Turnitin Guidelines

Do students have to submit their assignments to Turnitin?

Yes. WITT requires all tutors/students, with assignments requiring reference to and use of others material, to use Turnitin.

Do all students, regardless of their year or level of study, have unlimited Turnitin submissions?

Yes. All students will be permitted unlimited Turnitin submission attempts. This is because we wish students to see Turnitin as an informing and educational tool and not a punitive punishing tool. However while it would be expected that a student in their first year of tertiary study, or those on a lower level course, may be unfamiliar with the conventions of academic writing as regards paraphrasing, citing and referencing, and so require repeated submissions, it would be expected that those in their second or third year of study would have learned these conventions and so should not require repeated Turnitin submissions.

What percentage of my Similarity Index score is considered acceptable/safe?

WITT DOES NOT define a “safe” level for the Similarity Index, nor is there a level that signals that plagiarism has occurred. This is because Turnitin is a text matching tool only, it is NOT a plagiarism detection tool. The detection of plagiarism requires evaluation by a tutor on a case by case basis. WITT recommends that tutors view ALL originality reports regardless of the Similarity Index score.

What if my tutor refers to an acceptable “Originality Threshold”?

Some tutors/departments give students an “acceptable originality threshold”, stated as a %. (Of note is that the % refers to the % of text matching, not the % of plagiarism). The thinking is that an originality report with a high % may be cause for concern about the originality of content and can be viewed as an “alert” to the student and tutor that the assignment should be reviewed for potential plagiarism. Of note however that even when an originality threshold is stated tutors are still required to review the entire report to ensure that no portion of the assignment is plagiarised. The acceptable similarity rate for plagiarism is zero.

What happens if I have been found to have plagiarised?

An accusation of plagiarism is very serious. If your work demonstrates clear intent to defraud by copying all or significant portions of the material presented in your work penalties will occur, and in some cases these penalties are harsh. Refer to policy: Assessment and Student Code of Conduct.

Will the detection of plagiarism be considered less harshly/more leniently for first year students and students on lower level courses?

WITT acknowledges that students in their first year of tertiary study, or those on lower level courses, may be unfamiliar with the conventions of academic writing and can sometimes unintentionally plagiarise. Students should note that while all cases of plagiarism are considered serious, they will be considered on a case by case basis, and the year and level of study will be taken into consideration.