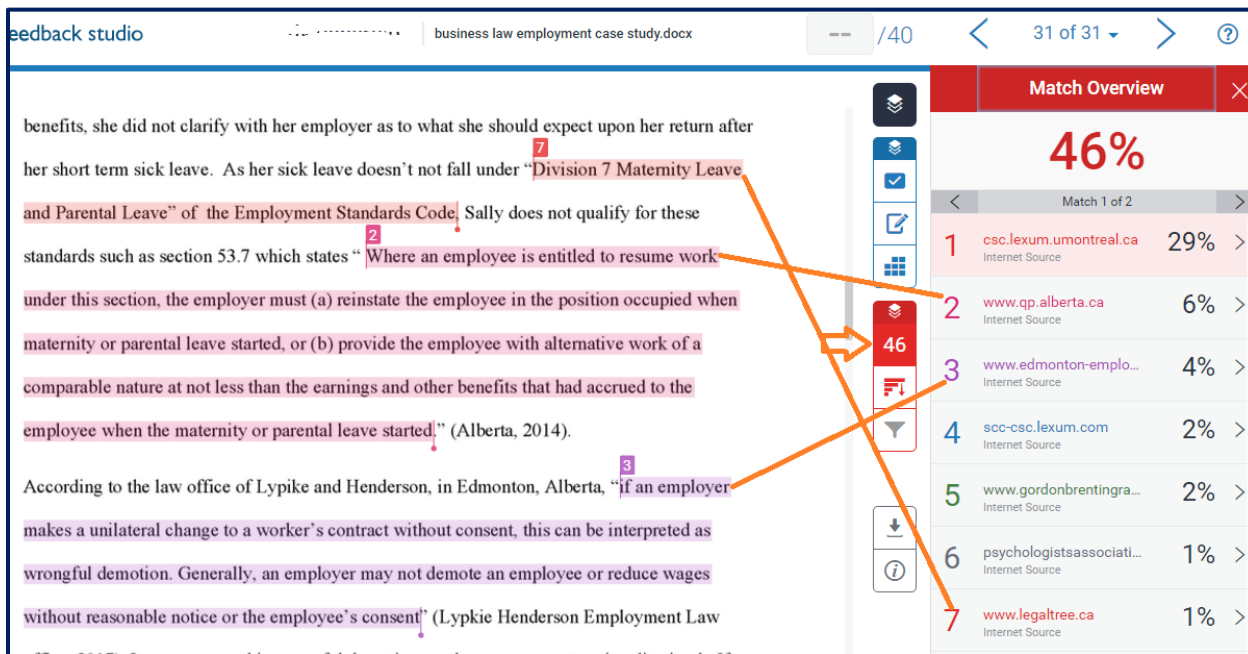# Interpret Turnitin Similarity Reports

Turnitin is a tool designed to help instructors and learners reduce intentional and unintentional plagiarism in written assignments. When enabled for an assignment, Turnitin compares submitted papers for matches in content or similar text information. This comparison is made through available electronic repositories and provides the results in the form of a similarity report, accessible to both the learner and the instructor.

Similarity Report Format

A similarity report is divided into three areas:

- Name of the submitted paper and learner's name are displayed across the top.
- The submitted paper takes up most of the screen on the left side. The highlighted areas are where Turnitin has found matches to other content.
- The overall similarity score and the external sources that have been matched to the paper along with the percentage of their similarity, are listed in the *Match Overview* column.

Note: If this column is hidden, click on *Match Overview* button (identified by an arrow in the image below) to display it.
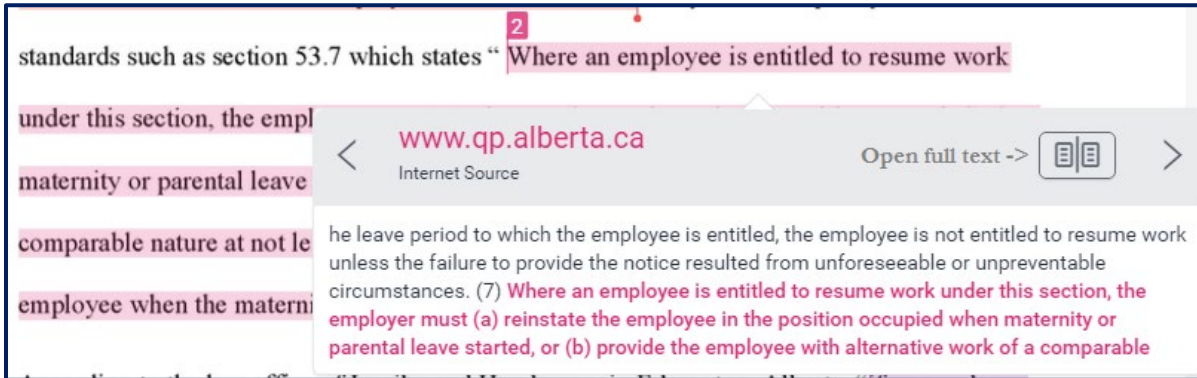

Learners will not be able to see any feedback or grades that you assign in this page; therefore, all feedback and grads should be given in D2L. Treat the similarity reports as "viewing only" pages.

The matched text and the sources of match are similarly numbered, and color coded for easy detection.

If you click on a highlighted number in the paper, the section of the external source that includes the highlighted text will be displayed, with the option to open the full text of the external source.

standards such as section 53.7 which states " Where an employee is entitled to resume work

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www.qp.alberta.ca
Internet Source

Open full text ->

he leave period to which the employee is entitled, the employee is not entitled to resume work unless the failure to provide the notice resulted from unforeseeable or unpreventable circumstances. (7) Where an employee is entitled to resume work under this section, the employer must (a) reinstate the employee in the position occupied when maternity or parental leave started, or (b) provide the employee with alternative work of a comparable
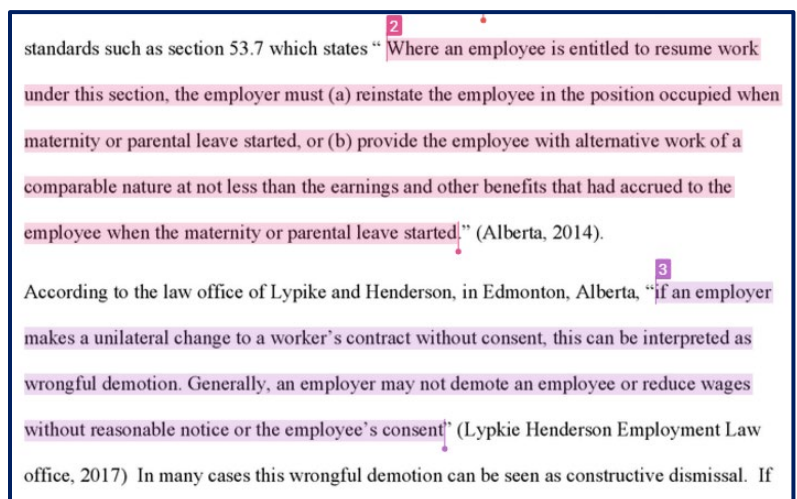
Taking Action

When comparing the text in the paper and its match in the external source, <u>you have to judge</u> whether the similarity is accidental or if the external source has been used to write the submitted paper without appropriate referencing. Usually, if the topic of the submitted paper and the external source are not related, and the similarity score for that source is very low, you can dismiss the match. On the other hand, if the similarity score is high and both the paper and the identified matching external source are about the same topic, more actions may be required to ensure academic honesty and copyright rules.

It is important to open and view the similarity report in its entirety before deciding whether a learner has adhered to academic honesty or not.

In this example the overall similarity score is 46%; however, all similar text is cited and referenced. Therefore, it is academically honest. Furthermore, the nature of the assignment is such that the learners need to find information from multiple sources. This increases the expected similarity scores.

standards such as section 53.7 which states " Where an employee is entitled to resume work under this section, the employer must (a) reinstate the employee in the position occupied when maternity or parental leave started, or (b) provide the employee with alternative work of a comparable nature at not less than the earnings and other benefits that had accrued to the employee when the maternity or parental leave started." (Alberta, 2014).

According to the law office of Lypike and Henderson, in Edmonton, Alberta, "if an employer makes a unilateral change to a worker's contract without consent, this can be interpreted as wrongful demotion. Generally, an employer may not demote an employee or reduce wages without reasonable notice or the employee's consent" (Lypkie Henderson Employment Law office, 2017) In many cases this wrongful demotion can be seen as constructive dismissal. If

Following are a few possible situations and actions that can be taken:

Similarities that can be easily explained and require no further actions:

This group of similarities usually have smaller percentage scores and can be dismissed.

- Quotations or sources that are correctly cited and referenced
- Bibliography and reference list(s) that could be exactly the same as another student's
- A common phrase or set of words
- Standard parts of academic papers, like the table of contents

Exact matches that are not quoted and/or cited:

The learner needs to use quotation marks around the exact matching text and cite the source as per the required referencing style. At Bow Valley College, APA is used in most departments as the referencing style.

Another option is to paraphrase the quotation and cite it appropriately.

Multiple matches to multiple sources in a small unit of text (e.g., one paragraph):

The action in this case needs to be based on each individual situation. While this can be treated like the previous group of similarities, there could also be room for synthesizing the text from multiple matches into a more coherent argument or statement. Either way, the sources need to be cited in the text and referenced at the end of the paper.

Match to another student's assignment submission in the past:

In this case the matched external source is not a published paper, book or other academic resource used to prove an argument. Instead, parts or the whole of the submitted paper is matched to an assignment submitted by another student. This usually constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and needs to be documented and reported to the program coordinator for due process to be followed.

Final Word

As the instructor who has assigned the paper, you are familiar with the content and the learners' level of writing skills, as such, you may find situations that lend themselves to other actions. Use your discretion and make Turnitin the learning tool that it can be. Learners will need your leadership to interpret similarity reports, to be able to identify the right course of action(s), and ultimately to use the Turnitin tool to improve their writing skills.