HE11 - Higher Education (HE) Originality Software Checking Policy

Policy Author:	Director of Curriculum	Policy Owner:	Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality
Approval Date:	July 2023	Review Date:	July 2025
Purpose of the Policy			
The College seeks to ensure that all HE students develop good academic practice, including the correct citation of material within assignments.			

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1. Reason for the Policy

1.1. The College's primary focus in using originality checking software (Turnitin) is to provide a means whereby students may enhance their knowledge and understanding of good academic practice in order to reference material correctly, thereby minimising the risk of submitting plagiarised work in summative assessments.

1.2. Turnitin may also be used to assist with plagiarism detection where there is concern that an assignment contains plagiarised material.

2. Policy Objectives

2.1. Staff should refer to *Turnitin* as originality checking software, not plagiarism detection software. Staff and students should be aware that *Turnitin* is not the only method of checking for originality and other means are readily available.

2.2. *Turnitin* compares assignments against its international database and produces an Originality Report. This report identifies the percentage of text which can be matched to any of the existing data, either as identical text or closely paraphrased material.

2.3. Staff and students should be made aware that *Turnitin* doesn't detect plagiarism as it cannot make decisions. For example, it does not distinguish between a quotation from a correctly acknowledged source or plagiarism or collusion or essential repetition. The Turnitin originality score and/or feedback is only one piece of evidence about a student's writing ability. Staff and students need to review and evaluate the score and/or feedback to ensure that the appropriate decision about performance and/or plagiarism is made.

2.4. Deciding whether plagiarism has occurred is a matter for the professional judgment by academic staff. Staff will exercise their professional judgement and follow agreed processes for determining the existence of plagiarism, accepting that Originality Reports are only tools for detecting textual similarities between compared works and do not conclusively determine the existence of plagiarism.

3. Policy

3.1. Students own the copyright to their work, but their formal acceptance of Weymouth College Regulations permits staff to submit student assignments to Turnitin endorsed externally hosted originality checking.

3.2. *Turnitin* is available to all academic staff teaching on HE courses, and it is recommended that, where appropriate, all programmes make use of *Turnitin* as an educational tool by allowing their students to submit at least some of their assignments to the system for both formative and summative purposes in each year.

3.3. Where a Module/Unit Leader has not elected to use *Turnitin* but there are concerns over the originality of a piece of work, it may be requested in electronic form for originality checking

3.4. *Turnitin* must be set up to allow at least one draft submission before the final submission. Each student will be expected to self-submit their own assignment on *Turnitin* and will have access to the Originality Reports arising from each submission.

3.5. In using Turnitin the Module/Unit Leader may determine the following:

- whether to check all Originality Reports for any given assignment and
- whether students are required to provide a copy of their *Turnitin* report when they submit their assignment. This requirement is recommended, and must be made clear in the assignment details requirement.

3.6. Programme and module/unit handbooks should clarify submission processes so that the approach to be adopted is clearly communicated to students before the

assignment is set.

3.7. University of Plymouth students only: In using *Turnitin,* staff must take steps to ensure that the University principle of anonymous marking is not undermined and therefore *Turnitin* reports should be anonymised for discussion with examiners.

Student Use of Turnitin
3.8. Students may submit their own assignments via the College VLE to Turnitin where the Module/Unit Leader has set this up.

3.9. Submitting the work of others, or having one's own work submitted by others using *Turnitin,* is expressly forbidden and is an assessment offence.

3.10. Students will only be able to use *Turnitin* for the specific assignments which have been registered on the system by the Module/Unit Leader responsible for the assignment.

3.11. Once work has been submitted to *Turnitin* it becomes part of the international database that subsequent works are checked against.

3.12. Standard information will be made available to students on-line.

4. Responsibility

Director of Curriculum & Quality

Definitions:	As above	Who Needs to Know?	• All College HE staff • HE Students
Related Policies and Procedures:	HE Assessment Policy HE Academic Offences Policy	Approval Date:	July 2023
This policy was approved and adopted by: *Julia Howe* **Julia Howe** **Principal**			