



PTAS Project Report (for REGULAR PROJECT GRANTS)

Project Title: The University of Edinburgh

Project type: Innovation Project (introduction and evaluation of an educational innovation, usually taking a practical approach)

Principal Investigator: Simon Beames
Schools/department: Moray House School of Education

Team members (including Schools and Departments): Amy Burge (IAD), Robert Chmielewski (IS), Sharon Boyd & Jessie Paterson (Royal (Dick) Veterinary School)

For further details, please contact: Amy Burge

Project teams must submit a report within 4 months of the conclusion of their project. Copies of dissemination material (eg journals/newsletter articles, conference papers, posters should be listed and attached (separate to the word count). The brief report will be published on the IAD web pages.

Report (maximum 1500 words)

This aim of this PTAS project was to develop a learning resource to help University of Edinburgh students improve their academic writing skills through the use of Turnitin.

Turnitin can be effectively employed as a powerful means of helping students with their paraphrasing, summarising, synthesising, quoting, citing, and referencing. Training students on how to interpret originality reports for their own work can help them to identify areas of their academic writing that need attention in order to improve the quality of their written work.

In many parts of the University, Turnitin is solely used as an academic administrative tool, with students having little or no access to the text matching, originality report facility. In other Schools where student access is permitted, only limited additional support for developing good academic practice is provided.

Our intention was to create a tool to help improve students academic writing in a way that would complement work already being done in Schools with Turnitin and academic conduct. To this end, we created a Learn course on to which students would self-enrol. This course was in two phases. First, we garnered comments on an outline structure from colleagues in IAD. Second, trials and discussions with focus groups with students in the School of Education and staff in the Veterinary School enabled us to make the course easier to navigate and interact with.



The course is divided into the following sections:

1. Using Turnitin: How to access and use the tool
2. What is good academic practice and why is this important?
3. Citing and referencing, including specific guidance for your School
4. Using sources, including quoting, paraphrasing and avoiding patch writing
5. Finding your voice: Synthesis and summarising

Basic information on the above topics is systematically provided, alongside a quiz, an opportunity to submit a short piece to a Turnitin Dropbox, and links to further resources. Separate accompanying pdf user-guides were also created for students and staff. We hope that this learning resource will encourage more Schools to make more effective use of Turnitin with their students.

The Learn course will be launched from 12-2pm on April 28th, 2017 at Teviot Hall. From then, selected programmes within the Education and Veterinary Schools will offer the Learn course. Other interested Schools should contact Amy Burge at the Institute for Academic Development (amy.burge@ed.ac.uk), as the Developing Academic Practice with Turnitin team would like to make this resource available to all Schools that are interested. In due course, we will be writing a blog for the University's Teaching Matters webpage.

Beyond the University, we have been approached some UK universities regarding sharing this resource and possibly conducting research on its impact on student learning. The project team is interested in evaluating the course and this may in turn lead to research output.

Financial statement:

This project has remaining funds unused and we require details of how to return the balance. The Principal Investigator or School Administrator appropriate can provide financial statements showing the funding usage as and when required by the UoE Development Trusts who may require it for auditing purposes.

Please send an electronic PDF copy of this report to:
Email: iad.teach@ed.ac.uk