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| Staff Use of Originality Checking Software | |
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| Classification: | **Policy** |
| Version Number: | 4 |
| Status: | Approved |
| Approved by: | Senate |
| Approval Date: | 01/06/2017 |
| Effective from: | 01/09/2017 |
| Next Review Date: | - |
| Document Author: | Teaching Excellence Academy |
| Document Owner: | Quality Support Service |
| Department/Contact: | Quality Support Service |
| Collaborative provision: | Not mandatory |
| Related documents: | - |
| Published location: | Quality and Standards website - Assessment [Quality and Standards | University of Hull](https://www.hull.ac.uk/choose-hull/university-and-region/key-documents/quality) |
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# Introduction

* 1. Originality checking software1 can detect potential instances of plagiarism and incorrect source referencing. Academic judgement is an essential element in the process of detecting plagiarism and the interpretation of originality reports.
  2. Originality checking software can work in several ways. It can compare the content of a student written assignment with material in the software database. The software produces an originality report that highlights matches with text in the database, though with some exceptions such as formulae and software coding. Therefore, the software only indicates the extent to which an assessment contains text that matches other text within the database. This does not, in and of itself, indicate an academic offence, since the output of text matching may include text that is copied and accurately quoted, text that has been copied and then manipulated to fall short of a direct copy, and text that must be copied in order to be accurate (e.g. titles and format elements). Neither is it the case that text-matching against database material will identify all areas of potential plagiarism.
  3. New tools in originality checking software are also able to distinguish between students’ writing styles and can detect submitted essays from ‘essay factories’ or ghost-written essays through small and subtle changes in the students’ writing style and language.
  4. It is possible for originality checking software to check for originality in lines of code and programming repositories. This software has a specific purpose and is used to check for copied and pasted lines of code between students in the same peer group.
  5. Staff and students should be aware that originality checking software and the originality report generated do not represent the only method of detecting plagiarism nor the only evidence that can be provided in a suspected case of academic misconduct.
  6. The policy sets out the University’s expectations regarding the use of the originality checking software. The University is committed to ensuring that all students are treated equitably and consistently and to upholding the highest level of academic integrity and rigour.

1 Originality checking software comprises of University approved systems that allow students to submit work for originality checking purposes. These will be under licence to the University of Hull. A full list of approved services and support for such services is available from the Teaching Excellence Academy (TEA) website.

# Principles and Practice

* 1. The policy is not mandatory for collaborative provision. Where originality checking software is used by Partner Institutions there **should** be a single policy in place. [It should be noted that staff at partner colleges are not permitted to use University software for originality checking under the terms of the University of Hull licence, although their students may].
  2. Where text-matching is used as the basis on which an issue of academic concern or offence (related to either collusion or plagiarism) is provisionally identified, or as confirmation of the extent of copying from a pre-identified source or other essay, it should be used only as an indicator and not as a substitute for academic judgement.
  3. All instances of academic misconduct are regulated by the University’s Regulations (principally Regulations governing Academic Misconduct).
  4. The production and submission of any piece of assessed written work, regardless of which tool is used to check originality, remains the sole responsibility of the student. That is, students are expected to ensure all sources are appropriately acknowledged within their own work and in line with academic unit practices.
  5. Originality checking tools can be used as a developmental tool to support students in gaining a greater understanding of good academic practice. Students **must** have the ability to submit draft assignments to originality checking tools via the institutional VLE during the period for which they are eligible to receive a Caution under the Academic Misconduct Regulations for every summative assignment in the module where applicable. Academic Units **must** make clear to students the process for utilising draft submissions.
  6. Academic Units **must** ensure that students receive a range of appropriate guidance and support regarding good academic practice, instructions for the use of originality checking tools (for example during induction for both new and returning students) and guidance on the interpretation of originality reports.
  7. All forms of summative written assessment **must** be screened using originality checking software where this is practicable. Where it is considered that screening via originality checking software is not practicable it **should** be declared in the module specification and approved as part of the usual module approval process.
  8. All summative written assessment screened using originality checking software should allow the students to view the output of the originality report.

**Version Control**

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| **Version** | **Author** | **Date approved** | **Relevant sections** |
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