Turnitin FAQ

Q. What is Turnitin?
A. Turnitin is a service the University pays for which looks for similarity between students' papers and thousands of online articles, other papers submitted to Turnitin, and other sources. Though the service is often used to help instructors identify plagiarism, the idea behind Turnitin is that students can use the service to identify areas of *potential* plagiarism in their writing and correct it before an assignment is submitted to an instructor.

Q. How does it work?
A. Students submit their papers and receive, when it is ready, an **originality report** (see sample at the end of this FAQ) that identifies areas of similarity in the students' writing and reveals potential sources as well. The students will be given an overall percentage of similarity to other sources.

Q. How do I submit my paper to Turnitin?
A. Lourdes University students do this in one of two ways: either through Sakai or by creating a Turnitin account and submitting an assignment directly to Turnitin.

- Most Lourdes University instructors have students submit to Sakai and have selected an option for their students' assignments to be automatically submitted to Turnitin from Sakai. When the originality report is ready to view, it will be visible in Sakai. Used in this way, the students do not have to create a Turnitin account.
- Some instructors will give their students a **course ID** and **enrollment password**. Students who have not used Turnitin before will need to create an account, and then access their course with this ID and password. Students who have created an account previously do not need to create a new one; they simply add their current course to their existing Turnitin account by providing the ID number and password given to them by their instructor.

Q. How long does it take to receive an originality report from Turnitin?
A. It depends. Sometimes reports will be available almost immediately and, other times, students can wait up to 24 hours to receive an originality report back from Turnitin. During very busy times (the service is utilized by millions of users worldwide), students have had to wait as long as three days to get originality reports back from Turnitin.

Q. My instructor allows me to resubmit my papers as often as I want up until the due date, but the originality report I see in Sakai is the same as the one I saw the first time I submitted my paper. Why is that?
A. If your instructor is submitting your assignments automatically when you submit your papers to Sakai *and* you are allowed to submit the paper more than once, you have to delete the original attachment in Sakai before attaching a new version of your paper in order to see a new originality report from Turnitin.

Q. Our assignment is a group paper. Is there anything special I need to do in Turnitin?
A. Because Turnitin stores every document under the submitting author's name, it is important to remember that, if your instructor allows multiple resubmissions, that the same group member needs to submit the paper to Sakai or Turnitin. If one group member submits one draft, and another group member submits a different draft, it will be comparing the group's new draft to the earlier submission, resulting in an increase in similarity.

Some other points to keep in mind when using Turnitin:
- Just because Turnitin says something is similar to something else does not mean that the word or phrase is plagiarism, or even that the word or phrase needs to be changed.
  - Turnitin identifies four words in sequence that are the same as in another source; however, when correcting true plagiarism using Turnitin, it is important to remember that some words or phrases will be picked up as "similar" through Turnitin that do not need to be changed.
    - A good example is the term, "President of the United States of America." Turnitin would say that phrase was similar to other sources, but using this term is correct and is not plagiarism.
- There is no magic number.
  - Students with more than 20% similarity should carefully evaluate the portions of their papers that were identified as similar; however, the only rule in terms of percentages to aim for is "the smaller, the better."
  - However, students should not ignore small matches or smaller percentages in Originality Reports because, though the number may be small, what Turnitin identified may, in fact, be plagiarism

Submitting an assignment to Sakai
- Access the course's Sakai site and click Assignments on the left
- Click on the Assignment name

- Click Choose File at the bottom of the assignment page and locate the file to be uploaded to Sakai; then, click Open
- The file will now be attached to the assignment
  - Note: If the instructor is using Turnitin and provides a text box on the assignment page, do not copy and paste the text of a paper into this box because Turnitin cannot read the text in the text box
    - Instead, attach the document in one of the accepted file formats: Word (.doc or .docx), PDF (.pdf), HTML (.html), RTF (.rtf), or plain text (.txt)
- If the correct file has been uploaded and is ready to be submitted, simply click the **Submit** button at the bottom of the assignment page

Viewing Originality Reports
- Once an Originality Report has been generated through Turnitin, return to the assignment page in Sakai, and a colored bar (blue, green, yellow, orange or red) will appear at the top of the assignment page
- Students can click this link to view Originality Reports
- When viewing an Originality Report in Turnitin, it is a good idea to exclude quotations and the bibliography from the Originality Report
  - To do this, click Text-Only Report in the lower right hand corner
  - Then, at the top of the next page, click exclude quoted and exclude bibliography

Resubmitting Papers in Sakai
- Carefully go through the document and identify places where patchwriting (intended as a paraphrase but turns out too closely worded to the original), plagiarism, and forgotten quotation marks have occurred
- Then, make the necessary corrections and save the document
- Finally, return to Sakai and upload the corrected version of the paper
- Do not forget to click the **Remove** button beside the original attachment

Sample Originality Report
(Text-Only Report; quotes and bibliography excluded)