

Turnitin at Pepperdine University

Turnitin is an online plagiarism detection service. The service provides a detailed *assessment of originality* on any submitted work by performing a search for textual similarities to other works in academic journals, on the Internet, and within its own database of submitted work. Pepperdine University has licensed the Turnitin service for the benefit of its faculty and students in order to *educate* students about academic integrity, *detect* instances of academic dishonesty, and *deter* plagiarism. This guideline was originally adopted and approved by the Pepperdine Dean's Council on November 14, 2007.

Turnitin Best Practices:

Faculty members are not required to use the Turnitin service. Those that choose to adopt Turnitin with their course should consider the following:

1. The instructor needs to understand voluntary versus mandatory submissions and incorporate a submission method accordingly.

Voluntary Submissions: The University recommends that faculty incorporate voluntary submissions through Turnitin. Voluntary submissions require the student to agree to Turnitin's Terms of Use (http://www.turnitin.com/en_us/about-us/privacy-center/usage-policy) and submit their own assignments. By accepting the Terms of Use, students acknowledge and accept that Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted papers for the sole purpose of detecting plagiarism in further submitted works. If a student volunteers to submit their work, no changes are required to the assignment file.

Mandatory Submissions: Additional steps are required if a faculty member wants to mandate the use of Turnitin for one or more assignments. In order to comply with FERPA, instructors must insure that no personally identifiable information is included within the submitted assignment. This requires the student or instructor to remove any instance of the student's name, Campus-Wide ID (CWID), network username, email address, mailing address, phone number, or similar data from the electronic assignment file before submission to Turnitin.

2. The course syllabus needs to inform the students that Turnitin will be used by the instructor. The syllabus should include (1) the University's Academic Integrity statement with links to learn more about Academic Integrity at Pepperdine University; (2) an explanation of how Turnitin will be used within the course; (3) an explanation of the consequences of plagiarism and how the division, program, or school will investigate alleged offenses with links to the school's academic integrity information; and (4) links to guides for proper citation and information literacy to promote ethical scholarship. If the use of Turnitin is introduced after the distribution of the syllabus, a written notice must be given to the students by the instructor.

The following is a suggested syllabus statement regarding the use of Turnitin:

"This course may require electronic submission of essays, papers, or other written projects through the plagiarism detection service Turnitin (<http://www.turnitin.com>). Turnitin is an online plagiarism detection service that conducts textual similarity reviews of submitted papers. When papers are submitted to Turnitin, the service will retain a copy of the submitted work in the Turnitin database for the sole purpose of detecting plagiarism in future submitted works. Students retain copyright on their original course work. The use of Turnitin is subject to the Terms of Use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com website. You may request, in writing, to not have your papers submitted through Turnitin. If you choose to opt-out of the Turnitin submission process, you will need to provide additional research documentation and attach additional materials (to be clarified by the instructor) to help the instructor assess the originality of your work."

3. Courses (powered by Sakai) integrates with the Turnitin service allowing instructors to create Turnitin assignments within their class sites. Documentation is available at <http://community.pepperdine.edu/techlearn/tools/courses/turnitin/>. Pepperdine University subscribes to Turnitin's OriginalityCheck plagiarism detection software only. It does not license GradeMark, Peer Review, or any other service offered by Turnitin's parent company, iParadigms.
4. If a faculty member elects to use the service, it is strongly recommended that the faculty member requests all students to submit assignments through Turnitin. Doing so for all students establishes a culture of fairness by holding all students to the same ethical standard.
5. The University recommends offering students an alternative to electronic submission. Instructors may require students to opt-out in writing and then require additional hardcopy documentation to address any concerns or questions about the originality of their coursework.

Limits of Turnitin:

By itself, Turnitin should not be viewed as conclusive proof of plagiarism. The originality report could contain *false positives* where a passage is flagged as a warning but is not plagiarized. Alternatively, Turnitin may not flag papers that are indeed plagiarized, such as purchased original papers written by someone other than the student. Ultimately, it is up to the judgment of the faculty member to critically review the originality report and determine whether or not an assignment is plagiarized. Faculty can always perform their own research for plagiarism by using common Internet search engines like Google.