How to interpret a Turnitin originality report

What is an originality report?

It is a tool that checks your assignment against various electronic resources for matching text. It will then highlight the areas of your assignment where a match has been found. Examples of resources that are checked are:

- Electronic books
- Electronic journals
- Websites
- Student assignments that have already been submitted through Turnitin at Salford University and other higher education institutions.

However, there will be many sources that are not checked against, such as new web content (e.g. today's news articles) and password protected sites (e.g. intranets).

An important point to note is that originality reports **do not detect plagiarism** – they merely highlight matched text, thus aiding you in checking that your work is correctly cited and referenced.

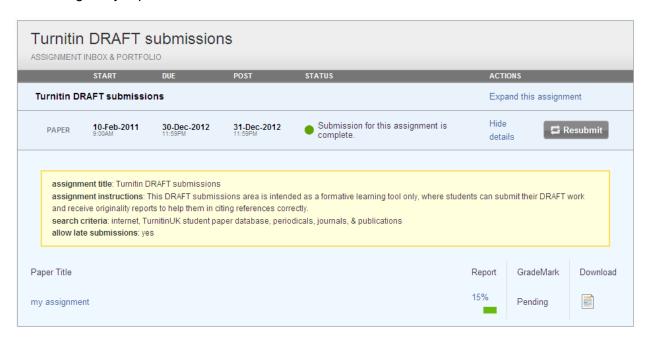## How do I access the originality report?

The report is produced when you submit an assignment to the draft folder. Your lecturer can tell you if your assignment has the option of draft submission, and where to find the link within BlackBoard.

The first time you submit your work to the draft folder, you will receive your originality report within minutes. To access the report, click on the 'assignment inbox' tab, as shown below:

- If your report is ready to view you will now see a percentage figure (if it is not ready you will see a grey box). This is known as the 'similarity index' percentage, which is the percentage of your document that has been matched to other sources.

- When you click on the percentage figure you will then be shown the more detailed originality report.

Turnitin DRAFT submissions
ASSIGNMENT INBOX & PORTFOLIO

	START	DUE	POST	STATUS	ACTIONS
Turnitin DRAFT submissions					Expand this assignment
PAPER	10-Feb-2011 9:00AM	30-Dec-2012 11:59PM	31-Dec-2012 11:59PM	● Submission for this assignment is complete.	Hide details Resubmit

assignment title: Turnitin DRAFT submissions
assignment instructions: This DRAFT submissions area is intended as a formative learning tool only, where students can submit their DRAFT work and receive originality reports to help them in citing references correctly.
search criteria: internet, TurnitinUK student paper database, periodicals, journals, & publications
allow late submissions: yes

Paper Title	Report	GradeMark	Download
my assignment	15%	Pending	

For any subsequent submissions it can take up to 24 hours to receive your report. This will overwrite your previous report, so if you want to keep a copy of it there are 'print' and 'download' buttons at the bottom of the originality report window.

You can submit your work into the draft folder as many times as you wish up to the hand in date of your assignment.

The 'similarity index'

This is the percentage of text in your assignment that has been matched to other sources.
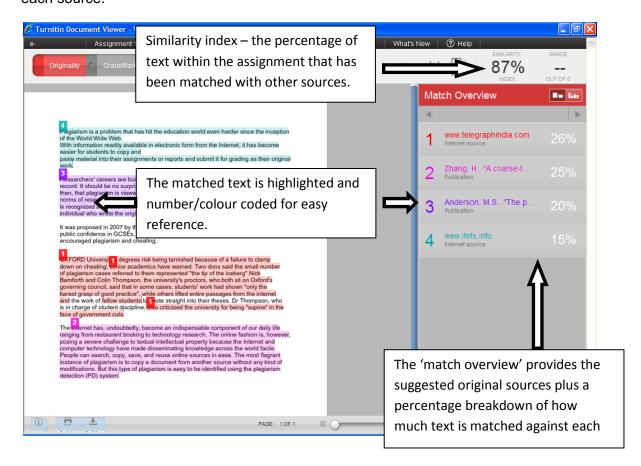
If the figure is high, it does not necessarily mean that you have plagiarised as the report could be text matching against the following:

- Quotations that have been correctly referenced.
- Your bibliography, where the citations you have used could be exactly the same as those of another student.
- A common phrase or series of words used in context to the topic.

Similarly, a low or zero percent similarity index does not necessarily mean that plagiarism has not taken place. As there are many sources that Turnitin does not check against, the similarity index cannot be used as an indicator of whether plagiarism has occurred or not.

[Oct11 – Stephen Ward]
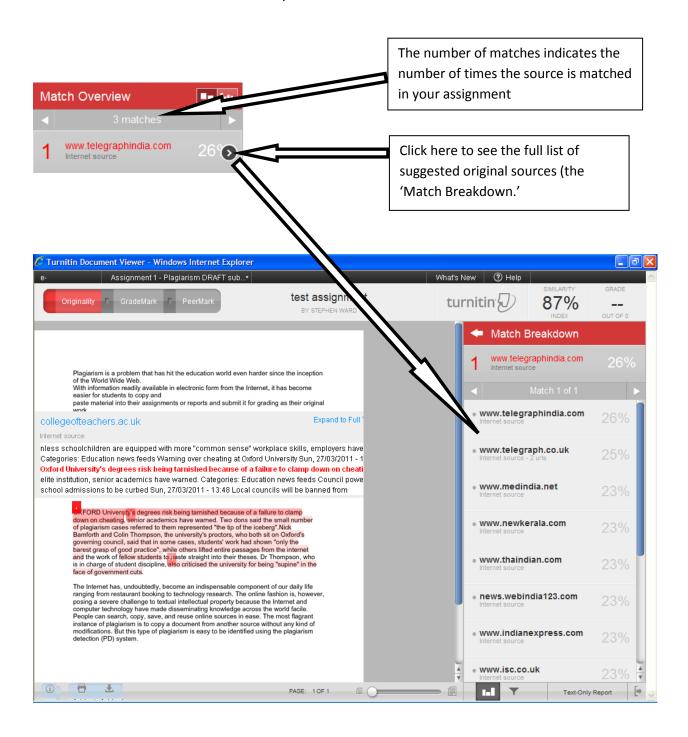
What information is included in the report?

- An overall 'similarity index' percentage. This indicates the amount of text in the whole assignment that has been matched with other sources.
- Text that has been matched will be number/colour coded for easy reference.
- The 'match overview' appears on the right hand side of the screen. This is a list of suggested original sources and the percentage of text that has been matched against each source.

Similarity index – the percentage of text within the assignment that has been matched with other sources.

The matched text is highlighted and number/colour coded for easy reference.

The 'match overview' provides the suggested original sources plus a percentage breakdown of how much text is matched against each

[Oct11 – Stephen Ward]

Viewing the Match Breakdown

By clicking one of the sources in the match overview, you can see how many times that particular source has been matched in your assignment.

At this point an arrow appears next to the source which you can click to show a list of additional sources that could be the original source of the text. This is known as the 'Match Breakdown' and is shown on the example below.
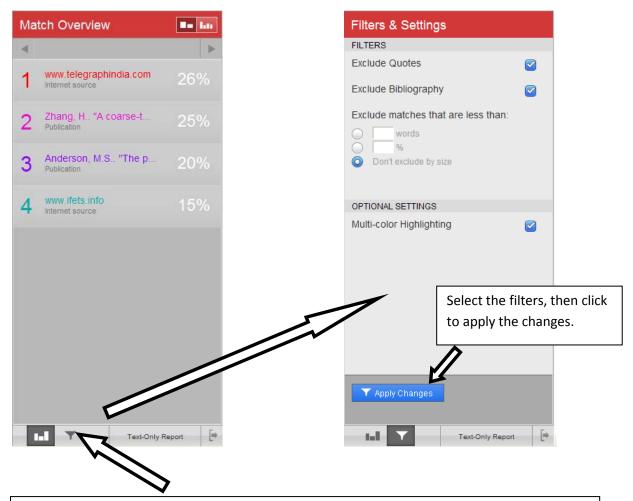
The number of matches indicates the number of times the source is matched in your assignment

Click here to see the full list of suggested original sources (the 'Match Breakdown.'

[Oct11 – Stephen Ward]

From the 'match breakdown' list you can click on any of the sources to view the content in its original format (see below).

Click here to view the source in its original form.

Filtering options

Some text matches are easily explained, such as quotations and bibliographies. You can exclude these from the originality report by clicking the filter button (see example below). Here, you can also exclude matches that are less than a certain number of words or less than a certain percentage.

If you select some/all of these filters, you also need to click on the 'apply changes' button for them to take effect.

Select the filters, then click to apply the changes.

Click on the 'filter' button to exclude quotes and the bibliography from the originality report. You can also exclude matches that are less than a certain number of words or percentage.

Use of originality reports by tutors

When you submit your assignment to the Turnitin FINAL submission area, a final originality report is included with it, which your tutor will be able to access. They will not use this to detect plagiarism – they will use this as an assistive tool to check any work that they already suspect to be plagiarised.

[Oct11 – Stephen Ward]