

## PLAGIARISM: THE WARNING SIGNS

A HIGH LOW 'SIMILARITY' SCORE IN TURNITIN

UNEVEN WRITING

'LOOSE' REFERENCING

INCORRECT OR BIZARRE USE OF WORDS

INCONSISTENT USE OF TENSE

INCONSISTENT FORMATTING

UNREFERENCED FACTS, IDEAS, DEFINITIONS ETC

### Identifying Plagiarism While Marking

**A high or low 'similarity' score in Turnitin:** Turnitin produces a similarity report based on matched text (similarities) between the assessment task submitted and a database of previously submitted work, websites and other sources. This is not a plagiarism report! However, in general a high or very low similarity report is worth investigating.

**Uneven Writing:** This is when some phrases or sentences stick out as being outside the student's normal academic writing style (reviewing the PELA writing task can help in this instance or a student's writing style in a Discussion Forum). It could be the use of unusual words/technical terms not expected by the student which means that these phrases have been copied directly from someone else's work.

**'Loose' Referencing:** This is seen when there are long paragraphs with multiple in-text references at the end of the paragraph. This may indicate that the student has failed to identify which material is original and which has been taken from elsewhere.

**Incorrect or bizarre use of words:** If words are used incorrectly, or in an unusual way, this may indicate that the student has used a paraphrasing tool such as 'Spinbot' to re-write text/paraphrase a piece of text e.g. (get the sample from Deb Sundin last semester)

**Inconsistent Formatting:** strange use of capitals, font style, and font size can be signs that text has been cut and pasted from elsewhere.

**Inconsistent use of Tense:** this can be an indication that text has been taken from another source or another author has worked on the assessment task. It can also be an indication of low levels of English language proficiency.

**Unreferenced facts, ideas, definitions etc.:** if the assessment task includes knowledge outside of the learning material or paraphrased text that do not include in-text references, then this suggests that the ideas, arguments, discussion points have been taken from somewhere else without crediting the source. This is the most common form of plagiarism in new students who are still learning about referencing conventions.

## CONTRACT CHEATING: THE WARNING SIGNS

A LOW 'SIMILARITY' SCORE IN TURNITIN

UNRELATED WORK

HIGHER STANDARD OF ACADEMIC WRITING

WRONG UNFAMILIAR REFERENCE STYLE

DOCUMENT PROPERTIES

UNUSUAL REFERENCES

Contract Cheating can be difficult to detect when marking but there are some triggers that can highlight if a student may have submitted work that is not their own and purchased their assessment task or had someone else write all or part of the assessment task.

### Identifying Contract Cheating while Marking

**A low Similarity Score in Turnitin:** Turnitin does not identify some forms of copied, purchased, or reused material, and can sometimes give a false positive. In general a low similarity report is always worth investigating if contract cheating is suspected.

**Unrelated Work:** Content that is included but not covered in the Unit or discussed in tutorials, or the approach to the assessment is not as outlined in the assessment guidelines or as discussed in tutorials.

**A Higher Standard of Work:** The standard of academic writing or written English is much higher than expected. For example in previous assessments, discussion boards, e-mail or spoken English.

**Incorrect or an Unfamiliar Reference Style:** a reference style that is not commonly used at ECU or as outlined in the assessment guidelines.

**Unexpected References:** unexpected or unfamiliar citations or they may not be subscribed to by the ECU Library or available from Google Scholar. References may also be old or there is an overuse of books.

**Document Properties:** (online submissions) the author of the document is not the student. [Go to 'File' then 'Properties'].

#### What to do if you identify a potential case of Academic Misconduct when marking:

All potential cases of academic misconduct should be lodged in the 'Lodge a 'Case' portal accessible from the Staff Academic Integrity Website: <https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/learning/academic-integrity/overview>

The Student Academic Integrity Coordinator will process the case to the relevant Designated Officer for investigation. The Academic Integrity Procedures along with the Rules and Policy are available from the above.