

ABOUT SAFEASSIGN

Overview

SafeAssign compares submitted assignments against a set of academic papers to identify areas of overlap between the submitted assignment and existing works. SafeAssign can be used to prevent plagiarism and to create opportunities to help students identify how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase. SafeAssign is effective as both a deterrent and an educational tool. SafeAssign is available as part of the Blackboard Learning System—Enterprise platform, at no additional cost.

How SafeAssignments Work

SafeAssign is based on a unique text matching algorithm capable of detecting exact and inexact matching between a paper and source material. SafeAssignments are compared against several different databases, including:

- **Internet** – comprehensive index of documents available for public access on the Internet;
- **ProQuest ABI/Inform database** with over 1,100 publication titles and about 2.6 million articles from 1990s to present time, updated weekly (exclusive access);
- **Institutional document archives** containing all papers submitted to SafeAssign by users in their respective institutions;
- **Global Reference Database** containing papers that were volunteered by students from Blackboard client institutions to help prevent cross-institutional plagiarism.

Global Reference Database

Blackboard's Global Reference Database is a separate database where students voluntarily donate copies of their papers to help prevent plagiarism. It is separated from each institution's internal database, where all papers are stored by each corresponding institution, and students are free to select the option to check their papers without submitting them to the Global Reference Database. Students submit their papers to the database voluntarily and agree not to remove papers in the future. Submissions to the Global Reference Database are extra copies that are given voluntarily for the purpose of helping with plagiarism prevention. Blackboard does not claim ownership of submitted papers.

SafeAssign Originality Reports

Once a paper has been processed, a report is available that details the percentage of the submitted paper that matches existing sources. It also shows the suspected sources of each section of the submitted paper that returns a match. Instructors can remove matching sources from the report and process it again. This may be useful if the paper is a continuation of a previously submitted work by the same student.

Because SafeAssign identifies all matching blocks of text, it is important to read the report carefully and investigate whether or not the block of text is properly attributed.

Interpreting SafeAssign Scores

Sentence matching scores are the percentage probability that two phrases have the same meaning. This number can also be interpreted as the reciprocal to the probability that these two phrases are similar by chance. For example, a score of 90 percent means that there is a 90 percent

probability that these two phrases are the same and a 10 percent probability that they are similar by chance and not because the submitted paper includes content from the existing source (whether or not it is appropriately attributed).

Overall score is an indicator of what percentage of the submitted paper matches existing sources. This score is a warning indicator only and papers should be reviewed to see if the matches are properly attributed.

- Scores below 15 percent: These papers typical include some quotes and few common phrases or blocks of text that match other documents. These papers typically do not require further analysis, as there is no evidence of the possibility of plagiarism in these papers.
- Scores between 15 percent and 40 percent: These papers include extensive quoted or paraphrased material or they may include plagiarism. These papers should be reviewed to determine if the matching content is properly attributed.
- Scores over 40 percent: There is a very high probability that text in this paper was copied from other sources. These papers include quoted or paraphrased text in excess and should be reviewed for plagiarism.

Copying or Moving SafeAssignments to another course

After performing a course copy or moving an individual SafeAssignment to another course an additional step is needed to activate the SafeAssignment in the new course. From the SafeAssign area under Course Tools on the Control Panel, click **Synchronize this course** to establish the link between the SafeAssignment and the Central SafeAssign server.