# Access to Plagiarism Detection Software (Turnitin) Policy

**Policy title:** Access to plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) policy
**Document reference:** LAAT-ACAD-POL-TURN
**Department / Function:** Academic Quality and Standards
**Owner:** Academic Dean, Dr Manoj Ponugubati
**Oversight Committee:** Academic Quality Panel
**Approving body:** Academic Board
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**Supersedes:** N/A

## Regulatory Alignment with Office for Students (OfS) Conditions

The Access to Plagiarism Detection Software (Turnitin) Policy forms part of the London Academy for Applied Technology's (LAAT) academic governance and assessment framework and supports the maintenance of academic integrity, fairness, and transparency in assessment practices.

The policy aligns with **OfS Condition B4 (Assessment and Awards)** by ensuring that assessment processes are robust, secure, and consistent, and that academic standards are protected through the appropriate use of plagiarism detection software. By providing staff and students with access to Turnitin, the policy supports the identification and management of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct, thereby safeguarding the validity and credibility of assessment outcomes and awards.

The policy also supports **OfS Condition B1 (Academic Experience)** by promoting good academic practice and supporting student learning through the use of Turnitin as a formative and educational tool. Students are enabled to develop their academic writing skills, understand proper referencing practices, and engage with feedback that supports improvement and academic development.

In addition, the policy aligns with **OfS Condition C1 (Consumer Protection)** by ensuring that students are provided with clear, accessible, and accurate information about the use of plagiarism detection software, including how submissions are processed, how similarity reports are used, and how outcomes may inform academic decision-making. The policy promotes transparency and consistency in assessment-related processes and supports students' understanding of institutional expectations.

This policy is informed by relevant sector reference points, including the **UK Quality Code for Higher Education**, and is implemented through LAAT's academic governance and quality assurance arrangements to ensure effective oversight, consistent application, and continuous enhancement.

## Terms of Reference

## 1. Purpose

This policy sets out LAAT's approach to providing access to plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) for students and staff. The policy supports academic integrity, transparent assessment practices, and compliance with partner university regulations.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to:
**Who**
- All students registered on Plymouth Marjon University programmes delivered by LAAT
- Academic and professional staff involved in assessment, marking, and academic quality

**What**
- All summative and formative assessments submitted via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
- Use of Turnitin similarity reports for educational and quality assurance purposes

**Where**
- All LAAT delivery sites and approved online learning environments

Where there is any conflict between this policy and Plymouth Marjon University regulations, the University's regulations shall take precedence.

## 3. Definitions

**Plagiarism Detection Software** – Software used to compare submitted work against existing sources to identify text similarity.
**Turnitin** – The plagiarism detection software approved for use by Plymouth Marjon University and LAAT.
**Similarity Report** – A report generated by Turnitin showing matched text and a similarity percentage.

## 4. Principles

Access to plagiarism detection software is underpinned by the following principles:
- **Educational use** – Turnitin is used to support learning and good academic practice

- **Fairness** – All students are subject to the same assessment checks
- **Transparency** – Students are informed about how Turnitin is used
- **Academic integrity** – Similarity reports support consistent academic standards
- **Proportionality** – Similarity scores are interpreted carefully and contextually

## 5. Academic Integrity Principles

**5.1**

LAAT is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity in learning, teaching, assessment, and research. Our approach is underpinned by the core values of honesty, integrity, responsibility, trust, respect, and fairness, and is aligned with the academic regulations and expectations of the University of Plymouth.

Academic integrity at LAAT is guided by the following principles:

**a) Responsibility for own work**

Each student is responsible for ensuring that all submitted work is their own, except where collaboration is explicitly permitted, and that sources are appropriately acknowledged in accordance with accepted academic conventions.

**b) Respect for the work of others**

Students and staff will treat the intellectual work of others with respect, ensuring that ideas, data, words, and creative outputs are used ethically and referenced correctly.

**c) Developmental and supportive approach**

LAAT recognises that students may require guidance and compassionate support in developing good academic practice, particularly during the early stages of higher education or when transitioning into UK HE study. The College is committed to providing academic skills support, guidance on referencing, and education on the ethical use of sources, including digital tools and AI technologies.

Teaching and support staff will model and actively promote academic integrity through their professional practice.

**d) Assessment design**

Teaching staff are encouraged to design assessments that promote originality, critical thinking, and authentic learning, and that minimise opportunities for breaches of academic integrity, including inappropriate use of AI tools.

**e) No credit for work breaching regulations**

No academic credit will be awarded for work that is found to breach LAAT or University of Plymouth academic integrity regulations.

**f) Consistent application of penalties**

All proven cases of academic misconduct, including plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating,

or inappropriate use of AI, will be subject to penalties in accordance with the relevant Academic Misconduct Policy.

## 5.2 Poor Academic Practice (PAP)

### 5.2.1 Definition

Academic poor practice is defined as work that falls below the expected standards of academic integrity due to **limited academic skills, understanding, or experience**, rather than deliberate or premeditated dishonesty. It typically arises from a student's lack of familiarity with the conventions and expectations of higher education study.

Examples of academic poor practice may include (but are not limited to):

• Incomplete, inconsistent, or incorrect citations or referencing
• Attempts to indicate that content or concepts are not the student's own, but doing so inadequately
• One or two sentences of direct copying from a source without proper acknowledgement
• Over-reliance on sources, limiting the demonstration of independent analysis or critical engagement
• Inappropriate paraphrasing

The following **do not** constitute academic poor practice and will normally be treated as **academic misconduct**:

i) Where a passage of text closely replicates a published source with only minor word changes, this will be treated as copying and therefore academic misconduct.

ii) Where a substantial portion of text mirrors the structure, sequence, or detailed organisation of a published source, even if wording has been altered, this will be treated as not being the student's original work.

### 5.2.2 Consideration of Context

In determining whether an instance constitutes academic poor practice, the following factors will be taken into account:

a) **Stage of study**
Students in their first term of higher education (typically Levels 3 and 4), or Level 7 students without recent experience of UK higher education, may not yet have developed the full range of academic skills required to demonstrate good academic practice.

b) **Intent**
Instances of unintended plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, or inappropriate use of sources (including AI tools) occurring during the early stages of study will normally be

regarded as academic poor practice, provided there is **no evidence of intentional or premeditated dishonesty**.

### 5.2.3 Management of Academic Poor Practice

Work identified as academic poor practice will normally be addressed through the marking and feedback process, rather than through formal academic misconduct procedures. Feedback should be constructive and developmental, aimed at supporting the student to improve their academic skills and understanding of integrity expectations.

Students retain the right to appeal against confirmed assessment results in accordance with LAAT's **Academic Appeals Policy**, including Appeals against Assessment Board decisions.

## 6. Governance, Committees and Oversight

**6.1 Governance Oversight**

Overall oversight of the use of plagiarism detection software is provided by the **Academic Board**, with delegated monitoring through the **Academic Quality Panel**.

**6.2 Reporting and Assurance**

- Use of Turnitin and trends in similarity reports are reviewed as part of academic quality assurance processes
- Issues of concern may be escalated through academic governance panels
- Use similarity reports to improve academic writing and referencing

## 7. Policy Statement

**7.1 Access to Turnitin**

- All students are provided access to Turnitin through the VLE for relevant assessments.
- Access is provided for both formative and summative assessment, where appropriate.

**7.2 Use of Similarity Reports**

- Similarity reports are used as a **supporting tool**, not as sole evidence of academic misconduct.
- Academic judgement is required when interpreting similarity scores.
- A high similarity percentage does not automatically indicate plagiarism.

**7.3 Academic Misconduct**

- Where concerns arise, cases are considered under the **Academic Misconduct Policy**.
- Similarity reports may form part of the evidence considered during investigations.

**7.4 Data Protection**

- Student work submitted to Turnitin is processed in accordance with data protection legislation and institutional policies.

## 8. Procedures at Partner Organisations

LAAT applies Plymouth Marjon University's approved processes for the use of plagiarism detection software. Access, data handling, and academic decision-making are subject to university oversight.

## 9. Regulatory and Partner Alignment

This policy aligns with:

- **Plymouth Marjon University Student Regulations Framework (SRF 2024–25)**
- **Office for Students Conditions**:
  - Condition B – Quality and Standards
  - Condition C - Consumer Protection
  - Condition E – Management and Governance
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education

## 10. Monitoring, Compliance and Review

**Monitoring**

- Use of Turnitin is monitored through academic quality processes
- Oversight provided by the Academic Quality Panel

**Non-compliance**

- Managed through academic governance and disciplinary procedures

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed every **two years**, or sooner if required by changes to partner university regulations or assessment practices.

## 11. Responsible People/Roles include

- **Academic Dean (Policy Owner)**: Dr Manoj Ponugubati
  Overall accountability for policy implementation
- **Academic Quality**: Dr Vishwanath Kokkonda
  administration, guidance, and procedural oversight
- **Program Lead**: Mr. Amarjeet Singh
  Implementation, compliance and coordination
- **Assessment Support officer**: Ms Nuzhat Rifa
  Monitors email and notifies the dean

**List of people and contacts**

| Role | Name | Contact email |
|---|---|---|
| Chair – Academic Dean | Dr Manoj Ponugubati | manoj@laat.ac.uk |
| Head of Academic Quality | Dr Vishwanath Kokkonda | vishwanath.kokkonda@laat.ac.uk |
| Program Lead | Mr Amarjeet Singh | amarjeet.singh@laat.ac.uk |
| Assessment Officer | Ms Moluk All Nakash | moluk@laat.ac.uk |

## 12. List of Documents

- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Assessment Regulations and Procedures
- Data Protection Policy

## 13. Evidence

- Academic misconduct policy
- Academic integrity policy
- Assessment regulations and procedures
- Data Protection policy

| Evidence Item | Purpose/What is demonstrates | Relevant OfS condition(s) |
|---|---|---|
| Academic misconduct policy | Defines academic misconduct, investigation procedures, decision-making processes, and sanctions, ensuring consistency, fairness, and protection of academic standards. | B4 (Assessment and awards), C1 (fair treatment of students), E2 (management & governance) |
| Academic integrity policy | Sets clear expectations for academic honesty, good academic practice, and student responsibilities, promoting a positive academic culture and prevention of misconduct | B1 (academic experience), B4 (assessment standards), C1 (transparent information) |
| Assessment regulations and procedures | Establishes consistent rules for assessment design, submission, marking, moderation, progression, and awards, ensuring reliability and fairness of assessment outcomes | B4 (assessment and awards), B1 (academic experience), E2 (management & governance) |
| Data protection policy | Ensures lawful, fair, and secure handling of personal data, including assessment, appeals, and misconduct records, protecting student rights and institutional compliance. | C1 (consumer protection), E2 (effective management and control), E5 (regulatory compliance. |