Sheridan | Library and Learning Services

Faculty Guide on the Use of Turnitin AI Detection Tool

Generative AI has introduced a wave of challenges and inquiries regarding the evaluation of student assignments and exams. AI technology can quickly generate text that is very similar to human-generated writing. AI-generated writing is difficult to identify and detect. This guide is designed to assist faculty members with using Turnitin's AI detection tool and substantiating breaches with unauthorized use of generative AI.

Steps for Use of the Turnitin AI Detection Tool

Sheridan has enabled the Turnitin's AI writing detection feature starting in the Fall 2023 semester. Now in SLATE, when you view a Turnitin Report, you will see another score at the bottom in blue that will show the AI score. *Keep in mind this percentage may not indicate academic misconduct, and a review of the paper is required.* Turnitin's AI writing detection model may not always be accurate (it may misidentify both human and AI-generated text), so it should not be used as the sole source of evidence to confirm a breach of academic integrity. If you obtained a high score from the Turnitin's AI detector and you suspect a violation of academic integrity, conduct a discovery interview with the student and ask them questions specific to their assignment as you would do to investigate contract cheating. Take detailed notes of the student's responses as they can be used as evidence of a breach.

1. Advise Students you are Using Turnitin's AI Detection Tool

- In Fall 2023, a notice will appear on all course outlines indicating that faculty may use Turnitin AI detection software to scan student submissions.
- Faculty members should provide clear instructions on acceptable and unacceptable use of AI tools on any type of evaluation.
- Without clear communication on AI use in assessments, students may claim that you did not directly forbid the use of generative AI.
- Do not submit student writing to any external tools such as GPTZero or any other AI detection tool. Sharing your students' work with these detectors without their permission raises a range of privacy and ethical concerns.

2. Set clear expectations about the use of AI tools in your course

- Add a statement to your syllabus or assignment instructions. Consult Syllabus Information for Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools/ChatGPT for a selection of approaches you may consider for the use of AI tools.
- Require students to disclose and cite AI tools when the use of these tools is permissible. Both MLA and APA now have citation guidelines for AI tools.

3. Note the AI Writing Report on Turnitin, but Approach the Score with Caution

- The AI Writing Report will display a percentage that indicates the amount of text that Turnitin's AI detection tool has determined as potentially AI-generated.
- The AI detection score must be considered only one data point in the grading process rather than evidence of an academic integrity breach.

- The Turnitin detection tool shows a false positive rate of 1%. For example, the detection tool may falsely flag repetitive writing as suspicious. This video from Turnitin explains false positives. Turnitin's website provides additional information on their AI detection software.
- The percentage reflects only the portion of the text that the detection tool was able to analyze. Turnitin's detector analyzes long-form English prose. It excludes short-form answers, lists, bulleted points, code, outlines, poetry, and any text that does not appear in standard grammatical sentences.
- Students cannot currently see the AI detection score. You will need to inform them of the percentage if proceeding to use the AI writing indicator in case of a suspected breach of academic integrity.

4. Use Other Data Points

Use additional data points to determine if a student has submitted text created using generative AI **before** reporting a breach of academic integrity.

Possible indicators of AI use include:

- A very low Turnitin Originality score combined with a high AI detection percentage.
- "High" means anything over 80%, but again approach that score with caution.
- Missing, inaccurate or fabricated citations and references.
- Significant departure from the requirements of the assignment (e.g., a lengthy answer that is not required, irrelevant responses or explanations).
- Student demonstrating skill or learning far beyond a level previously demonstrated.
- Uncharacteristically strong submission for the course.
- Extreme, formulaic specificity of response to the question/prompt.
- Highly specific, procedural organization of ideas that directly maps on to prompt (i.e., if the assignment/test question asks students to "Describe X and then explain Y's importance to Z" a generative AI response will do exactly that, in that order).
- Text copied and pasted from ChatGPT, which can include phrases such as "As an AI language model . . ." or the disclaimer from the app's footer: "ChatGPT Mar 23 Version. Free Research Preview. ChatGPT may produce inaccurate information about people, places, or facts."

5. Conduct a discovery interview with the student and ask them questions specific to their assignment.

- Before the meeting, check the validity of references and review their content.
- Ask the student to explain their work process for this assignment.
- Ask the student to provide a summary of a source they referenced.
- Ask the student to provide a reason for using a particular source they referenced.
- Choose high level vocabulary from the text and ask the student to define it.
- Ask the student to elaborate on the concept(s) discussed in the paper and to explain how their understanding of the topic evolved over time.
- Choose an example the student provided to illustrate a point. Ask the student to explain how or why they chose that example.

- Ask the student to talk about their conclusion and to explain how they arrived at that conclusion.
- For coding assignments: ask the student to explain what the function does and how the code works. Ask the student to elaborate on what the code makes happen.

If a student is unable to explain their work in a way that aligns with their level of writing, that would suggest the work does not reflect the student's knowledge or understanding and they used some kind of assistance with the assignment. If you notice a discrepancy between the quality of the work and the way a student describes their process for completing that work, that may indicate the unauthorized use of generative AI.

With sufficient evidence, faculty members may choose to report a breach of academic integrity. The most likely selection on the breach form would be Unauthorized Use of Digital Technology.

Turnitin AI Writing Detection Resources

- The AI Writing Detection Guide
- AI Writing Detection Capabilities – Frequently Asked Questions
- Academic Integrity in the Age of AI

This resource was adapted with permission by Iryna Pavlova from Sharpe, A. *Using Turnitin's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Detection Tool and the Process Guide for Navigating Potential Academic Offences, Conestoga Teaching & Learning, Faculty Learning Hub https://tlconestoga.ca/using-turnitins-artificial-intelligence-ai-detection-tool-and-the-process-guide-for-navigating-potential-academic-offences/*