Frequently Asked Questions

What is originality?
Originality is a highly valued trait of written work in an academic setting. Original writing should include:
- The writer’s individual perspective
- Unique insights and ideas on topics
- A personal academic voice
- Clear synthesis of information
- A specific alignment with the particular assignment

What is Turnitin?
Turnitin is a tool that checks submitted papers for originality. Turnitin highlights passages in a student’s paper that match other sources, including books, articles, online materials, and other students’ papers. Matches may be harmless and coincidental (like matching references, forms, templates, and assignment instructions) or may be significant (like plagiarism and inappropriate recycling).

Where do I access Turnitin?
Turnitin is accessed directly through the in-class Waypoint grading system. Students have the option to check their assignment in Turnitin or to submit their assignment for grading. Students are strongly encouraged to check their work in Turnitin before submitting it for grading.

What is the difference between the “Originality Check Only” submission and the “Submit for Grading” submission?
In the Waypoint grading system, the “originality check only” submission option allows you to submit your paper for a Turnitin originality report. The results will then be made available through the “Click Here to View Report” option that will appear once the check is complete. It may take several minutes or more for the report to generate. Please give yourself time to use the tool and be patient.

The “submit for grading” submission option should only be used when you are ready for your paper to be graded. Once a “Final” submission is made, the Turnitin feature may be unavailable. Assignments submitted as “originality check only” will not be available to your instructor and will not be graded. Please be sure to submit your assignment for grading after you’ve utilized the Turnitin report and have revised your work.

How do I read the Turnitin originality report?
You can view the originality report through the link in Waypoint. You will find a matching percentage, a list of matching materials, and a highlighted version of your assignment. Each highlight indicates an incident of unoriginal writing, which may or may not indicate plagiarism. You should check each highlighted area to ensure academic honesty. Look for proper quotation marks and block quote formatting as well as accurate and complete in-text citations. Your reference list will likely be highlighted because many other people have cited the same source(s) and have therefore written the same reference citation(s). For more information, review the tutorial HelpNow! Video.
Can I be cited for plagiarism if the Turnitin report shows no matches?
Evidence of matching or plagiarism is likely to appear on the Turnitin report; however, evidence of academic dishonesty may come from another source. Turnitin is only one tool to identify issues of academic dishonesty. Students who have plagiarized are subject to disciplinary action, whether Turnitin identified the issue or not.

Why is my paper a 90-100% match?
If you have previously submitted the assignment in another class, your assignment may appear as a 90-100% match to the prior submission. The act of re-submitting an assignment in another class is academic recycling. You must contact your instructor before attempting to submit recycled work. For specific guidelines and information, refer to the recycling policy outlined in the Ashford Catalog > Student Rights and Responsibilities.

If you have not recycled content from a prior assignment, please check your work and refer to the Turnitin Student Guide document.

Where can I get more information?
- The Turnitin Student Guide
- The Writing Center
- Contact your Instructor
- Contact your Advisor
- The Submitting a Paper Through Waypoint Video
- The Interpreting a Turnitin Originality Report Video