

**LTC15D016**

**Title:** *Replacement of the University's Text Matching Software (TMS) – a report from the Online Marking ISD Project Manager*  
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#### **Issue**

An update from the Online Marking ISD Project Manager on the replacement of Turnitin with SafeAssign as the University's Text Matching Software from 1 September 2015

#### **Recommendation**

Recipients are invited:

To note the date of change

To note the decision and approval process

To note implementation, training, support and review period

To note the change to University policy

#### **Resource Implications**

The expiry of the Turnitin license relates to a saving of £17,000 per annum providing project funds for the technical consultancy to replace eVision eMarking with automated online submission, marking and feedback in Blackboard.

#### **Risk Implications**

The associated risks of the implemented change are highlighted in the Project Manager's report to LTC.

#### **Equality and Diversity**

There are no equality or diversity implications with regard to the Project Manager's report to LTC.

#### **Timing of decisions**

No decisions are required by LTC at this stage.

#### **Further Information**

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#### **Background**

The decision to replace Turnitin with Safe Assign was made on 20 April 2015 by the Assessment & Feedback Project Board, Project Chair and Sponsor Professor Neil Ward, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

Adam Longcroft (ADTP) requested this paper be bought forward to LTC.

# Replacement of the University's Text Matching Software – a report from the Online Marking ISD Project Manager

## Overview

The University's Text Matching Software *Turnitin* license expires annually on 31 August, the license cost for 2015/2016 was £17,000. A period of consultation resulted in the decision on the 20 April 2015 at the Assessment & Feedback Project Board chaired by Project Sponsor Neil Ward that we would not renew the existing license and instead replace *Turnitin* with Blackboard's inbuilt Text Matching Software called *SafeAssign*.

The change in the University's approved text-matching software means that from 1 September any investigation of suspected cases of plagiarism and/or collusion would be investigated using *SafeAssign*.

A Blackboard site has been created for use by Plagiarism Officers – this site has become the key repository for training, support and guidance on how to use *SafeAssign* and the principal archive for Plagiarism cases. All Plagiarism Officers and deputies were invited to attend trainings sessions during September and October, additional training sessions are scheduled for late October and November to ensure POs are equipped to investigate UG cases in a timely manner.

Adam Longcroft noted to all PO's in email 28 August 2015:

*"I am sure it goes without saying that none of us should rely on SafeAssign as a 'silver-bullet' – it cannot, of itself, prove that plagiarism or collusion has occurred – only Plagiarism Officers can make such a judgment following careful consideration of each case (including the pertinent originality report). Individual markers will need to continue to be vigilant for possible infringements of the Plagiarism & Collusion policy, and will need to draw their concerns to the attention of their School's PO for further investigation as normal."*

## Benefits of SafeAssign

- *SafeAssign* requires no additional license fees for the University.
- It offers similar functionality to *Turnitin* in the sense that POs can generate and save a copy of an SA originality report, in which a similarity 'score' is provided, along with highlighted sections of text, with the original sources identified etc. Plagiarism Officers should be aware, however, that *SafeAssign* will check against a different database from that provided by *Turnitin*, and may provide 'matches' with different sources.
- Future developments (some currently being piloted in MED) include Batch Sampling/Screening and Student 'Self Check' integrated with Blackboard assignments.

## Risks

The risk of a non-use through the change in text matching software will be mitigated through training, guidance and support sessions. RISK – LOW

The risk of *SafeAssign* not matching the depth of database checks available through *Turnitin* will be mitigated through a three month (Semester One) review using real examples and PO feedback. RISK - MEDIUM

The risk of MED piloting the new functionality of student checks and batch screening in *SafeAssign* will be mitigated through a change in policy (see below), the requisite of Blackboard submission and marking plus student and PO feedback over a series of pilots. RISK – MEDIUM

## **Change to Plagiarism Policy – August 2015**

### **5 Use of Software for Matching Text to Detect Plagiarism**

5.1 University approved text matching software (software that searches for text in work submitted to it that matches text contained in its databases to aid the detection of plagiarism) may be used for students taking undergraduate modules or postgraduate modules.

5.2 Schools that make use of University approved text matching software shall:

5.2.1 appoint a University approved text matching software specialist (a member of academic staff who shall be familiar with the use of approved text matching software and the interpretation of its reports);

5.2.2 monitor its use for equality impact assessment.

5.4 Schools may submit module batches into the University approved text matching software. Where Schools elect to use the University's approved text-matching software in this way to screen student submissions they shall ensure that:

5.4.1 Students are informed in advance of the assessments that will be subject to batch screening using the University's approved text-matching software;

5.4.2 An originality report is generated for all student submissions for the assessment in question, not just a sample of students from the cohort;

5.4.3 Staff involved in marking assessments which are subject UEA CALENDAR 2015/16 to batch screening should access the training provided in the use of the University approved text-matching software.

5.5 In cases where assessments are subject to batch screening, students on the module in question shall:

5.5.1 have access to the use of the University approved text matching software so that they can generate an originality report on a draft of their assessment prior to the submission deadline;

5.5.2 be provided with training by the Schools' Plagiarism Officer on how to access the University approved text matching software, how to generate an originality report of their draft submissions prior to the submission deadline and how to interpret and act on the information contained in the originality report;

5.5.3 have access to online guidance resources that address

### **Summary**

SafeAssign is a new Text Matching Software tool that requires evaluation and feedback from POs and deputies over the forthcoming months. It is just one of a number of tools for checking plagiarism and collusion. The annual license cost saving has been assigned to the technical consultancy work required to complete automated online submission, marking and feedback within our Virtual Learning Environment Blackboard.