Viewing and Evaluating Turnitin 'Originality Reports'.

The students have been given a detailed handout on how to upload their essays and on how to view the originality report. Please not that staff and students have different interfaces for viewing originality reports. This is because students only get to view their own, and staff can see all the reports for the module. *If a student asks how to view their originality report, please refer them to the handout 'Submitting your Essay Electronically'*. Members of staff will need to follow the instructions below.

Because originality reports are listed by student name, viewing the reports needs to be a separate stage of the marking process (normally after the essays are marked), and will usually be done by the module convenor. If a marker has concerns over a particular essay, they should contact the convenors so that they essay can be de-anonymise and the originality report checked.

To view the originality reports:

1. Go to 'Enrolments', and click on the Blackboard course for the module with the essays that you need to check.
2. Then go to the 'Control Panel' menu (bottom left-hand menu), and click on 'Course Tool'.
3. This displays a drop-down menu, at the bottom of which is a button called 'TurnitinUK Assignments'.
4. Click on that.
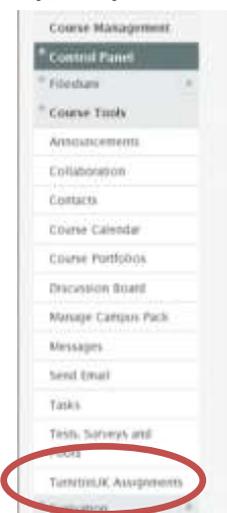
This brings up a page with a link to the assignment you set. Click on the title for the link to the originality reports.
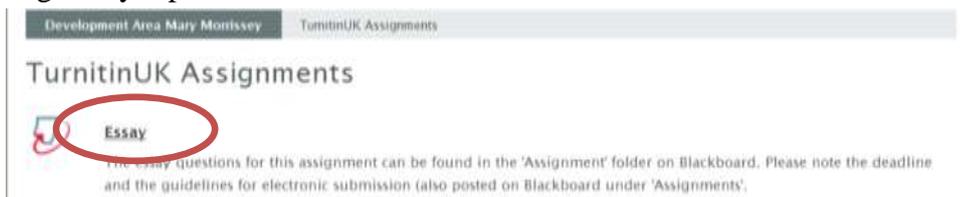
The next page shows the students' names with their essay title. In the 'similarity' column there is a percentage and a coloured square. The originality report is accessed by clicking on the percentage.

The percentage represents the percentage of the dissertation that matches text in the Turnitin database; the colour-coding suggests whether this might be considered a significant level of matching (red or orange) or not (green or blue).

We do not recommend that convenors arbitrarily decide on a percentage below which essays are assumed to be 'plagiarism free'. Convenors should try and familiarise themselves with the system by extensive checking. Markers with concerns over particular essays should take them to the module convenor to be de-anonymised and the originality report checked thoroughly.

To view an originality report:
- Find the student's name in the list (click 'author' at the top of the list of names to alphabetise the list).
- Click on the percentage in the 'similarity' column.
- This will bring up the originality report.
    - You might be offered a very brief video tutorial on reading originality reports, 'Getting Started'; if you don't want to watch it, click 'Close'.
    - If you click on the essay title, it will bring up the student's essay, but not the originality report.

The originality report looks like this:
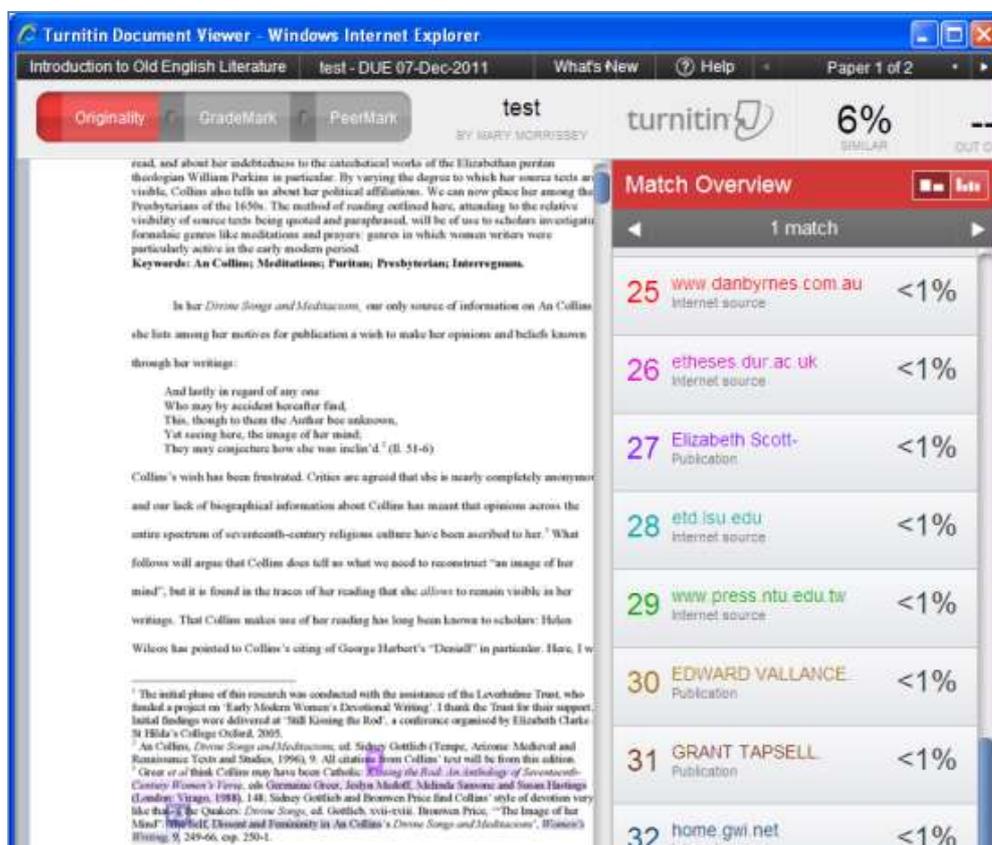
Text that matches material found in the Turnitin database is highlighted, and the source is referenced in the same colour on the right hand side.

- Clicking on the sources in the right-hand column allows for further analysis of the sources.
- Clicking on the quotation in the text will bring up a text box showing the borrowed text in its original context.
  (If the source is a student essay from another institution, you have to fill in a request to view it.)
- Clicking on the 'i' icon at the bottom left of the page will bring up information about the essay, including the time and date of submission and the word count.
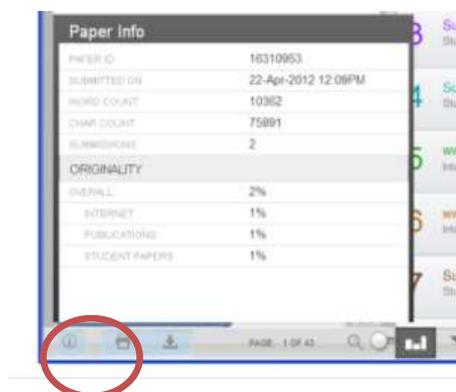
Students are given the following advice on interpreting the Originality Report:
An originality report does not *prove* that a piece of work has been plagiarised.
   The Turnitin software simply compares strings of words in your essay with all of the other material available in its database (everything on the web and the other essays that have been submitted to Turnitin in other UK universities) and looks for strings of words that match. Sometimes the matches it finds are completely legitimate: A long quotation that is indented (and therefore not in inverted commas) will come up as a match, but this is not plagiarism. The originality reports generated for each assignment will be examined by a tutor, so that legitimate matches can be distinguished from cases of collusion or plagiarism.
   Turnitin is simply a tool to help your tutors find sources that contain text similar to the submitted work. If your originality report finds a high percentage of matches, you might want to re-examine your work, to check that you are referencing quotations properly, using secondary sources appropriately and are not being too reliant on the critics you have read.

Markers should also note:
- Turnitin does not look beyond the first source it finds, and so a website quoting a common source will be cited, rather than the printed source used in both student essay and website.
- Turnitin finds it hard to recognise matches where many small changes have been made to the borrowed text.
- Turnitin uses a different algorithm to other search engines, e.g. Google. It doesn't always find everything.
- *So if you suspect plagiarism and Turnitin does not find anything much, you should trust your professional judgement and carry out whatever checks you normally make for plagiarism. A case of plagiarism can be made even if Turnitin has found few matches.*

If you think Turnitin has found evidence of plagiarism, you can download or print off the originality report by clicking the arrow button on the bottom of the 'originality report' screen:
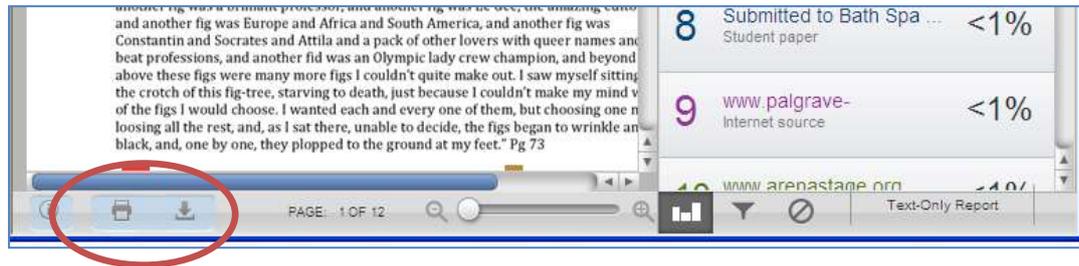
- The report should then be taken to the department's DTL for further investigation.

- If the essay demonstrates poor academic practice, but not plagiarism, it should be marked as usual and a note made in the comments about the student's use of secondary sources and advice on how to improve this.

- If you are satisfied the Turnitin has not found anything that might constitute plagiarism, you can close down the originality report in the usual way (top right corner).

- The university's regulations on electronic submission warn against the unnecessary copying of students' work by downloading and forwarding electronic submissions. ***Please don't forward a student's work without good reason.*** You can download in the original format or in pdf.

- Very close matches between students at different institutions are picked up by Turnitin and generate an automatic email to teaching staff on the course. If you receive a message of this sort DO NOT reply to it as you may reveal confidential student information. Instead, the convenor should forward it to CDOTL.

Problems? **Try the 'Turnitin Support and Training Resources' in the 'Time-saving tips' section of the 'E-Learning support' tab (Blackboard, top centre menu), or contact the Blackboard Local Administrator (m.e.morrissey@reading.ac.uk for English Literature; j.i.brooks@reading.ac.uk for Modern Languages). A status report for Turnitin is usually posted on the Blackboard login page: sometimes the problem is not your fault!**