

# How to interpret a Turnitin originality report

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## 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:

- 45 billion web[pages] (and growing daily)
- Electronic books
- Electronic journals
- Student assignments that have already been submitted through Turnitin at UCT and other higher education institutions around the world.

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

It is important to note that originality reports **do not detect plagiarism** - it merely highlights unoriginal text (i.e. text that matches text already in the Turnitin comparative database) and reference quotes in your submission.

## How do I access the originality report?

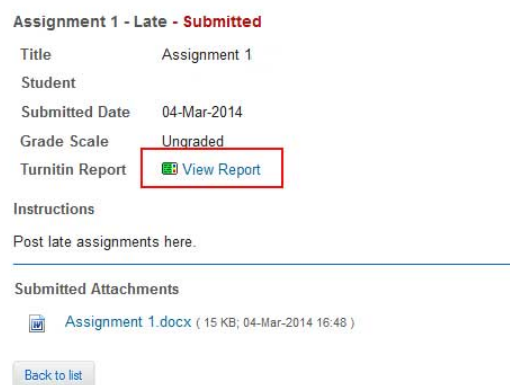
Your lecturer may decide to employ Turnitin when they create (an) assignment(s) on (a) Vula site(s). If the lecturer has allowed students to view their Turnitin reports, you will be able to access the report by clicking on the name of the assignment (in the Assignments tool), for example, see [Assignment 1](#) in Figure 1 below:

Assignment title	Status
<a href="#">Assignment 1 - Quantitative Methods</a>	Not Started
<a href="#">Assignment 1</a>	Submitted 04-Mar-2014 16:49
<a href="#">Assignment 2</a>	Submitted 24-Mar-2014 11:49
<a href="#">Assignment 2</a>	Not Started
<a href="#">Research Proposal</a>	Not Started
<a href="#">Assignment 2</a>	Submitted 24-Mar-2014 11:48

Figure 1: Access Originality Report

After following the link to the assignment, you will see a colour-coded similarity icon and the option to view the report (see Figure 2). The colour and the percentage shown represent the percentage of your document that has been matched to other sources.

- Blue (0% similarity)
- Green ( < 25% similarity)
- Yellow (25-49% similarity)
- Orange (50-74% similarity)
- Red ( > 75% similarity)



Assignment 1 - Late - Submitted

Title Assignment 1

Student

Submitted Date 04-Mar-2014


Grade Scale Ungraded

Turnitin Report [View Report](#)

Instructions

Post late assignments here.

Submitted Attachments

 Assignment 1.docx ( 15 KB; 04-Mar-2014 16:48 )

[Back to list](#)

Figure 2: View the Originality Report

## 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 matching text against the following:

- quotations that have been correctly referenced
- your reference list/bibliography, particularly if the citations you 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.

## Accessing the Turnitin originality report

Click on the View Report link (See figure 2) to see the detailed originality report

## 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.
- The 'similarity index' is a sum of the percentages matches for all sources (i.e. 20 1% matches would produce a 'similarity index' of 20%)
- 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 original sources and the percentage of text that has been matched against each source.

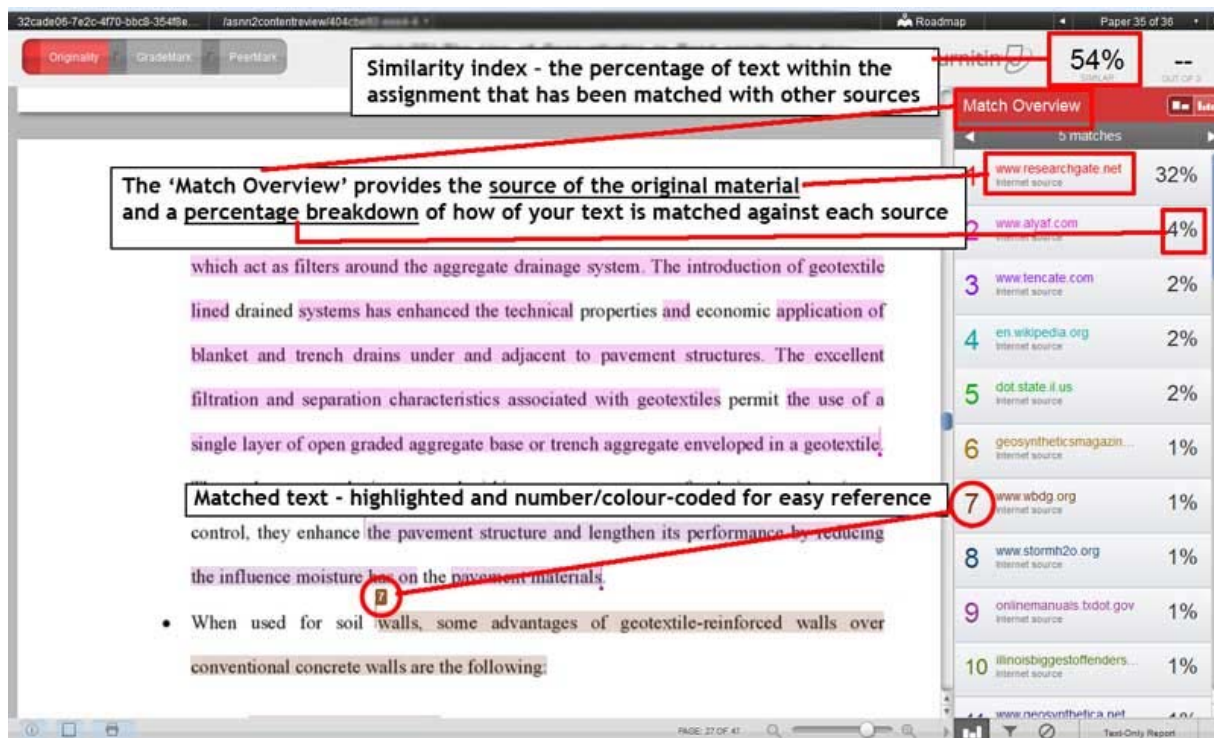


Figure 3: Similarity Index

## Viewing the Match Breakdown

Clicking on one of the sources in the match overview allows you to see how many times that particular source has been matched in your assignment. Once you click on a matched source, an arrow appears next to the source, which you can click on 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 in the example in Figure 4 below.



Figure 4: Match Breakdown

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots. The left screenshot is a Turnitin 'Match Breakdown' window. It displays a list of sources and their match percentages. A red circle highlights the entry for 'en.wikipedia.org' with a 5% match. A red arrow points from this circle to the right screenshot. The right screenshot is a web browser showing the Wikipedia article for 'Geosynthetic'. The article text is visible, starting with 'Geosynthetics are the generally polymeric products used to solve civil engineering problems...'. A red arrow also points from the Wikipedia article back to the Turnitin window.

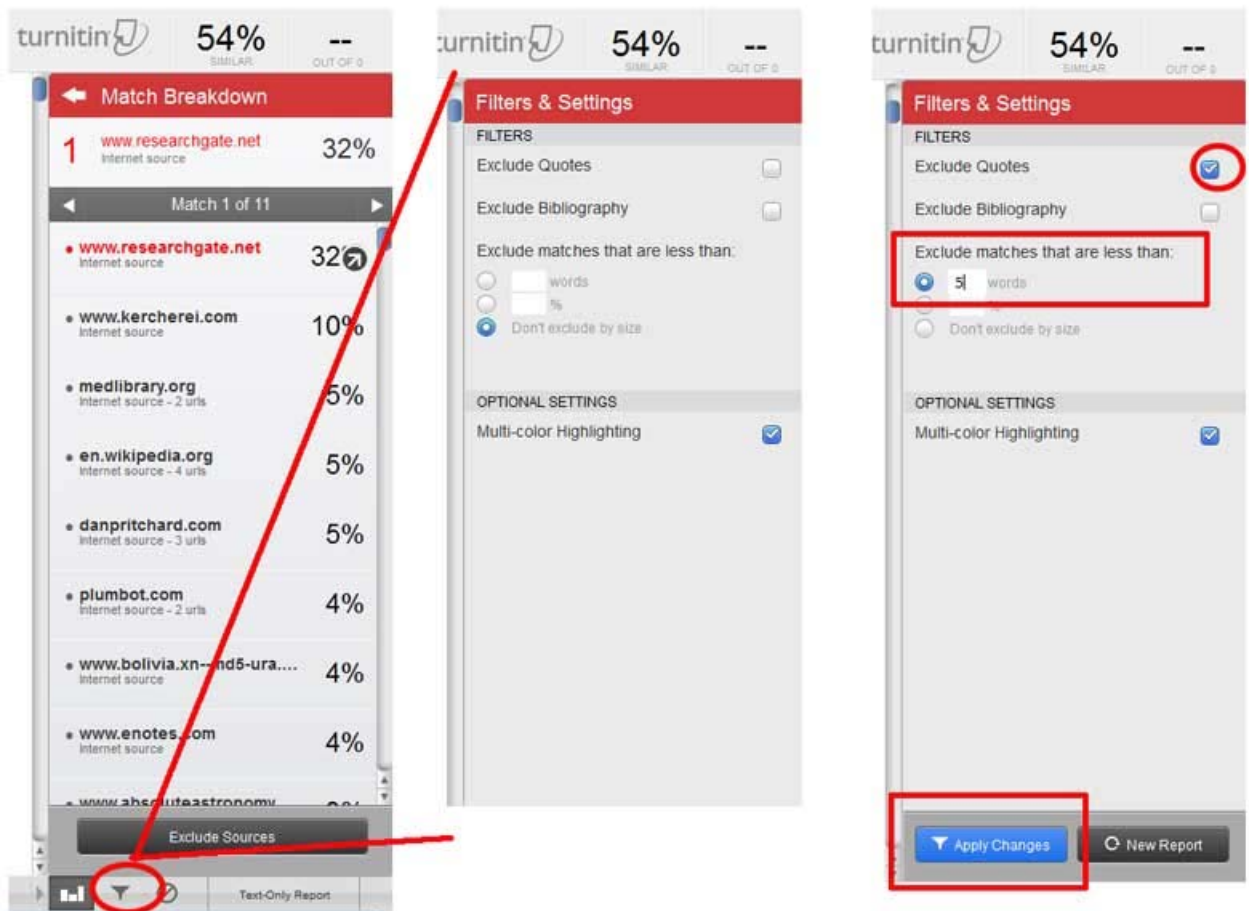
Source	Match Percentage
www.researchgate.net	32%
www.researchgate.net	32%
www.kercherei.com	10%
en.wikipedia.org	5%
danpritchard.com	5%
plumbot.com	4%
www.bolivia.xn--md5-ura....	4%

## Filtering the matches

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 Figure 5 for 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 'apply changes' button for them to take effect.

Please note: As you are accessing the originality report as a student you are not able to exclude sources from the comparison.



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

Figure 5: Filtering Options