The University of Oklahoma UOSA Honor Council

Thoughts for Students and Faculty on Turnitin.com

OU has joined a growing number of colleges and universities that use Turnitin.com, an online plagiarism detection service. Turnitin works by comparing an uploaded paper to web sites, scholarly articles available online, and all previously uploaded papers. It provides a report that highlights similarities and gives an overall numerical "originality score."

Turnitin should be looked upon as an opportunity for faculty and students to partake in OU's continuing pursuit of academic excellence. We hope members of the OU community view Turnitin as a beneficial way to maintain academic integrity.

In a perfect world, no one would need a service like this; but until then, we hope Turnitin will prove a useful tool for students and professors. Toward that end, we propose two principles:

<u>Integrity should be everyone's concern in every class</u>

For professors:

- Turnitin should help maintain an atmosphere of trust and honesty in the classroom, not just catch misconduct.
- We hope professors who use Turnitin will announce that they are doing so.
- Reasonable steps will be taken to help students understand the rules of writing and citing.
- We hope professors will give students the chance to submit their papers to Turnitin whenever it is reasonable.
- Personally identifiable student information should not be included in papers submitted to Turnitin.

For students:

- The same standards of integrity need to apply whether the professor is using Turnitin or not.
- We hope students can always expect that doing honest work will not put them at a disadvantage in any class.
- Students should support all reasonable steps to promote integrity and, where necessary, detect and report misconduct to maintain the value and quality of their degree from the University of Oklahoma.

Turnitin should be used fairly and appropriately

For professors:

- Turnitin should be used consistently – for example, for all papers or according to a random schedule – and that students will not be singled out except where there is reasonable cause to do so.
- Results from Turnitin should be interpreted carefully. Several minor coincidences of word usage should not be labeled as plagiarism.
- Students should have access to appropriate technical support when uploading their own papers.
- We hope the use of Turnitin will not significantly delay the return of papers.

For students:

- The focus should be on writing good papers, not "avoiding plagiarism" by focusing on the numerical originality score. **Students entering OU should already know the difference between writing and copying.**
- When students have the opportunity to use Turnitin before submitting a paper for a grade, it should be used to catch mistakes and citation problems – not in order to change copied words piecemeal in quest of perfect "originality."
- Personally identifiable student information should not be included in papers submitted to Turnitin.