Internal Examiner: Instructions for examination of research degree thesis using Turnitin

- The University requires that all research degree theses must be analysed using TurnitinUK when submitted for examination. To achieve this, a Blackboard shell has been created entitled 'RESTTfRS Turnitin for Research Students' ('Turnitin for Research Students 2' from September 2018) which you can find in the module list of your Blackboard homepage. If you do not have access to the blackboard shell 'RESTTfRS Turnitin for Research Students' please email your username to onlinetraining@dmu.ac.uk
- It is the responsibility of the Internal Examiner to check the similarity report generated from their students submitted thesis and act on the result accordingly.
- Most staff are already familiar with TurnitinUK, but for those who are not, TurnitinUK is an academic plagiarism checker program. It highlights similarities of text within a written document that could be regarded as a possible plagiarism offence. The program works by searching for identical text that has already been published in publically available sources, such as: academic journals, books, or documents available on the web. From this search TurnitinUK produces a similarity report that shows where the matched similarities are within the text, and identifies the source to which they are matched too.
- Students are required to submit their thesis to the Thesis Submission option within 'RESTTfRS Turnitin for Research Students' ('Turnitin for Research Students 2' from September 2018) on Blackboard within 3-days of submitting their written thesis to the Graduate School Office.
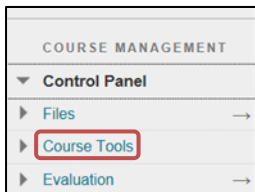
Guidelines on plagiarism:

- There is no threshold figure for the similarity score which reliably indicates evidence of plagiarism or not. In general terms, a figure below 20% is unlikely to indicate widespread plagiarism throughout the document, but even that does not discount the possibility of clear plagiarism in a small sub-section of the document.
- The key is to look for the distribution of coloured highlighting of the student's text. TurnitinUK operates by identifying any sequence of 7 words within the student's text which have previously been published on a public domain, such as on the web or in a published article. Given the volume of published material, it is not unexpected that occasionally phrases within text submitted by students will coincide with those already in the public domain.
- In such cases the highlighted text will consist of short sequences scattered throughout the student's document. This is clearly linguistic coincidence and not plagiarism and students can therefore be reassured that although TurnitinUK has identified a degree of similarity between their work and published material, this would not be construed as plagiarism by an examiner.
- If the sequence of words highlighted in the Similarity report extends to several sentences, or worse whole paragraphs or pages, then it is highly likely that the text has been copied from another source. In such cases, the first thing to do is to check the original source and to make sure that the student is not the author of the original source (e.g. when a student has already published parts of their research). Students cannot be guilty of plagiarising their own publications and in such cases there would be no accusation of plagiarism.
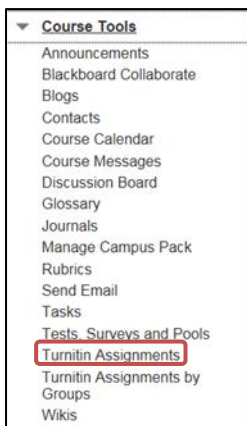
Choice of Actions:

- If the original source is not the student themselves and has not been appropriately attributed in the student's text, then it would be likely to be viewed as plagiarism by examiners. In such cases send a copy of the Similarity report to the Director of the Graduate School before contacting the External examiner. If your suspicion of plagiarism is confirmed then the examination process will be stopped and the Graduate School Office will advise on further action.
- If you are satisfied that the thesis shows no evidence of plagiarism, either send a copy of the Similarity report to the External Examiner together with your conclusion or take a copy to the viva so that the External examiner is informed of the outcome ahead of the viva examination.

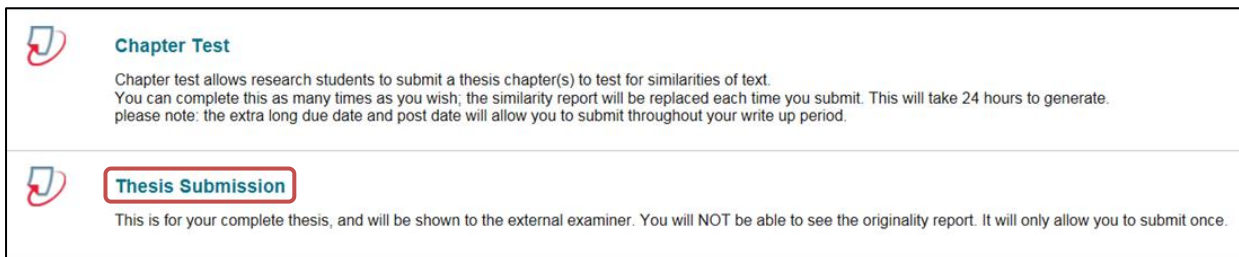**Finding and saving the Turnitin Similarity Report on Blackboard**

- Log into Blackboard
- Go to the Turnitin for Research Students course
- Click the Control Panel link within the course
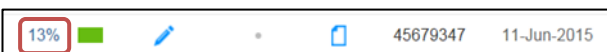- Select Course Tools

COURSE MANAGEMENT

▼ **Control Panel**
- ▶ Files ⟶
- ▶ Course Tools
- ▶ Evaluation ⟶

- Choose Turnitin Assignments

▼ **Course Tools**
Announcements
Blackboard Collaborate
Blogs
Contacts
Course Calendar
Course Messages
Discussion Board
Glossary
Journals
Manage Campus Pack
Rubrics
Send Email
Tasks
Tests, Surveys and Pools
Turnitin Assignments
Turnitin Assignments by Groups
Wikis

- Choose the Thesis Submission Assignment

Chapter Test
Chapter test allows research students to submit a thesis chapter(s) to test for similarities of text.
You can complete this as many times as you wish; the similarity report will be replaced each time you submit. This will take 24 hours to generate.
please note: the extra long due date and post date will allow you to submit throughout your write up period.

Thesis Submission
This is for your complete thesis, and will be shown to the external examiner. You will NOT be able to see the originality report. It will only allow you to submit once.

- This will display all submissions
- Click on Author to list students alphabetically

Thesis Submission
INBOX | NOW VIEWING: NEW PAPERS ▼   PAGE: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 NEXT

| Submit | export | Online Grading Report | Roster Sync | Edit assignment settings | Email non-submitters

| ☐ | AUTHOR | | TITLE | SIMILARITY | GRADE | RESPONSE | FILE | PAPER ID | DATE ▲ |

- Click on the percentage score to view the student's Similarity Report

| 13% | ▬ | ✏ | · | | 45679347 | 11-Jun-2015 |

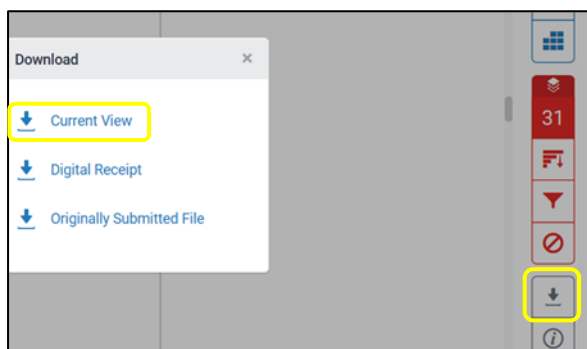- This will open the Turnitin Document Viewer

- Click on the Red percentage number to view the Match Overview

- This will open the Match Overview
- Sources are listed with the highest matches first. These primary sources have the closest match to the student assignment text. These sources will indicate where they have come from i.e Internet or a student paper
- Matches found within the student originality report are colour coded and hyperlinked and matched to those listed to the sources found on the right panel and are numbered based on the colour code within the student assignment itself so you can see where the text matches are

- Click on the grey arrow, then choose Current View to download and save the Similarity Report

Detailed instructions on how to locate, check, and save the Similarity report are also avaliable within the Turnitin Staff Guide on the CELT Hub http://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/turnitin/turnitin-staff-guide-updated-february-2014/