

# Faculty Guidelines for Using Turnitin.com to Detect Plagiarism

## Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the voluntary use of Turnitin.com, an online service that can be used to detect and prevent plagiarism in student assignments.

## Summary

It is in the interest of Geneseo's academic mission that every student adheres to the highest standards of scholarly integrity. Visit the Office of the Dean's website for information about the [College's Academic Dishonesty Policy and Procedures](#). In a case of suspected plagiarism, faculty should refer to this policy and proceed accordingly.

Turnitin is a plagiarism-detection software that compares a student's assignment to every document in its database (which includes all previously submitted Geneseo papers if desired by the faculty) and on the Internet. Geneseo faculty are not obligated or required to use Turnitin. Turnitin is simply a tool that is available for the community to utilize. Faculty members are strongly urged to use Turnitin in order to help students realize the difference between good and poor citation practices. It will also help students avoid the pitfalls of plagiarism through the use of Originality Reports.

- Turnitin can be used to check lab reports, essays, research papers, or any written assignment.
- By using this tool, faculty reduce the amount of "detective" work they conduct.
- Turnitin ensures fairness and equity in plagiarism allegations, because every paper is checked, not just suspicious papers.

## Policy

In all classes, faculty must notify their students that the Turnitin service may be used. The language below should be in the academic policies section of the syllabus.

*Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to [Turnitin.com](#) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the [Turnitin.com](#) reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the [Turnitin.com](#) service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the [Turnitin.com](#) site.*

Faculty should offer students either an opt-in option. A recommended statement (modified according to the professor's specific use of Turnitin in a class) is as follows:

*Geneseo has a licensing agreement with Turnitin, an online service to help prevent student plagiarism. As part of this course I will be using Turnitin at my discretion to determine the originality of your work. If your work is submitted to Turnitin, it will be stored in the Turnitin database. You have the right to refuse either to submit your work to Turnitin or have the university do so; availing yourself of this right will not negatively impact your success in the course. If you do not wish to use Turnitin you must notify me by e-mail within two weeks of today's date. If you object to the use of Turnitin, I will use other procedures to assess originality.*

When a paper is evaluated, Turnitin provides originality reports which tell you that text in the evaluated project or paper is similar to or identical to text Turnitin has in its database. Faculty must still evaluate the quality of the report independently and determine if the parts identified by Turnitin that are similar or identical, are actually plagiarized text. This is because all matches are shown, even those where students cited properly. As a result, faculty must critique the report they receive, use their best judgment and follow University policy before approaching a student about possible plagiarism.

Similarly, if a paper is reported as "original" by Turnitin, that is not necessarily airtight evidence that the paper is original. Instead, it may mean that the student plagiarized from a work that is not available in the Turnitin database. No database is entirely comprehensive and many sources are not digitally available. Therefore, plagiarism can occur and be undetectable by services such as Turnitin.

Faculty who need assistance setting up Turnitin in their courses should [contact CIT](#) directly.

## Contact

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