Things for Instructors to Know About Using Turnitin

Learning to Use Turnitin

• Turnitin is now available at Cornell for instructors to access via Blackboard.
• Instructions for using Turnitin are available at http://cit.cornell.edu/services/turnitin (click on the “How to... for Instructors” link). No time for reading instructions? Here are the 3 basic steps:

  1. The instructor creates a “Turnitin assignment” in Blackboard.
  2. Students submit their papers to the Blackboard Turnitin assignment. Turnitin scans the student submission, compares it to a large database of student work, publications, and materials on the Internet, and generates an “Originality Report” detailing how much of a student’s work matches work in the database.
  3. Student submissions and Originality Reports are made available in the “Turnitin Assignments” tool, located in the Course Tools area in the Blackboard Control Panel. If you grade assignments using this tool, the grades are automatically posted to the Blackboard Grade Center.
• A link to a schedule of Turnitin training and information sessions is available at http://cit.cornell.edu/services/turnitin.

Teaching with Turnitin

• The “Originality Report” alone cannot determine plagiarism. The report flags matched text but it does not tell you whether this matched text has been used and cited correctly. Similarly, the report does not pick up many instances of plagiarized paraphrasing. Thus, while Turnitin can detect plagiarism, it can not by itself teach students how to use sources well or correctly.
• Turnitin can serve as an effective deterrent to plagiarism but may be problematic if not incorporated into a larger educational approach of promoting and teaching academic integrity. Students’ attitudes toward Turnitin have varied markedly depending upon whether their instructors used Turnitin solely as a detection tool or rather as an educational tool.
• Turnitin can be used as a teaching tool, for example, by allowing your students to submit their own work and view their “Originality Reports.” You might also allow your students to submit their papers to Turnitin while still in draft stages so that they can check and correct their papers before submitting them to you.

Providing Notice to Students

• If you use Turnitin, it is strongly recommended that you provide students with advance written notice. Sample notice is available at http://cit.cornell.edu/services/turnitin/studentnotice.cfm.