Postgraduate Research: Use of Turnitin for screening of PGR assessed work. From session 2023/24

Contents

This document sets out the process agreed by Graduate Board and the Progression and Examinations Group for the screening of PGR assessed work. It sets out the process agreed to ensure a consistent application and approach to the use of Turnitin for PGR assessed work across the University.

General Principles

1. All PGRs will be enrolled on, and expected to complete, the PGR version of the Academic Integrity Tutorial and Test via Minerva.

2. PGRs are required to submit their transfer report or thesis to GRAD. As part of the submission process all PGRs complete a declaration of academic integrity which includes confirmation that the work may be screened to verify the absence of plagiarised work.

3. All PGR work submitted for assessment will be submitted to Turnitin before the work is sent for examination. This includes (a) the transfer report and (b) the thesis submission.[1]

4. Turnitin will produce an "Originality Report". The originality report will be shared with the Transfer Panel/Thesis Examiners as part of the examination process. Where it is the judgement of the Transfer Panel/Examiners that there is an indication of potential plagiarism this should be reported to the to the Head of School, Director of PGR Studies and Graduate School immediately. Where the Director of PGR Studies is one of the assessors/examiners or the Supervisor, the Head of Graduate School should be informed.

5. Allegations of plagiarism will be reviewed by the School. Separate guidance is available to Schools to help with the review of allegations. After scrutiny at School level, and if concerns remain about the submission, the Head of School (or nominee) must arrange for the case to be investigated following the PGR Academic Misconduct Procedure. Separate guidance for Schools is available.

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[1] This applies to submissions for assessment made from September 2023 onwards

Use of Turnitin (Minerva) for PGR assessed work

6. PGRs must submit their transfer or thesis report for assessment using GRAD. Doctoral College Operations (DCO) will manage the process for retrieval of the transfer report/thesis from GRAD and submission to Minerva for the Turnitin screening. Submissions will be undertaken on a daily basis and DCO will aim to have the Turnitin Originality report available within 2 working days of submission of the transfer/thesis for examination.

7. Where a submission exceeds the maximum file size for upload to Turnitin (100M) DCO may need to compress files or ask for non-text content to be removed. DCO will contact the School and PGR on a case by case basis where this will be needed.

8. Thesis files are normally expected to be submitted as PDF, but in some cases[2] additional file formats may be submitted (.mp3, .mp4 .jpg, .jpeg or others). Text only (PDF or Word file) content will be submitted for screening.

9. The default settings for PGR submissions will be to exclude the transfer and thesis from being saved to the Turnitin database (the not store the papers in any repository option will be applied as standard to PGR submissions)[3]. By setting the **no repository** option as standard the work will not be stored in the Turnitin standard paper repository or the institution's paper repository.[4] This will mean that submissions will not be checked between PGRs at Leeds (or be checked against by other Institutions). The thesis submission will not match against an earlier transfer report, reducing the likelihood of the legitimate re-use of material from transfer being matched as possible plagiarised content. This will also mean that one thesis submitted for examination cannot be screened against another thesis submitted for examination. However the Turnitin screening will search open access repositories (including White Rose Etheses Online) and so a thesis submitted for examination will be screened against an earlier awarded thesis.

10. The following filters will be applied to all work screened:

    - The Exclude Quotes filter will be applied.[5]
    - The Exclude Bibliography filter will be applied[6].
    - The Exclude sources that are less than 1% filter will be applied.

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[2] including for practice-led PhD theses or supplementary material e.g. data sets

[3] "*If you select **no** repository, your students' papers will not be stored in the Turnitin standard paper repository or the institution's paper repository, therefore meaning that the papers will not be checked for collusion between students of the same or different institutions"* see Turnitin Guide

[4] If there are concerns with an individual thesis being screened via Turnitin e.g. due to contractual/sponsor agreements the Director of PGR Studies is asked to contact DCO well before the work is submitted for assessment.

[5] From the Turnitin guide: this applies where text has either inverted commas ("x") around it or text has been block indented.

[6] From the Turnitin guide: this applies to any references shown after a Bibliography or References heading

11. The Turnitin Originality Report will initially be shared by DCO as a PDF. However it is possible to give temporary access to staff members to Minerva/Turnitin area for purposes of investigation, which will allow access to the interactive version of the report (including links to sources etc). The Director of PGR Studies or Graduate School can make requests on an individual basis to DCO, and DCO will request access from IT, and arrange for access to be withdrawn at the end of the process.

Turnitin Originality Report

12. Turnitin will produce an "Originality Report". The report compares the PGR's submitted work to web pages, online journals and its own database of work that has already been submitted and highlights content that matches material elsewhere (with links to that content where possible). A percentage mark of non-original text is given. This is the 'similarity index'.

13. Consideration of potential plagiarism cannot rely on the Turnitin Similarity index (% match) alone. An academic judgement will be required whether there is potential plagiarism regardless of the percentage match indicated by the similarity index. There is no minimum % match over which cases are recommended for further investigation. No review or judgement on the Turnitin originality report/similarity index will have been undertaken by DCO. There will need to be academic judgement as to whether matched text is:

   a) Correctly quoted and referenced.
   b) Common phrases or terminology considered acceptable in the discipline. These matches can be discounted at academic discretion/judgement.
   c) The PGR's own published work[7]. Progression and Examinations Group policy allows for re-use of any material the PGR may have published during their candidature[8]. Any part of the thesis which has been taken from the PGR's other academic outputs will have been clearly identified as such at examination entry and on the title pages of the thesis. Re-use of published material in accordance with the policy is acceptable and would not be considered plagiarism/self-plagiarism.
   d) Where text has been paraphrased from the original source, the original source should be cited and it will then be a matter of academic judgment whether the text has been appropriately rewritten in the PGR's own words, or suggests possible plagiarism.
   e) Indicates possible plagiarism which requires further investigation.

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[7] Or own earlier work. Please see guidance later in this document.
[8] In accordance with the *Guidelines on the Use of Solely or Jointly-Authored Publications within a Thesis Submission w*ork must be reformatted and, *if necessary*, rewritten to ensure integration with the central arguments of the thesis, but it is recognised that it will sometimes be necessary for sections of already published material to be included word for word in the thesis, as long as all normal practices of citation are followed.

Sharing of originality reports with the transfer panel or examiners

14. The Turnitin originality report will be shared with the transfer Panel/Examiners alongside the other examination documentation sent. The Turnitin Originality Report is intended to assist the academic reviewing the work for assessment (Examiners or Transfer Panel). Where in the reading of the work submitted for assessment the examiners/panel suspect possible plagiarism the Turnitin Originality Report can be used to inform the consideration of whether or not possible plagiarism may have occurred.

15. Where it is the judgement of the Transfer Panel/Examiners that there is an indication of potential plagiarism this should be reported to the Head of School and Director of PGR Studies and Graduate School immediately. Where the Director of PGR Studies is one of the assessors/examiners or the Supervisor, the Head of Graduate School should be informed.

Sharing of originality reports with PGRs and Supervisors

16. Where concerns are raised, and a formal investigation is required, the Turnitin originality report will be shared with the School, Panel, PGR and their Supervisor(s) as part of that process.

17. In all other cases the transfer Turnitin originality report will be shared with the PGR and their Supervisor(s) after the transfer process is concluded as an additional training/learning experience. DCO will upload the Turnitin originality report to the project files in GRAD after the outcome of the transfer has been confirmed, and will notify that PGR and Supervisors that it is available. The thesis Turnitin originality report will not be shared.

Screening of work outside transfer and thesis

18. The formal Procedure relates only to PGRs when submitting work for assessment. They do not consider, for example, plagiarism in draft chapters submitted to the supervisor as part of the routine supervision contact. The expectation is that these will handled as a training matter, with appropriate support in academic writing signposted/provided and issues documented in GRAD. In any case of plagiarism in a draft of work the Supervisor(s) should also inform the DoPGRS who may also meet with the PGR. The Progress Support Process (PSP) may be instigated[9]. A Turnitin screening can be requested from DCO in such cases to support the PSP (or consideration of whether PSP may be required).

Document Version History

Author	Date	Version number
Graduate Board Progression and Examination Group (DCO)	August 2023	1.0

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[9] Plagiarism in drafts of work is included on the list of examples under PSP process