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 Mphahlulele & 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

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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.

**Assessment submissions page**

From your course learnonline site, navigate to the relevant Assessment and view the submissions.

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).

Select this button to open the similarity report in TII.

**Similarity score colour key**

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.

- **Viewing Turnitin similarity report**, learnonline staff help, UniSA

**‘View Originality Scores’ page**

To view the scores in ranked order, click on the **Grading action** drop down box and select ‘View Originality Scores’

- **Similarity score ranges** Turnitin®
### Review notes

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.

### I can’t see a Similarity Report

It may take 24 hours or more for a report to be generated after submission (or re-submission).

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.

There are a range of other reasons why an error message could appear (see the Turnitin® help pages).

- [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**.
Intercultural Miscommunication

- By Tamra Ulpen (Demo for TIL Resources)

There are several reasons why intercultural miscommunication can occur. Barriers to effective communication across cultures are created when the behaviour of an individual differs from your own (Chavez & Martin 2003). Failure to recognize and understand the reasons for these differences can cause interpersonal confusion, tension and misunderstanding.

A common cause of intercultural conflict and misunderstanding is ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is the use of one’s own culture to interpret all other cultures. Ethnocentric people tend to interpret the actions, customs, values, religion, codes and behaviours of other people using their own culture as a guide. They view their own culture as the ‘central’ culture and, in interacting and communicating with members of different cultures, use their own cultural norms as the central point of reference. Ethnocentric behavior will impede intercultural communication and lead to intercultural misunderstanding, tension and conflict. Pedgrie Ricardi (2004) explained in his TED talk that we all have different ideas of what is accepted and familiar according to our home culture. Ethnocentric behavior can be overcome once you accept that your assumptions are not necessarily the assumptions of others in that culture.

Another reason cross-cultural miscommunication occurs is due to the differences between high and low context cultures. Dwyer (2009) reports, “In a high context culture a large part of the message is influenced by the background and basic values of the communicator and implied in the message’s context. In a low context culture the words in the message are explicit, and non-verbal cues have less impact on the intended meaning.” For example, most English-speaking countries are low-context, which means they construct a message in direct words. In those cultures, saying “no” when you mean “no” is just considered efficient or honest. On the other hand, high-context cultures such as in Japan, expect the listener to interpret the message’s meaning from the context clues and situation. For example, Asians sometimes say “yes” or “maybe” when they actually mean “no.” According to the Diversity Council, Asians often consider an outright refusal rude rather than honest.

Finally, another cause of intercultural miscommunication is due to the choice of vocabulary and the interpretation of the text. Dwyer (2009) p.40, for example, in certain countries, people place explanation at the start to the attention. Both Ha-Ken (2014) & Fawten (2014) have indicated that intercultural communication can result from obstacles which consists of – results and dialect adherence.

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®
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Sources</th>
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<tr>
<td>The graph icon in the right hand panel provides a detailed match breakdown of all the sources identified, sorted by highest percentage match. 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. It will also identify where that match has been found in the assignment. Use the arrows to navigate to the next or previous match. Remember, the book icon will reveal the original full source view which will load in the right panel.</td>
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| The download button provides three options:  
- Current view (download a pdf version by of the report)  
- Digital receipt  
- Originally submitted file |

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**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®

<table>
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<th>Exclude quotes and bibliography</th>
<th>Exclude small sources (by word number or percentage)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Check the boxes to exclude matching text between quotation characters (&quot;...&quot;) and the bibliography. Then click ‘Apply Changes’. A revised lower overall similarity score will appear.</td>
<td>Use the filters and settings panel (as above) to exclude sources less than a number of words, or a certain percentage of words. You can also exclude sources via Match Overview or All Sources panels, as below.</td>
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• **Excluding quotes and bibliographic materials**, Turnitin®
Exclude full sources by Match Breakdown

Review matches in detail by clicking the arrow to the right of the relevant source.

At the bottom of Match Breakdown panel, click the Exclude Sources button.

Use the check boxes to select the source(s) you would like to exclude.

Select the red Exclude button. This will recalculate the originality score.

- Excluding sources, Turnitin®

Exclude sources by All Sources

At the bottom of All Sources panel, click the Exclude Sources button.

Use the checkboxes to select the sources to exclude.

Select the red Exclude button. This will then recalculate the originality score.

The red button shows a count of the number of sources you have chosen to exclude.

- Excluding sources, Turnitin®

Viewing excluded sources

To view the sources you have excluded, select on the Exclude icon in the toolbar.

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

- Viewing excluded sources, Turnitin®
If you believe that the TII database has been updated since the report was last generated (e.g., with another students paper, or a website) you can re-generate the report and update the originality score.

Go to Filters and Settings and select the New Report Button.

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


