

To: All Teaching Faculty
From: Office of the Provost
Date: August 21, 2025
RE: Using Turnitin Responsibly

Many Messiah University instructors use Turnitin (embedded in Canvas) to evaluate student writing for the possibility of [plagiarism](#) as well as a student's [reliance on generative AI](#). Although the University allows the use of Turnitin for these purposes, some cautions are in order.

Cautions Related to Student Privacy

Turnitin has made it clear that it holds student submissions in perpetuity. Given the potential for student privacy to be compromised, please adhere to the following guidelines when using Turnitin:

- Do not use Turnitin when assessing student writing that is personal in nature (e.g., personal narratives in which students reveal details about their personal lives).
- Allow students to omit their names from the papers they upload, or at least allow them to upload papers using only their initials as identifiers.
- Do not have students include their ID numbers or other confidential information in the papers they submit.

Cautions Related to Academic Integrity Violations

- Instructors should be aware that Turnitin's tools do not prove AI use, nor do they prove plagiarism, but rather they provide information that can help instructors make informed judgments about student [AI use](#) and [plagiarism](#).
- You, as the instructor, have latitude in what you do with the results generated by Turnitin. If you're suspicious a student has (a) used AI to generate writing inappropriately or (b) has engaged in plagiarism, you will first want to have a conversation with that student. Please refrain from making accusations too hastily.
- If you conclude that the student has committed an academic integrity violation ([see Messiah's Academic Integrity Policy here](#)) and especially if you believe they did so intentionally, you should complete an Academic Integrity Violation Report, available in FalconLink.
- As with other academic integrity violations at Messiah University, the University allows instructors to enact the penalty they believe best suits the situation. If you want to discuss a possible penalty with someone, talk with your department chair, program director, or the Dean of General Education, Common Learning & Academic Support.
- Finally, given the potential for violating FERPA regulations, please do not run your students' work through other AI-detection or plagiarism checkers available on the internet.