1 Introduction

The University subscribes to Turnitin UK software which is widely used in UK universities and matches text in work submitted to the software to that in a large database of online sources. This document explains how Turnitin UK will be used by the Faculty of Mathematics and explains the implications of submitting your work to the software.

You are asked to read the information thoroughly and then sign/submit the online declaration to show that you consent to your work being submitted to Turnitin UK as described here. Without your consent the Faculty of Mathematics cannot submit your work to the software.

You are reminded that Turnitin is only one method of checking the originality of your work. Examiners may initiate the standard investigative procedures if they have unresolved queries about the originality of your work, regardless of whether Turnitin has been used or whether it has substantiated any concerns.

The University Advocate may decide to prosecute a student suspected of plagiarism or collusion to plagiarise\(^1\), even where that student has not consented to the use of Turnitin. In such circumstances the student may be specifically asked by the Advocate to consent to submission to Turnitin and a failure to consent will be provided as part of the evidence against him or her.

2 Plagiarism and good academic practice: your responsibilities

You should ensure that you are familiar with the discipline-specific guidance about referencing conventions and good academic practice which is issued by the Faculty of Mathematics and can be found

- for all students at http://www.maths.cam.ac.uk/facultyboard/plagiarism/;
- for students taking Part IB and Part II, in the Part IB and Part II Computational Project Manuals respectively;
- for students taking Part III, in the Part III Essay Guidelines and Titles booklet;
- for students taking the M.Phil. Computational Biology, in the handbook.

If, after reading the guidance, you have any outstanding queries you should seek clarification at the earliest opportunity from your Director of Studies or Course Director (as appropriate).

You should also familiarise yourself with the University-wide Statement on Plagiarism which is available on the University’s plagiarism website, www.cam.ac.uk/plagiarism. This site also features links to useful resources and guidance.

3 About Turnitin UK text-matching software

a) Who controls the service?

This University is the recognised Data Controller for the data held and processed by, or on behalf of, the service. An American company, iParadigms, is the Data Processor.

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\(^1\) This includes allowing another student to copy your work
b) How does Turnitin UK work?

Turnitin UK may detect direct plagiarism, paraphrasing and collusion as submitted work is compared with a vast database of online material and with a ‘private’ database of previous submissions. Therefore, submitting your work to the database helps to protect it from future attempts to plagiarise it, and helps to maintain the integrity of the University’s qualifications.

The software makes no judgement about whether a student has plagiarised, it simply shows the percentage of the submission that matches other sources and produces an originality report which highlights the text matches and, where possible, displays the matching text and its immediate context.

In many cases the software highlights correctly cited references or innocent matches. Therefore, Examiners will carefully review all originality reports to determine whether the work does contain plagiarism.

4 How will Turnitin UK be used in the Faculty of Mathematics?

The Faculty of Mathematics will use Turnitin UK to screen all work submitted for assessment. The resulting originality reports will be referred to the Examiners and Assessors responsible for the academic assessment of the work only if there is prima facie evidence of plagiarism or poor academic practice. Further details of procedure are available:

- for students taking Part IB and Part II, in the Part IB and Part II Computational Project Manuals respectively;
- for students taking Part III, in the Part III Essay Guidelines and Titles booklet;
- for students taking the M.Phil. Computational Biology, in the handbook.

5 How is a prima facie case of plagiarism or poor academic practice determined, and what will happen next?

The Faculty appoints Academic Integrity Officers (AIOs) whose responsibility it is to review originality reports generated by Turnitin UK. If the reports generated by Turnitin UK highlight one or more matches between your work and any other source, as outlined in section 3b above, the role of the AIO is to judge, inter alia,

- whether the matches are innocent,
- whether matches arise from appropriately referenced material (if not, this may constitute plagiarism),
- whether you have made excessive use of material from other sources (which may be poor academic practice),
- whether there has been unacceptable collaboration between students.

If there is a prima facie case of plagiarism or poor academic practice, the AIO will forward your work to the relevant Examiners/Assessors, initiating the University’s procedure for dealing with suspected cases of plagiarism/poor scholarship (see http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/plagiarism/examiners/).

The Examiners and Assessors will mark your work on the basis of its academic merit. However, depending on the extent and context of the matches, your work may be referred to the Proctors for further investigation. In such cases the Turnitin UK originality report may be used as evidence. If you are found to have plagiarised, the penalty may be severe and your degree may be withheld.

6 Will Turnitin UK affect my intellectual property rights or copyright?

The copyright and intellectual property rights of the submitted material remain wholly with the original owner (normally the student, with the exception of some collaborative or sponsored research projects). However, you are asked to permit Turnitin UK to:
• reproduce your work to assess it for originality;
• retain a copy of your work for comparison at a later date with future submissions.

7 Will my personal data be retained by Turnitin UK?

Material submitted to Turnitin UK will be identified by your examination number, course details and institution: personal data will not be used.

8 What will happen if text submitted by another student matches that in my work?

a) Matches to text submitted from other HE institutions

If a report generated by another institution identifies a match to your work, the report will only show the extent of the match and the contact details of the University’s Turnitin UK Administrator. If approached, the Turnitin UK Administrator will attempt to contact you about the matter. The contents of your work will not be revealed to a third party outside Cambridge without your permission.

b) Matches to text submitted from within the University

If a match is found to material submitted from within the University, the Examiners can obtain the full text without approaching you.

9 How do I apply for my work to be removed from Turnitin UK?

Work submitted to Turnitin UK will be stored indefinitely on the Turnitin UK database unless you specifically request that it be removed. To maximise the effectiveness of the software, it is hoped that such requests will be kept to a minimum. However, once examinations have been concluded, you may at any time contact the Undergraduate/Graduate Office of the Faculty of Mathematics to request that your work be removed.

10 Sources of further information and support

• The University’s plagiarism website: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/plagiarism/
• Turnitin UK’s website: http://www.turnitinuk.com/en_gb/home

11 The next steps

Please read

• the University-wide Statement on Plagiarism (www.cam.ac.uk/plagiarism), and
• the discipline-specific guidance issued by the Faculty of Mathematics as listed in section 2 above.

Please then complete the appropriate online declaration:

• for Part IB Students at http://www.maths.cam.ac.uk/undergrad/catam/Declarations/Current/IB/
• for Part II Students at http://www.maths.cam.ac.uk/undergrad/catam/Declarations/Current/II/
• for Part III Students at http://www.maths.cam.ac.uk/postgrad/mathiii/Declarations/Current/
• for MPhil Students at http://www.maths.cam.ac.uk/postgrad/mphil/Declarations/Current/