

# TURNITIN: ACCESSING AND INTERPRETING YOUR SIMILARITY REPORT

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## INTRODUCTION

This guide contains technical instructions for accessing, interpreting, and saving/printing your Similarity Report in Turnitin.

### ***CHECKLIST: BEFORE YOU ACCESS YOUR SIMILARITY REPORT***

Before accessing your Similarity Report, you must ensure that you:

#### ***KNOW WHEN AND HOW YOUR SIMILARITY REPORT WILL BE AVAILABLE***

Under the consistent University-wide Turnitin set up, you will see your Similarity Report at different times depending on whether you submitted a draft or a final version for marking, and whether the final version was on time or late. See the *When will my Similarity Report be available?* section for information.

#### ***UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF TEXT MATCHES***

Text matches in Turnitin do not automatically mean that plagiarism has been detected. Some basic advice is outlined in the *Interpreting your Similarity Report* section below. Ask your Tutor if you have any questions or concerns.

#### ***KNOW HOW TO RETAIN A COPY OF YOUR SIMILARITY REPORT***

Similarity Reports can be downloaded from Turnitin for you to keep and/or print for your records or should you wish to discuss it further with your Tutor or student support. Steps for doing this are available in the *Saving / Printing a copy of your Similarity Report* section below.

## UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS FOR USE OF TURNITIN

### ***PLAGIARISM POLICY***

In line with the University Plagiarism policy you will have an opportunity to submit at least one draft and view the Similarity Report for each piece of coursework or assignment you are asked to submit to Turnitin. The purpose of this is to help you develop good academic writing – learning how to cite and reference correctly so that you don't inadvertently claim other people's work as your own. Your programme should provide an early educational focus on the use of Turnitin early to help you with this.

Turnitin itself does not make any decisions about plagiarism based on the percentage of matched text in your Similarity Report. The software is a tool to support markers' own decisions. They will look at the report in detail, considering whether your writing is fairly attributed and referenced, before they make any judgement.

### **TURNITIN SET-UP**

A revised consistent University-wide Turnitin setup requires that;

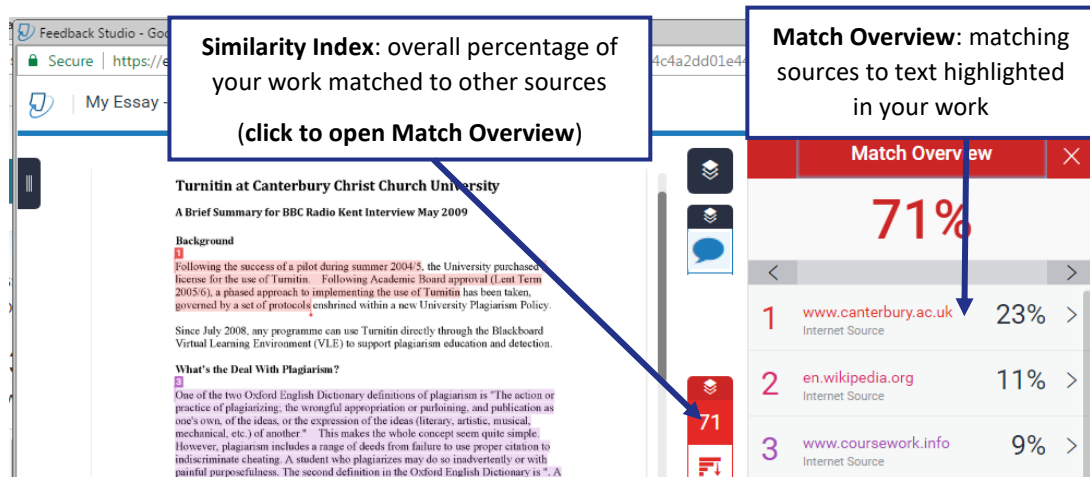
1. All Turnitin Assignments must be created **within module Blackboard sites in a central Assessments area.**
2. There must be **at least two draft Turnitin Assignments per module** for students to use.
3. There must be a **separate folder for final submissions** for each assessment using Turnitin, within which there must be **separate Turnitin Assignments for on time and after deadline submissions.**
4. There must be a **separate folder for reassessment**, within which there are sub-folders for each assessment, again each containing separate submission points for on time and after deadline submissions. This should appear beneath the initial assessment folders.

### **WHEN WILL MY SIMILARITY REPORT BE AVAILABLE?**

<b>Turnitin Assignment (submission point)</b>	<b>When you see your Similarity report</b>
Draft	Shortly after first submission; up to 24 hours after each subsequent submission
Final (on time)	Shortly after the deadline (Turnitin Due Date and Time), it will show as <i>"Processing"</i> in the meantime.
Final (after deadline)	Shortly after submission.

## INTERPRETING YOUR SIMILARITY REPORT

When you open your Similarity Report, the left-hand side contains your work and highlights text which can be found ('matched') in other sources. These sources are shown in the right-side panel and include websites, journal articles and work submitted by students from this and other universities using Turnitin. The overall percentage of your work which can be found in these other sources is shown at the top and is called the **Similarity Index**. The amount found in each individual source is listed in the **Match Overview** panel.



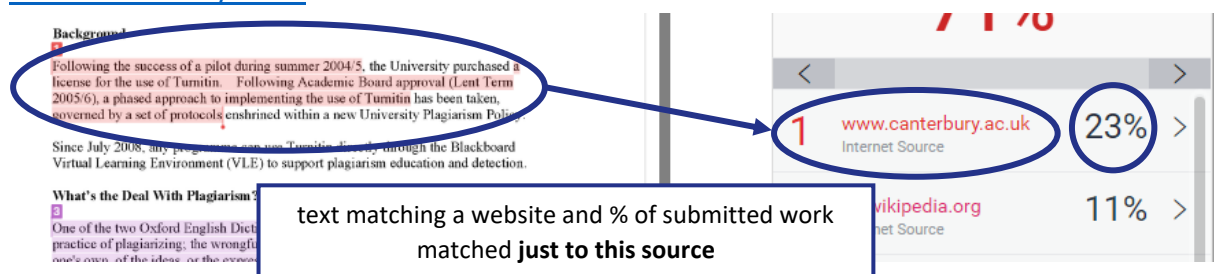
**Similarity Index:** overall percentage of your work matched to other sources  
(click to open Match Overview)

**Match Overview:** matching sources to text highlighted in your work

Match Overview		
<b>71%</b>		
1	www.canterbury.ac.uk Internet Source	23%
2	en.wikipedia.org Internet Source	11%
3	www.coursework.info Internet Source	9%

In this example, Turnitin can find 71% of the submitted essay in other sources (a 71% Similarity Index).

Below, you can see that 23% of the essay matches text found on the web site [www.canterbury.ac.uk](http://www.canterbury.ac.uk).

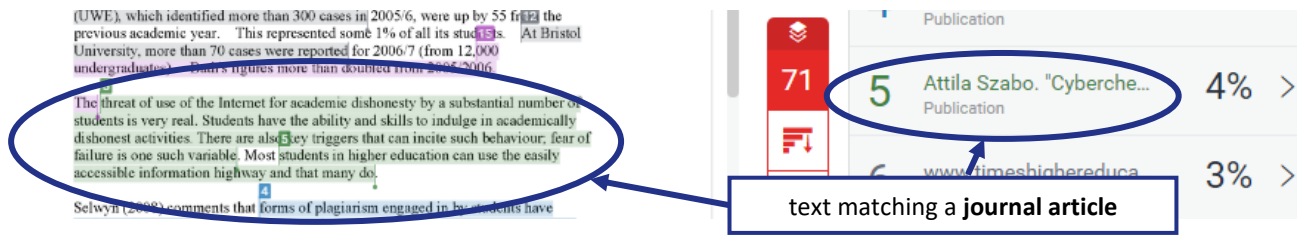


1	www.canterbury.ac.uk Internet Source	23%
2	en.wikipedia.org Internet Source	11%

text matching a website and % of submitted work matched just to this source

**Don't panic!** This just means some of your text is **unoriginal**. Some unoriginal text might be quotations, some might just be 'common language'. **Unoriginal does not automatically mean it is plagiarised**. How much of your text is unoriginal will depend on the type of writing and the subject area involved. When marking final submissions, markers will look at the report in detail, considering whether your writing is fairly attributed and referenced, before they make any judgements.

**Note:** the matched text is not necessarily copied from the website listed - many websites may have the same text, Turnitin just shows you what it considers to be the 'best match' first.



The image shows a Turnitin Similarity Report. On the left, a snippet of text is highlighted in green and circled in blue. On the right, a table lists matches. The top match is circled in blue and has a callout box pointing to it that says "text matching a journal article".

Match Percentage	Source
71%	(Overall Match)
4%	Attila Szabo. "Cyberche... Publication"
3%	www.timeshighereduca...

Here, 4% of the essay also matches a journal article (Szabo), but the text matched may be correctly quoted and attributed.

### WHAT OVERALL PERCENTAGE MATTERS?

There is no right or wrong percentage because there is no right or wrong amount of unoriginal text in any piece of work. Different subjects have different expectations on the amount of quotes to use and this can vary from assignment to assignment. Talk to your tutor if you're unsure.

A high percentage could just as well include **fair text** (e.g. large amounts of correctly-attributed quotes or lots of common language phrases) as it could **problem text** (e.g. where you've copied or changed a bit but not cited the source). You should check each passage of highlighted text in your Similarity Report (see the *Technical instructions* section below) and consider whether:

- it is a word-for-word quote which you must clearly show as quoted and cite the source or
- sentences look similar with some words changed which you may need to rewrite in your own words and then cite the source
- it is common language which doesn't need attributing to any source so don't worry!

If you're not sure which is which, check with your tutor.

Ensure that all your sources are clearly acknowledged and check all your citations are in your reference list.

You can exclude text you've already quoted from being matched, as well as exclude your reference list (see the *Technical instructions* section below). However, you should consider not excluding quotes until you're familiar and comfortable working with Turnitin as it they will show you how much of your work is original, even where properly quoted. It may also help you check you've included the sources of all your quotes in your reference list.

### ***FURTHER ADVICE ON INTERPRETING YOUR SIMILARITY REPORT***

Ask your tutor for further advice on interpreting your Similarity Report.

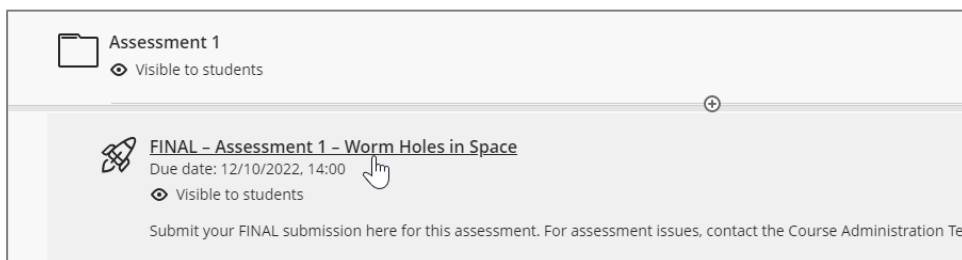
**Note:** the University Plagiarism Policy requires that an educational focus on the use of Turnitin must be provided early on in the programme to help students understand the meaning of Similarity Reports and how to avoid plagiarism

See also this short video for some examples of [interpreting a Similarity Report](#). (although this shows a previous version of the Turnitin Similarity Report, the principles are the same)

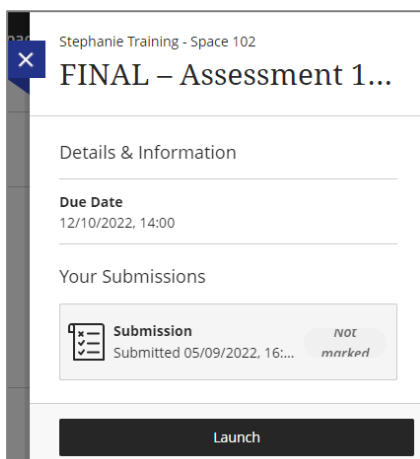
## **TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONS**

### ***HOW TO ACCESS YOUR TURNITIN SIMILARITY REPORT IN BLACKBOARD ULTRA***

In Blackboard, go back to the Turnitin Assignment you submitted the work to and click on the **title** of the Assignment:



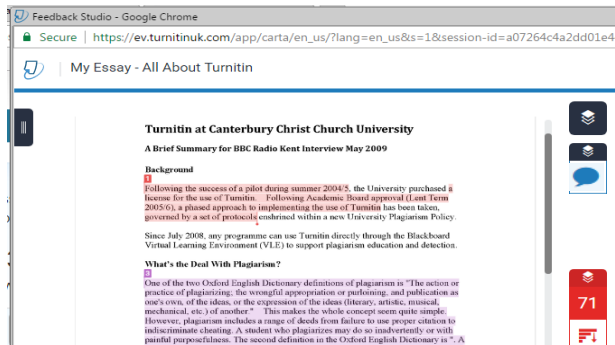
From the right-hand panel that opens select **Launch**.



From the **Assignment Dashboard** screen select the coloured square or % under the **Similarity** heading:

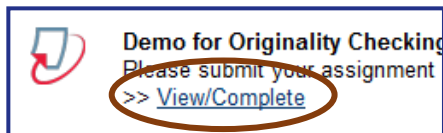


The Feedback Studio window will open:




## HOW TO ACCESS YOUR TURNITIN SIMILARITY REPORT IN BLACKBOARD ORIGINAL

In Blackboard, go back to the Turnitin Assignment you submitted the work to and click the **View/Complete** link.



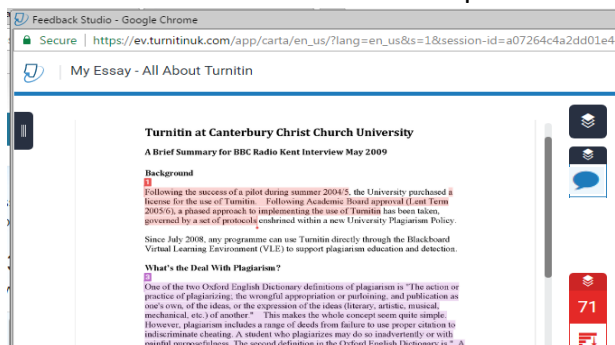
Click on the % Similarity link:

Click % for Similarity Report

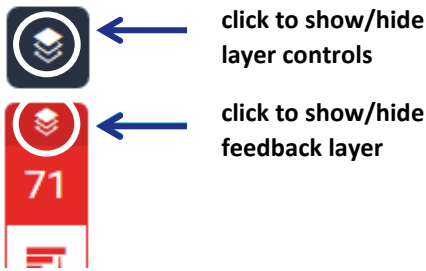
Assignment Inbox: Turnitin Training			
Info	Dates	Similarity	
Demo for Originality Checking and eFeedback	Start 01-Aug-2011 12:01AM Due 25-Nov-2011 11:59PM Post 30-Apr-2012 11:59PM	64%	

**Note:** If you cannot access your Similarity Report, or it shows as **“Processing”** it may not be available yet. See the *When will my Similarity report be available?* section above. Contact your Tutor for queries.

The Feedback Studio window will open:

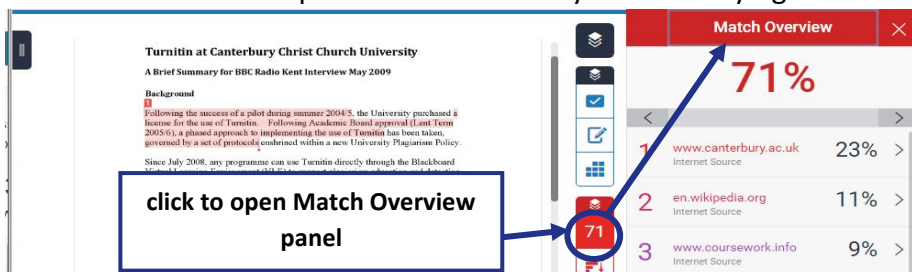


**Note:** If you cannot see any text matches, check first that you have the Similarity 'layer' visible:



Click on the % **Similarity Index** to see a list of sources your text matches to.

There is no one acceptable overall percentage in the Similarity Index; your tutor will help you understand what is required for the course you are studying.



See also Turnitin's own online guidance for further technical instructions:

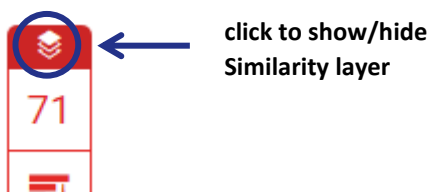
- [Viewing and checking matches and excluding quotes and reference lists from being matched](#)
- [Interactive demo of Feedback Studio](#)

**Note:** although primarily aimed at markers, this demo will give a good feel for how Feedback Studio works.

### **SAVING/PRINTING A COPY OF YOUR SIMILARITY REPORT**

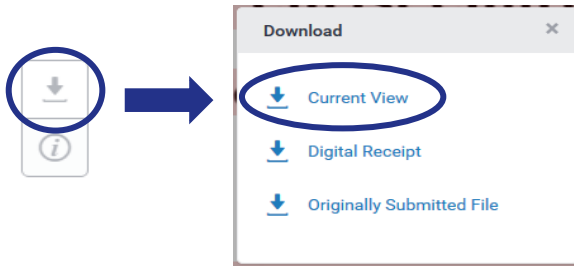
Your Similarity Report will be available online through Blackboard for as long as you are enrolled in the Blackboard site you submitted the work to. However, you may prefer to have an offline or printed copy to retain for future reference. To do this, you can download a PDF version.

To download a PDF of your Similarity Report, open your paper in the Feedback Studio (see *Accessing your feedback in Turnitin* above). Ensure the Similarity 'layer' visible.





Click on the **download icon** and select **Current View** to start the download.



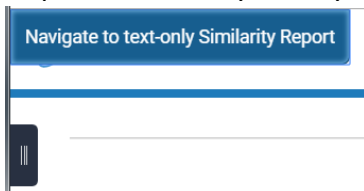
### ACCESSIBLE SIMILARITY REPORT

While Feedback Studio has been designed to be highly accessible across a range of devices and by users with a range of needs, it is not currently completely WCAG 2.0 AA compliant, you can use the text-only report for a better experience with an assistive technology and Turnitin.

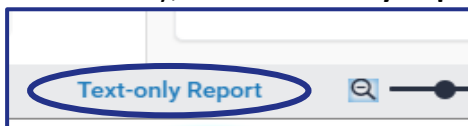
Open your paper from the **Assignment Inbox** by selecting the **Similarity %** number:



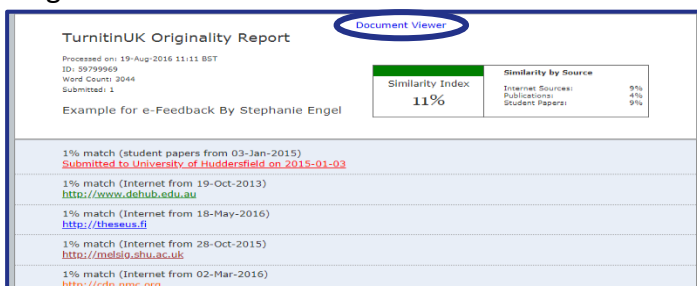
Wait for the paper to fully load in the Feedback Studio and then press the **Tab** key. A box will appear on the screen with the focus already on that element. A screen reader will read this element as a link saying '**Navigate to text-only Similarity Report**'. You can select on this link or press enter on your keyboard to open the text-only Similarity Report.



Alternatively, select **Text-only Report** from the bottom of the document viewer.



The text-only Similarity Report will now load in a new window. Turnitin Feedback Studio will remain open in your previous window. You can also select on the **Document Viewer** to load it again.



If you find engaging with your Similarity Report online difficult, you can download a PDF copy (see *Saving/printing a copy of your Similarity report* above). Alternatively, you can request your tutor or a programme administrator do this and e-mail it to you.

**Note:** PDF versions of Similarity Reports contain the same basic information as the online version but they are not as interactive.

## HELP!

Turnitin online help can be accessed through the link at the top-right of the Feedback Studio window:



### ***CONTACT YOUR TUTOR***

If you're not sure what, where and when to submit to Turnitin, or if you accidentally submit the wrong file or to the wrong Turnitin Assignment, as well as for further advice on interpreting your Similarity Report

### ***CONTACT THE I-ZONE***

If Turnitin is not working properly including any technical error messages.