

A one-page guide to interpreting Turnitin Originality Reports©

The * symbol indicates where you must exercise academic judgment.

See <https://wiki.brookes.ac.uk/display/BVhelp/Turnitin> for information on how to submit work to Turnitin.

1. Open the class page.

2. Scan down the ranked list of reports.

Look briefly at all the icons to the right of each name. Notice how many appear for each colour code (from red indicating a 100% match between student work and Turnitin databases to a blue icon indicating 0% or no matching text found).

*Make an overall assessment of how many reports are likely to need more than a quick (i.e. 20 second) inspection. Estimate the MINIMUM time needed to review the class, assuming half a minute for unproblematic reports.

3. Identify where on the ranked list you need to start looking at individual reports.

Start your individual review of Originality reports by clicking on the coloured icon that represents the lowest percentage you consider to be useful. You are judging if the student has used others' work correctly. In general, it makes sense to check all icons with percentages over 30 or 35%. In some cases, checking all icons is useful. Most teachers develop their own strategies quickly for deciding when to stop checking.

Once you click on an icon, a side-by-side report will pop up.

4. Look at the right hand list of sources the student has used.

*Evaluate the list by looking at:

- How the overall total was created. Is it one source that provides the overall percentage — usually a bad sign? Or is the total accumulated from many sites with each only contributing 1% or 2% each — usually not a cause for concern?
- Where single sites contribute *significantly to the overall total, do percentages indicate chunks of copied text? For example, a 35% match derived from a combined 12%, 12% 11% use is likely to need more examination than a 35% total from 20 sites of 1-2% that probably reflects the student's use of correctly cited bibliographic materials.

Try and take no more than 20 seconds to decide whether the side-by-side list warrants more investigation. If it does not, then move on.

5. Identify the subset of reports warranting further investigation and allocate 5 minutes for each as a rough estimate. Remember, you are only assembling a case for referral to the ACO or (in cases where no referral is needed) for providing the student with feedback on how they have used resources.

6. For each student warranting further inspection, click on the icon to open the side by side report.

This is the most counter-intuitive bit.

When the side by side report appears, scroll through the LEFT HAND text noting how the student has used matching source material. Look for:

- **Indications that copied text is correctly acknowledged** with quote marks, in-text citations or indented paragraphs (the last are tricky as formatting has been removed)
 - **Indications that the student has informally acknowledged** the use of others' words. *Referral to the ACO will depend on whether this breach of writing conventions can be handled within the assessment criteria of the assignment.
 - **Places where matching text has no bearing on judging the originality** of the work. For example, has the report highlighted the bibliography? Has the student used the standard wording for this idea or activity?
 - Where **students' attempts to paraphrase have remained too close** to the original. *Referral will depend on the level of the student's understanding/skill.
 - **The location** (in the student's text) of any copied, unattributed text. *Copied text will be more important in sections where originality and understanding are central to judging whether or not the student has met the learning outcomes.
 - **The length of any copied, unattributed section**. In general, the longer the copied section, the more worrying.
7. **Make an overall judgement** on whether or not the work needs to be referred to the Academic Conduct Officer. Referral will be based on:
- How much of the work is not the student's own work
 - Where the unoriginal work is used
 - Whether there is any evidence of deliberate attempts to deceive or mislead the assessor (for example, by fabricating or altering original sources)
 - Whether any breach of the regulations to submit individual, original work can be handled within the assessment criteria or whether the breach constitutes academic misconduct
 - The impact of the unoriginal work on assessing the learning outcomes.
8. For any referred piece of work, briefly summarise the Originality Report for the Academic Conduct Officer's investigation. Your summary could address the points in step 6 above. It need not be exhaustive. Be sure to also include any signals you have noticed which might indicate the work is not the student's own but which are not highlighted by the Originality Report.

