

Understanding Your Turnitin Report

What is a Turnitin report?

A Turnitin similarity report shows matches between the assessment you submitted and text already in Turnitin's database. In the report passages are highlighted in different colours to show where matched material occurs. The number of matches within your work and the amount of text within these matches are used to generate a 'similarity score'. The more matched material that appears, the higher this score will be.

What does my assessment match to?

Matches can be to anything that is published and available within Turnitin's database, including material available online, in publications (e.g. journals) or work previously submitted by other students. In some cases, matches can be your own previous submissions made via Turnitin.

The source listed is not the one I used when I wrote my assessment.

Please be aware that because written material can be reproduced in numerous places, online and offline, sources listed in the Turnitin report may not precisely match those that you consulted when preparing your assessment. However, the source itself is not the main concern of an assessment offence allegation: this will always be whether you referenced any copied material within your submission correctly, in line with the assessment instructions and the General Regulations.

My work matches to a student paper: does that mean you think I've copied from another student?

Not necessarily. We understand that your work might match to another student's for a number of reasons. Often this means that you have copied material word-for-word from the same place, or that you and other students have used the course materials. In our investigation, we will consider this. Any material which is not your own work must be referenced correctly.

Is there a 'safe' similarity score?

No. Whilst a higher volume of matched material results in a higher score, there is no 'safe' figure when it comes to a similarity score. It is about how this material is presented on the page. An assessment with a similarity score of any size can contain passages that fulfil the University of London's definition of an assessment offence.

Is the Turnitin score the reason I have received an allegation of an assessment offence?

No. The Turnitin score may form part of the referral for investigation, but the main part will always be whether your assessment contravenes the University's General Regulations. All referrals are made by the academics marking your work. The Turnitin report is helpful in showing where problematic material may be within your submission, but further investigations will always take place to see whether an assessment offence has taken place.

I have used some quotation marks and in-text citations.

Please note that in order for your work to be properly referenced you must use quotations marks and in-text citations **every** time you use material word for word from somebody else's work. Missing even one set of quotation marks or one in-text citation can mean that that section of your assessment is not clearly marked as somebody else's work, and this contravenes the University of London's General Regulations.

My Turnitin report shows matches with short passages, commonly used phrases or subject specific terminology

This is taken into consideration during the marking and referral process. It was the academic judgement of the examiners that the similarities found within your submission were beyond what could be considered acceptable for the assessment. Small matches will be usually discounted from the investigation, as will matches on a cover sheet or to questions copied out from the question paper into your answers. You should focus on the larger matches and areas of your submission that contain more frequent highlighted passages.