

# Guide to Understanding Turnitin Originality Reports and How to Reference Appropriately

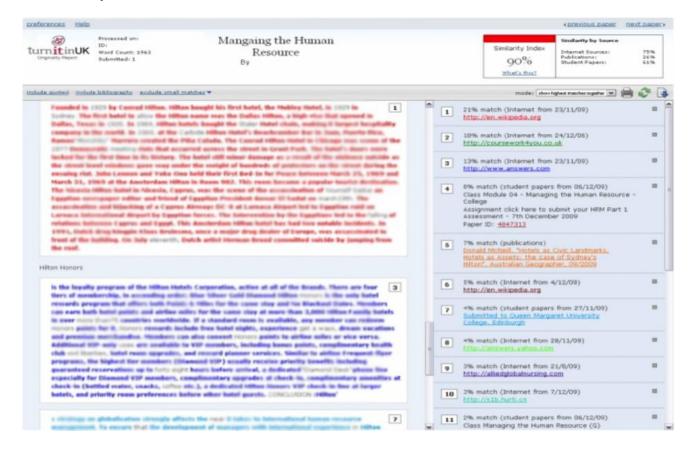
#### Overview

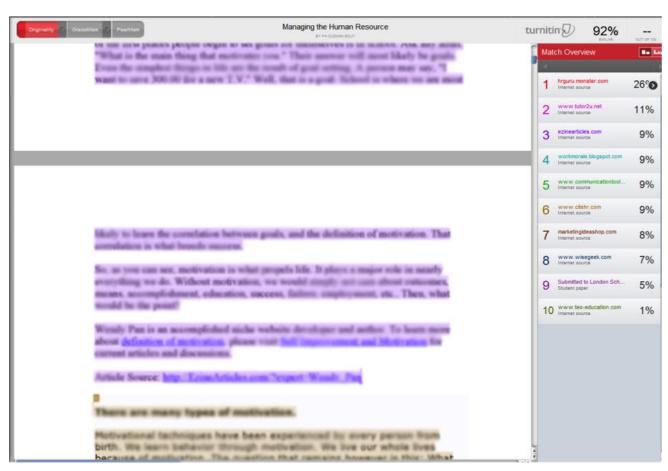
This guide has been designed to illustrate some of the more common problems that have been brought before the Committee of Enquiry for Unfair Practice (including plagiarism and collusion). It is designed to make students aware, and hopefully not fall foul, of academic writing conventions. Before proceeding it would be useful to remind ourselves of what is plagiarism. **Plagiarism** is the action of claiming the work of others as your own work. 'Others' in this context can include fellow students and the authors of books, journals and internet material.

Turnitin, when used appropriately, is an excellent tool to help ensure you both reference your work and paraphrase correctly. In order to make use of this you should be uploading your draft work to Turnitin and examining the Turnitin originality report at an early stage. You can upload your work as many times as you like leading up to an assessment deadline. You should therefore be making good use of this facility. No student should be uploading their work for the first and only time when submitting work; this is a recipe for problems which may result in your work being sent for investigation for Unfair Practice. To view your Turnitin originality report you need to click on the 'similarity index score', having uploaded your work.

The following pages are organised by examples of student work. There are seven in total. Having introduced the 'screenshot' these are then discussed in turn. Please remember the referencing style applied to this programme is the Harvard system. The programme handbook details examples of how to apply the Harvard system along with a link to a comprehensive referencing guide. The plagiarism quiz, located within the induction module, is also a very useful resource for re-acquainting yourself with Harvard referencing conventions.

## **Example One**



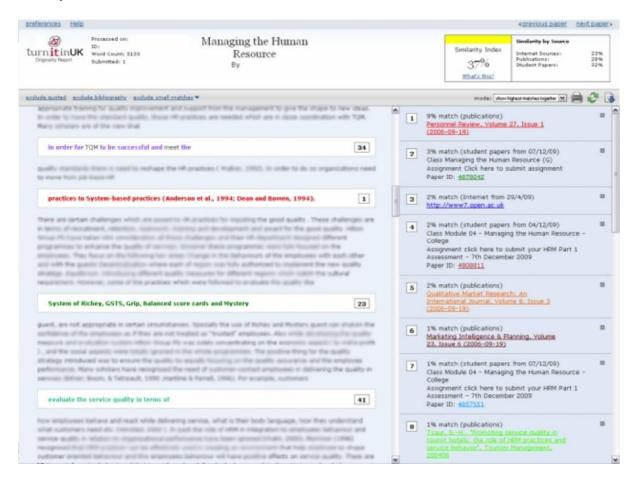


## What is poor in example one?

This is almost word for word plagiarism! There is no acknowledgment of the author/source for either paragraph. In addition to this, looking on the right- hand side of the screenshot, there are also links to student work. This suggests potential collusion and/or self plagiarism. It is important if you identify a similar pattern of links to student work that you satisfy yourself you have not breached the rules and exposed yourself to Unfair Practice allegations.

Although not an issue of unfair practice it should be pointed out that the quality of the research is very poor. Students should not be citing work from Wikipedia, <a href="Coursework4you.co.uk">Coursework4you.co.uk</a> or <a href="Answers.com">Answers.com</a>. These types of sites are simply not credible. Instead you should be using relevant texts (see programme guide for indicative texts for each module) and journals. To these ends you should be making good use of the University library databases/EBSCO online library (whichever is appropriate). These contain quite literally thousands of journal articles. If using websites, you should either paraphrase the work in your own words and reference this to the source or use short extracts and place these in speech marks and again reference appropriately. Please remember you should only be quoting short extracts and only do this when the extract is key to the argument you are developing.

# **Example Two**



## What is poor in example two?

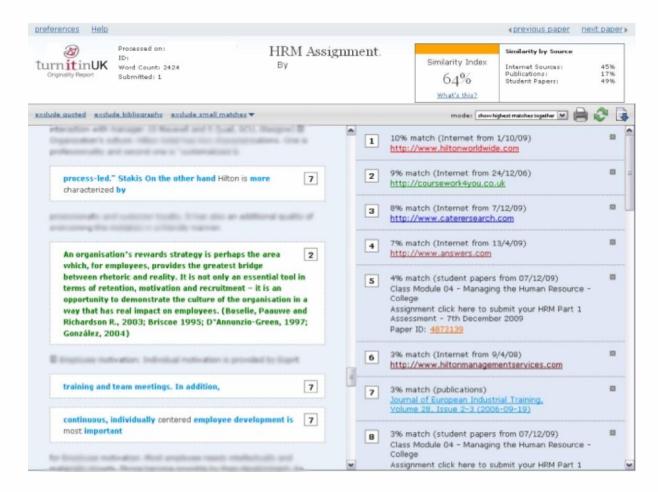
The student has failed to reference to the secondary source. The offending sentence can be located on the left-hand side of the screenshot, labelled as (1) (commences 'practices to systems-based....'). As a recap, secondary referencing is when one author is referring to the work of another and the primary source is not available. Wherever possible you should try to locate the original work. This is because you are reading an 'interpretation' of the primary source.

Where this is not possible, you need to satisfy yourself of the accuracy of the secondary source. In this specific case, the reference should have appeared in the following format:

"system-based practices (Anderson et al., 1994; Dean and Bowen)" cited in Redman & Mathews (1998, p. 61).

Given this is a short extract the student would have been better advised to locate the original source or use an alternative primary source, arguing a similar point within the context of the 'paragraph' in question. In terms of cases brought before the Committee of Enquiry inappropriate use of secondary sources (i.e. not including these) account for a significant proportion of the cases. Many of these include entire paragraphs that have not been attributed to the secondary source. For further guidance on secondary sources, question 37 of the online plagiarism quiz details an example of how to reference secondary sources both within the main body of the work and within the reference list.

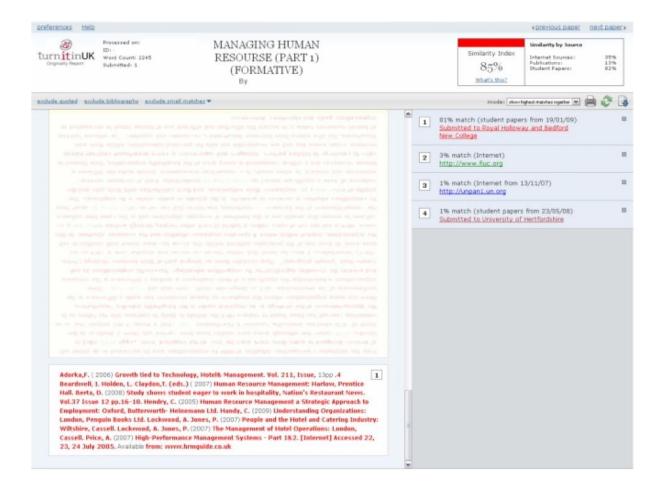
## **Example Three**



#### What is poor in example three?

This is almost a 'carbon copy' of the problems contained within example one. Again, this is almost word for word plagiarism. The student has plagiarised from a web site that should not even be searched by students (<a href="mailto:coursework4you.co.uk">coursework4you.co.uk</a>). This is simply not a credible source. As stated within example TWO you are advised wherever possible to locate the primary source.

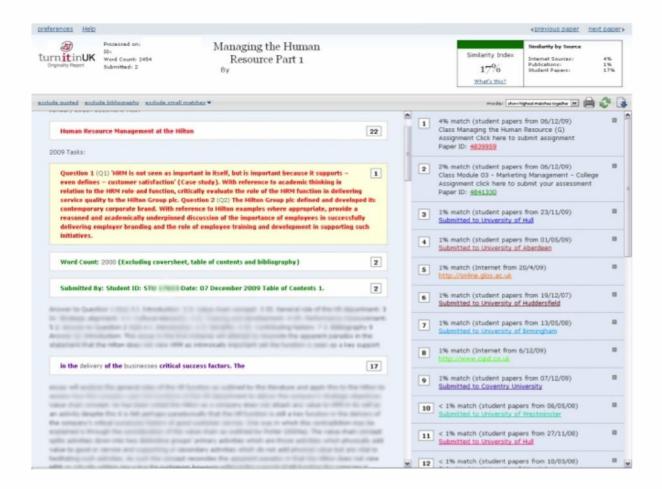
## **Example Four**



## What is poor in example four?

It would appear the reference list has been 'lifted' in its totality from another source (Royal Holloway and Bedford College paper). This is at best misleading and potentially an offence. Your reference list is an important part of your essay. It lists all the work referred to in the main body of the text. You should ensure that all work referred to in the main text of your essay is referenced appropriately in your reference list and that your reference list ONLY includes sources cited in the main text.

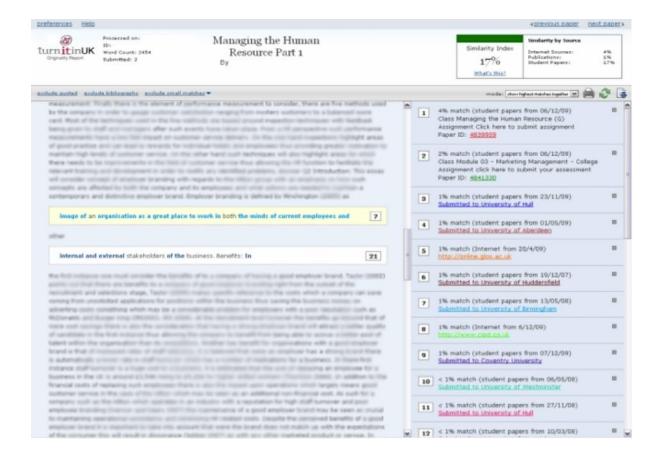
# **Example Five**



### What is poor in example five?

Within the text on the left hand-side there is NOTHING wrong with this work. The student has repeated the assessment question which has been highlighted by Turnitin. This is not an offence, although Turnitin does detail 'all matches'. This is an excellent example demonstrating that the similarity index score cannot be used in isolation from the Turnitin originality report. This is why Arden does not give a 'score' that is acceptable. This is also why you should be uploading your draft work and interpreting the report for yourself and where necessary making changes to ensure your work is appropriately referenced.

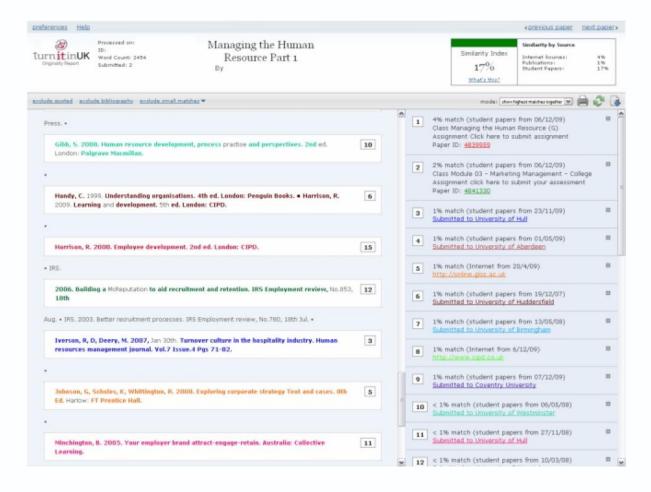
## **Example Six**



## What is poor in example six?

Nothing! The work is the student's own work. However Turnitin will identify words similar to other resources.

# **Example Seven**



## What is poor in example seven?

Nothing! Looking at the left-hand side of the screenshot the references do not appear in one 'block' of colour. This would suggest the references have been individually constructed. If Turnitin indicates references are similar to other work then this is 'probably' OK. Indeed it is not surprising that Turnitin has located other resources using the same references. You should however still check to satisfy yourself you have referenced appropriately.

### Conclusion

Turnitin is a very useful resource that you should ensure you are familiar with as an essential part of your referencing tool kit. You need to ensure you upload your draft work at an early stage to check your referencing and paraphrasing. Always try to locate primary sources wherever possible. If this is not possible then you need to satisfy yourself the secondary source is reliable. Make use of recommended texts for each module. Also make good use of the University library/EBSCO online library (whichever is appropriate). Finally be proactive and make good use of Turnitin. If in doubt, contact your module leader for guidance.