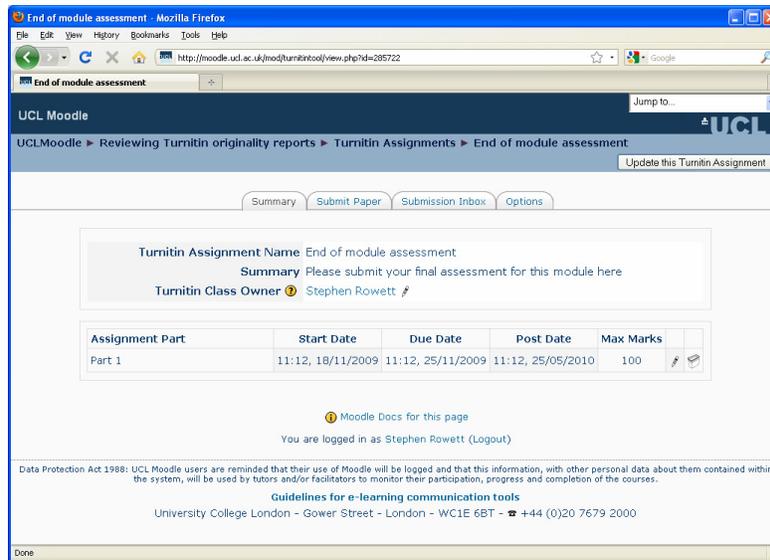


How to view and interpret the similarity score and originality reports

## How to view and interpret the Turnitin® similarity score and originality reports

### How to view originality reports

- Step 1: Go to your Moodle course and click on the Turnitin assignment you wish to view. You will see the assignment summary screen:

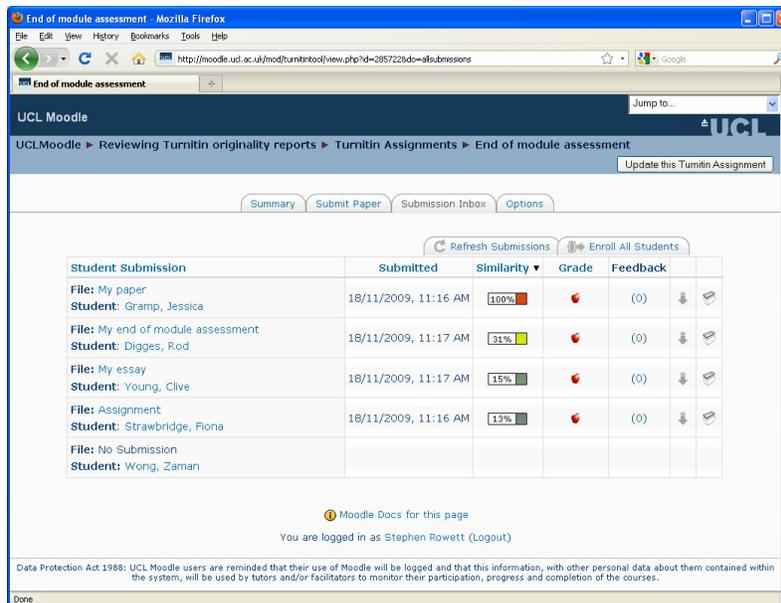


The screenshot shows the Moodle interface for a Turnitin assignment. The browser window title is "End of module assessment - Mozilla Firefox". The URL is "http://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/turnitool/view.php?id=285722". The page title is "End of module assessment". The breadcrumb trail is "UCL Moodle > Reviewing Turnitin originality reports > Turnitin Assignments > End of module assessment". There is a "Jump to..." dropdown menu and an "Update this Turnitin Assignment" button. Below the breadcrumb trail are tabs for "Summary", "Submit Paper", "Submission Inbox", and "Options". The main content area shows the "Turnitin Assignment Name" as "End of module assessment" and the "Summary" as "Please submit your final assessment for this module here". The "Turnitin Class Owner" is "Stephen Rowett". Below this is a table with the following data:

Assignment Part	Start Date	Due Date	Post Date	Max Marks
Part 1	11:12, 18/11/2009	11:12, 25/11/2009	11:12, 25/05/2010	100

Below the table, there is a "Moodle Docs for this page" link and a "You are logged in as Stephen Rowett (Logout)" message. At the bottom, there is a "Data Protection Act 1988" notice and "Guidelines for e-learning communication tools" with the contact information "University College London - Gower Street - London - WC1E 6BT - +44 (0)20 7679 2000".

- Step 2: Click on the tab marked **Submission Inbox**. You will see a list of your students, with details of the work they have submitted. In the example below, four students have submitted work, one has not.



The screenshot shows the Moodle interface for the Turnitin submission inbox. The browser window title is "End of module assessment - Mozilla Firefox". The URL is "http://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/turnitool/view.php?id=285722&id=alsubmissions". The page title is "End of module assessment". The breadcrumb trail is "UCL Moodle > Reviewing Turnitin originality reports > Turnitin Assignments > End of module assessment". There is a "Jump to..." dropdown menu and an "Update this Turnitin Assignment" button. Below the breadcrumb trail are tabs for "Summary", "Submit Paper", "Submission Inbox", and "Options". The main content area shows a table with the following data:

Student Submission	Submitted	Similarity	Grade	Feedback
File: My paper Student: Gramp, Jessica	18/11/2009, 11:16 AM	100%	0	(0)
File: My end of module assessment Student: Digges, Rod	18/11/2009, 11:17 AM	31%	0	(0)
File: My essay Student: Young, Clive	18/11/2009, 11:17 AM	15%	0	(0)
File: Assignment Student: Strawbridge, Fiona	18/11/2009, 11:16 AM	13%	0	(0)
File: No Submission Student: Wong, Zaman				

Below the table, there is a "Moodle Docs for this page" link and a "You are logged in as Stephen Rowett (Logout)" message. At the bottom, there is a "Data Protection Act 1988" notice and "Guidelines for e-learning communication tools" with the contact information "University College London - Gower Street - London - WC1E 6BT - +44 (0)20 7679 2000".

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For each student, you will see:

- Their name, and the title they gave to their submission
- The date and time it was submitted (in red if after the Due Date)
- The *similarity score* which is the percentage of that student's work that Turnitin has identified as being matched against other sources
- A link (the apple symbol) to Turnitin's online marking system called GradeMark
- A link to any feedback that has been attached to this assignment
- A link to download the document
- A link to delete this student's submission so they can resubmit (for example if they contacted you to let you know they submitted the wrong document).

Note that it takes approximately 10-30 minutes for a report to be produced after the student has submitted the work. During this time the similarity will show as *Pending*.

Student Submission	Submitted	Similarity ▾	Grade	Feedback		
<b>File:</b> My paper <b>Student:</b> Gramp, Jessica	18/11/2009, 11:16 AM	100% 		(0)		
<b>File:</b> My end of module assessment <b>Student:</b> Digges, Rod	18/11/2009, 11:17 AM	31% 		(0)		
<b>File:</b> My essay <b>Student:</b> Young, Clive	18/11/2009, 11:17 AM	15% 		(0)		
<b>File:</b> Assignment <b>Student:</b> Strawbridge, Fiona	18/11/2009, 11:16 AM	13% 		(0)		
<b>File:</b> No Submission <b>Student:</b> Wong, Zaman						

The students' names are listed in order of descending similarity score, although you can click on the headings to change the sort order.

- **Step 3:** To view an *originality report* for a particular student, click on the percentage number in the **Similarity** column. The report will appear. Details of how to interpret this report are given in the following pages.

## Interpreting originality reports

An example of an originality report is shown below:

The screenshot shows a Turnitin originality report interface. At the top left, there are links for 'preferences' and 'help'. The Turnitin logo is visible, along with the text 'Originality Report'. Processing details include: 'Processed on: 03-12-09 5:53 PM GMT', 'ID: 4813425', 'Word Count: 948', and 'Submitted: 1'. The document title is 'Rod Digges's essay' by 'LTSS Test Account 01'. A summary box on the right shows a 'Similarity Index' of 31% and a breakdown: 'Internet Sources: 31%', 'Publications: 5%', and 'Student Papers: 29%'. Below this, there are tabs for 'include quoted', 'include bibliography', and 'exclude small matches'. The main area is split into two columns. The left column displays the student's submitted text, with several segments highlighted in different colors (green, red, orange) to indicate matches. The right column lists the sources of these matches, numbered 1 through 6, with their respective match percentages and source URLs. The matches are: 1. 15% match (Internet from 02/02/07) from http://www.smifforums.net; 2. 8% match (Internet from 18/09/09) from http://www.spellsofmagic.com; 3. 4% match (internet) from http://online.northumbria.ac.uk; 4. 2% match (Internet from 17/05/09) from http://en.epochtimes.com; 5. 1% match (Internet from 09/02/08) from http://work.restory.net; 6. 1% match (Internet from 24/08/09) from http://www.legalserviceindia.com. The bottom of the interface shows a 'Done' button and a lock icon.

Turnitin shows the student's submitted work on the left hand side, and the matches it finds on the right hand side. In this case, Turnitin has identified that 15% of the student's work may be from the web site [www.smifforums.net](http://www.smifforums.net) and a further 8% may be from the web site [www.spellsofmagic.com](http://www.spellsofmagic.com). Turnitin will not count quotes within quotation marks or bibliography entries in forming these percentages.

The colour coding shows where these matches appear in the students work. For example, at first glance it would appear that Turnitin has matched some fairly common sentences, but we would be unlikely to consider this plagiarism. However, some larger blocks are also matched and these would be of greater concern. We would also be concerned as, looking at the student's work, we cannot see any references within the text.

As Turnitin finds matches it will report them in different ways:

- For web sites, books and journals, Turnitin will identify the web site, book or journal that is the source of the match.
- For work submitted by students in the past, Turnitin will identify the institution the work was submitted to, but not the name of the student. Nor will it allow you to view that student's work. Instead you will be given an opportunity to contact that institution to request that the work is released.

## How to view and interpret the similarity score and originality reports

From the report we can do the following:

- Clicking on the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 etc on the right hand side panel will take us to the point in the student's work where that match starts.
- Clicking on one of the coloured text blocks on the left hand side panel will show the contents of the matched web site, paper or journal page in the right hand panel
- The **include quoted** and **include bibliography** options will include quoted pieces of text and bibliographic references from Turnitin's checking, and will thus normally increase the similarity score.

The screenshot shows the Turnitin interface for a report titled "Rod Digges's essay" by "LTSS Test Account 01". The similarity index is 31%. The "Similarity by Source" table shows: Internet Sources: 31%, Publications: 5%, and Student Papers: 29%. The report includes options for "include quoted", "include bibliography", and "exclude small matches". The main text area shows a paragraph about plagiarism with several highlighted sections. On the right, a list of matches is shown, including a 15% match from smiffforums.net, an 8% match from spellsofmagic.com (highlighted with a red box), a 4% match from online.northumbria.ac.uk, a 2% match from en.epochtimes.com, a 1% match from work.restory.net, and a 1% match from legalserviceindia.com. A "Done" button is visible at the bottom left.

Note that for text that may appear in many places in books or journals or across web sites, Turnitin may identify that the text has been copied, but it of course cannot be exactly sure which source the student used to copy it. So you may see an assignment that is properly referenced, but the Turnitin match gives a different original location to the one that the student uses in their references. In cases such as this, the cross next to each match on the right hand panel is useful. Clicking the cross excludes this match from the list. Turnitin may then uncover other sources which also match the student's work.

## Things to remember

- Plagiarism is an academic judgement, and Turnitin makes no attempt to judge whether plagiarism has occurred. A high unoriginality score does not automatically mean that it has occurred, and a low unoriginality score does not automatically mean that it has not occurred.
- Students are advised that there is no score to aim for and that the important consideration is suitable referencing of sources used, rather than working for a particular score. However, over time, you may come to a working judgement of a level for the unoriginality score below which you wouldn't check each piece of work – such a level is likely to depend on the discipline and nature of the assignment being set.
- Substantial quotes used in a document may increase its unoriginality score, even if these quotes are properly referenced. In some cases you may judge that a piece of writing with a high unoriginality score and with many correctly referenced quotes might be a poor example of academic writing, but is not plagiarism.
- Turnitin makes no claims to match against every possible source. Although its database is large, there will inevitably be some cases of plagiarism which it fails to match. A very low score or a score of 0% does not prove that plagiarism did not occur.
- Turnitin can do little nothing to identify cheating where an original and genuine piece of work is written, but it is not written by the student who has submitted. This might include students asking friends or family to write for them, or buying a bespoke essay from a writing service.

## Frequently asked questions

### **What percentage unoriginality score is sufficient to indicate plagiarism?**

The unoriginality score indicates text matches with other documents, including for example quotations that are used. We advise students that there is no score they should aim for as a target. The important thing is to ensure that ideas and quotations used are properly referenced in an appropriate academic style, not to aim for a particular unoriginality score.

### **A piece of work has an unoriginality score of 0%. Does this mean it is not plagiarised?**

No, an unoriginality score of 0% does not guarantee the work is not plagiarised. Turnitin has a large database of web sites, books, journal papers and other sources, but does not (and cannot) include everything ever written.

### **If students resubmit an assignment, won't it show up as a 100% match**

No, work submitted within a single assignment by a particular student will never match other submissions within the same assignment by themselves. If you wish to support students in drafting work across multiple assignments, then you should set the *Store Student Papers* option to *No* to prevent 100% matches from occurring.

### **What file formats will Turnitin accept?**

Most common word-processing formats are accepted. Turnitin will accept documents in Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, PostScript, PDF, HTML, RTF, and plain text. Microsoft Powerpoint and Excel documents, and formats for computer programming languages are not accepted.

### **What is the maximum file size that can be submitted to Turnitin?**

The maximum filesize is approximately 20MB.