

Comparing SafeAssign and Turnitin

Feature	Blackboard SafeAssign	Turnitin	Comments
Fee	Included in annual Bb cost.	Annual Fee	
Drawing tool	Yes	No	
Rich and creative feedback	Video/audio/mash ups can be embedded within the feedback area, as well as webcam video recordings	Text 3min max audio file can be attached.	
Private notes tool (information can be left that will not be seen by the student)	Yes	No	
Spellchecker	Yes	No	
Rubrics	Yes	Yes (But instructor must manually attach rubric so students can see before submission.)	
Control over addition of student papers to the databases	YES - Instructor and student Instructor controls whether student work is added to the Institutional database Student controls whether their work is added to the Global Reference Database (cross-institutional)	YES - Instructor Instructor controls whether student work is added to the Turnitin database (cross-institutional)	
Supports multiple drafts	YES - Set up draft assignment Instructor creates a "draft assignment" for each	YES - Add to an existing assignment Instructor creates a "revision assignment" for work that was previously submitted. Revision	

	<p>draft. Draft assignments not stored in SafeAssign databases; therefore, subsequent drafts are not compared to the original.</p> <p>Instructor creates a regular SafeAssignment for the final draft.</p>	<p>assignments are stored in the Turnitin database, but are not compared to the original.</p>	
Supports multiple submissions of the same assignment	<p>YES</p> <p>Instructor must clear the original assignment to allow students to resubmit. Each submission overwrites the previous submission</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>Instructor can set up an assignment that allows students to submit papers multiple times until the due date, generating a new originality report each time. Each submission overwrites the previous submission.</p>	
Preloaded Comments	<p>No (Workaround is copying and pasting from a template of comments (e.g. on Word).</p>	<p>Yes (QuickMark)</p>	
Online Marking (computer / laptop)	<p>Yes [3]</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
Mobile device marking (tablet / mobile)	<p>Yes - iPad</p>	<p>Yes - iPad</p>	<p>no current apps for Android / Windows devices?</p>
Offline marking using App	<p>Bb Grader (Dec2014)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
Supports multiple/delegated marking	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No[2]</p>	<p>TII say multiple markers have never been supported - it sort of works on desktop (not anonymous), but does not work at all with the iPad app [2]</p>
Double (triple, quadruple etc) Blind Marking	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	

Multiple marker feedback	Yes	No	
Integration with Blackboard	Yes	Yes - with some issues	Copying assignment content areas to other courses can cause issues (note: this is caused by Blackboard software not TurnItIn)
Support marking Group assignments (one member submitting on behalf of group)	Yes	No	
Portfolio Assignment	Yes	No	TII integrates with other external portfolio tools (e.g. PebblePad)
Quality/size of database (Submitted Papers)			
Quality/size of database (Published work)	The Internet, 6,800+ journals	The Internet, 130 million articles	
Method for backing up of marked work	As scripts are stored on local server, these are usually backed up with VLE server backups. Script can be added to complete additional backups.	Yes - but must be done assignment by assignment. Bulk download per assignment possible into zip file.	
Allows use of rubrics	Yes, in app or IMS standard for import and export (which IMS standard?)	Yes - can be built in app, or imported from Excel	
Maximum file size accepted for submission	10MB	20MB	
Accepted file types for originality checking (e.g. MS Word, PDF etc.)	DOCX, DOC, PDF, TXT, RTF, HTML, HTM and ODT	DOCX, DOC, PDF, TXT, RTF, HTML, HTM, PS, PPT, PPTX, WordPerfect	

Direct Submission from cloud storage services?	No	Yes. Google Drive and Dropbox.	
Submission possible during remote service outage?	Yes - submissions are made to local server - originality checking then requires staff to request report once service is back up. Student sees little disruption.	No - submissions are made directly to remote service.	

[2] Pete Lonsdale, Keele University

[3] Cumulative Update 5 for Learn, Release 9.1, Service Pack 14 has fixed the issue with students seeing comments in Crocodoc (David Callaghan, Edge Hill University)

Below is a table comparing the files supported by each product (as published by Blackboard/TurnitinUK). Note both tools accept any file type, but only these file types will generate an Originality Report.

Blackboard	TurnitinUK
.doc	.doc
.docx	.docx
.odt	.odt
.txt	.txt
.rtf	.rtf
.pdf	.pdf
.html	.html
	Google Docs via Google Drive
	WordPerfect (.wpd)
	Microsoft Powerpoint (.pptx, .ppt, .ppsx, .pps)
	Microsoft Excel (.xlsx, .xls)*
	PostScript (.ps/.eps)
	Hangul Word Processor (.hwp)

Databases Checked

Below is a table comparing the databases utilised by each product in the originality report check (as published by Blackboard/TurnitinUK)

Blackboard	TurnitinUK
<p>Institutional document archives: Contains all papers submitted to SafeAssign by users in their respective institutions.</p>	<p>Student Papers: Over 50 percent of plagiarism comes from other student's work. Turnitin compares submitted papers to a database of over 337 million papers in the Turnitin paper database. Each day, the Turnitin student database grows by 190,000 papers.</p>
<p>Global Reference Database: Contains over 15 million papers volunteered by students from Blackboard client institutions to help prevent cross-institutional plagiarism.</p>	<p>Content Partnerships: Turnitin has partnered with leading content publishers, including library databases, text-book publishers, digital reference collections, subscription-based publications, homework helper sites and books. These partnerships have contributed over 130 million additional articles to our databases.</p>
<p>ProQuest ABI/Inform database: More than 1,100 publication titles and about 2.6 million articles from the 1990s to present time, updated weekly.</p>	
<p>Internet: SafeAssign searches across the broader internet for matching text using the Yahoo! BOSS search service as the underlying internet index provider.</p>	<p>The Current and Archived Web: Similar to Google and Bing, Turnitin has built a web crawler that crawls the Internet and indexes content into a searchable form. Turnitin currently contains over 45 billion web pages from the current web as well as archived web pages.</p>

Both tools search the internet for matches, and both have partnered with content partners to extend their databases to include publications and articles. However the major difference here is in the comparison of student papers. TurnitinUK automatically adds any student paper uploaded to its global repository, ensuring a large database to compare against (>337 millions papers at present). Blackboard however takes a different approach – student papers are only automatically added to the institutions database, not a global database. Currently at UoB we do not use the Blackboard tool as yet, and therefore this repository would take some time to build. Students are given the option of including their uploaded work into the Global Reference Database, but this optional, and currently stands at a smaller size than Turnitin's (15 million vs 337 million).

<http://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/cw115/2014/05/27/blackboard-vs-turnitinuk-observations-round-1/>