WriteCheck discontinued – what to do instead

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WriteCheck is being discontinued….what to do instead

The plagiarism checking tool WriteCheck is being withdrawn and lots of students have asked for advice as to what to do instead.

Let's start by reminding ourselves why OBU is concerned about plagiarism. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and students who cheat are not upholding the values of ACCA as a professional body, or OBU.

What is plagiarism and why is it cheating?

Plagiarism is taking somebody's ideas and pretending that they are your own ideas because you have not acknowledged where the ideas have some from. If I read a convincing explanation for the growth of hotels in China on an investor website and I use this explanation in my research report, I must acknowledge this source. If I don't acknowledge the source, then I am presenting the explanation as my own idea.

Also, if I use someone else's words verbatim (word-for-word) I should also show that I am quoting – by using quotation marks or indenting the paragraph for a longer quotation. Normally, quotations should be kept to a minimum. It is better academic practice to state the main ideas of a passage in your own words. (It helps demonstrate that you have understood the meaning.)

So, to avoid plagiarism, you need to acknowledge your sources and show if you are quoting. This is referencing.

It is obviously wrong to take another student's work and use it as the basis for your own. Your research and writing should be your own.

How does OBU spot plagiarism?

OBU uses a text matching software (Turnitin) to help identify where text in a RAP matches another source (other student's work, newspaper articles, internet examples, text books). The marker will look at the nature of the matches and use their judgement to decide whether the student has used another source and whether they have acknowledged it correctly.

How do I make sure my work is not plagiarised?

As you do your research, keep notes of what you read and where you found it (copy URLs) and when you found it.

Write your report in your own words. Use your research, paraphrase other people's arguments and acknowledge them. Paraphrasing is preferable to the use of lots of direct quotes as it shows that you understand the ideas, concepts or arguments. Write the reference list as you go along.

Prior to submission re-read your work. Check that you have not inadvertently included an idea without acknowledging the source. Check that all the sources in the report are included in the reference list, and that the reference list doesn't include sources you have taken out of the report.

What about on-line plagiarism checking tools?

There are lots of sites available some of which are not reputable and are dangerous. Some sites will offer a plagiarism check, and then offer to re-write your work, or write the work for you. Submitting work that has been written for you is deliberate cheating, is unethical and could result in you being expelled from OBU.

If you do want to use a plagiarism checking software tool, iThenticate is the product Turnitin provides for researchers and freelance writers.

Do I have to check my work prior to submission?

No. It is far better to follow good academic practice as outlined, above. Turnitin is one of the tools OBU uses to spot cheating, there are others. The team at OBU might still ask questions about the authenticity of a RAP, even if it had a low Turnitin score.