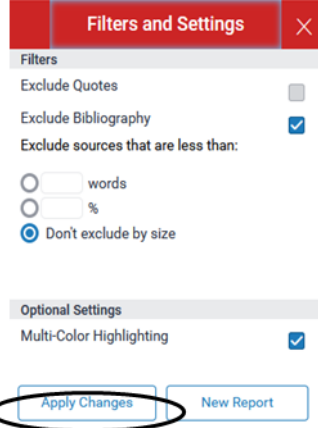
When reviewing reports, it is a good idea to scan the reference list and look for direct quotations. Ask yourself questions such as:


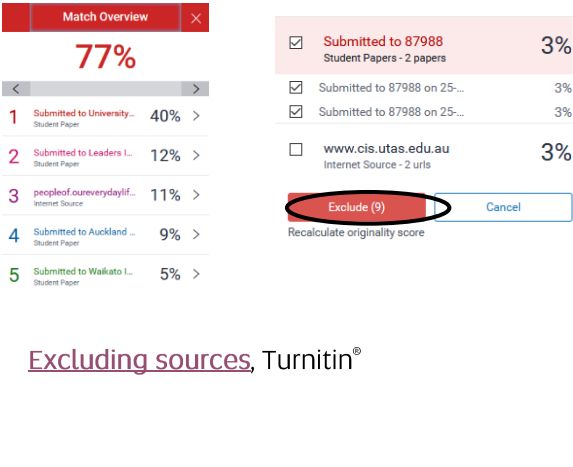

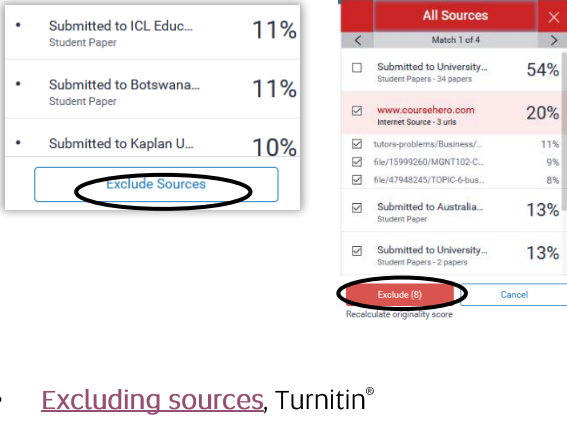

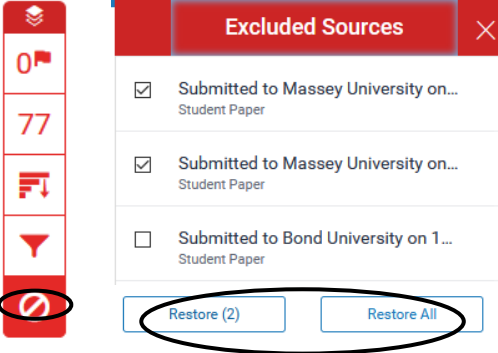
- Are any 'questionable' references included (eg inappropriate to the topic, discipline, language)?
- Do the TII matches in the reference list show a rainbow rather than one specific colour (ie matching to only one source)?


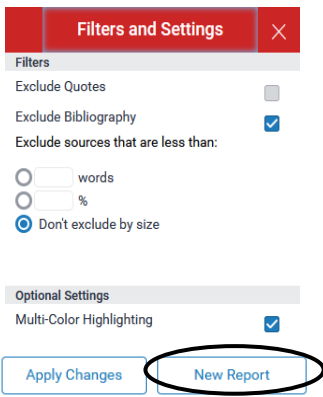
- Has the student referenced and acknowledged all direct quotes correctly?

If you are satisfied, then these similarities can be considered ‘innocent’ matches that are influencing the overall mathematical calculation of the similarity index score. Matches to the bibliography and quotation can be removed to reveal a more refined similarity score. This may assist you to evaluate whether plagiarism has occurred.

- [Refining the similarity report](#), Turnitin®

	<p>Exclude quotes and bibliography</p> <p>Check the boxes to exclude matching text between quotation characters (“...”) and the bibliography. Then click ‘Apply Changes’. A revised lower overall similarity score will appear.</p>	
	<p>Exclude small sources (by word number or percentage)</p> <p>Use the filters and settings panel (as above) to exclude sources less than a number of words, or a certain percentage of words.</p> <p>You can also exclude sources via Match Overview or All Sources panels, as below.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excluding quotes and bibliographic materials, Turnitin®

	<p>Exclude full sources by Match Breakdown</p> <p>Review matches in detail by clicking the arrow to the right of the relevant source.</p> <p>At the bottom of Match Breakdown panel, click the Exclude Sources button.</p> <p>Use the check boxes to select the source(s) you would like to exclude.</p> <p>Select the red Exclude button. This will recalculate the originality score.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excluding sources, Turnitin®
	<p>Exclude sources by All Sources</p> <p>At the bottom of All Sources panel, click the Exclude Sources button.</p> <p>Use the checkboxes to select the sources to exclude.</p> <p>Select the red Exclude button. This will then recalculate the originality score.</p> <p>The red button shows a count of the number of sources you have chosen to exclude.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excluding sources, Turnitin®
	<p>Viewing excluded sources</p> <p>To view the sources you have excluded, select on the Exclude icon in the toolbar.</p> <p>To restore some of the excluded sources, check the boxes of the sources you wish to have included in the similarity score, then click 'Restore'. To restore all of the excluded sources, click the 'Restore All' button</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewing excluded sources, Turnitin®

	<p>Generate a new Similarity Report</p> <p>If you believe that the TII database has been updated since the report was last generated (eg with another students paper, or a website) you can re-generate the report and update the originality score.</p> <p>Go to Filters and Settings and select the New Report Button.</p>	 <p>Filters and Settings</p> <p>Filters</p> <p>Exclude Quotes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Exclude Bibliography <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Exclude sources that are less than:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> words</p> <p><input type="radio"/> %</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Don't exclude by size</p> <p>Optional Settings</p> <p>Multi-Color Highlighting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Apply Changes <input type="button" value="New Report"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating a new Similarity Report, Turnitin®
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If you would like to ask online teaching and learning questions related to your course, you can look through our [FAQs](#), write to TIU@unisa.edu.au, have an [online consultation with a member of the TIU](#) or complete the online modules as part of [Introduction to Engaging Learners Online](#).

References

Hanbidge A.S., McKenzie A., Scholz K.W., Tin T. (2020) Academic Integrity in the Digital Era: Student Skills for Success Using Mobile Technology. In: Yu S., Ally M., Tsinakos A. (eds) Emerging Technologies and Pedagogies in the Curriculum. Bridging Human and Machine: Future Education with Intelligence. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-0618-5_20.

Katkins, L. (2019) Does Turnitin support the development of international students' academic integrity?. Ethics and Education vol. 14, no. 4, pp 430-448. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2019.1660946>.

Mphahlele, A. & McKenna, S. (2019) The use of Turnitin in the higher education sector: Decoding the myth. Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education vol 44, no. 7, pp 1079-1089. <https://doi.org/10.1080/O2602938.2019.1573971>.

Rolfe, V. (2011). Can Turnitin® be used to provide instant formative feedback? British Journal of Educational Technology, 42(4), 701–710. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8535.2010.01091.x>.