

Use SafeAssign in Assignments

SafeAssign is now integrated into regular Blackboard Learn assignments. With the integration between SafeAssign and regular assignments, almost all of the regular assignment features are available with the SafeAssign service.

Use SafeAssign to review assignment submissions for plagiarism potential and 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 compares submitted assignments against a set of academic papers to identify areas of overlap between the submitted assignment and existing works.

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

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

Watch a Tutorial

Double-click the video to enlarge the viewing area.



How to Use SafeAssign in Your Assignments

You can now use SafeAssign plagiarism checking for any of your assignments.

1. On the **Create Assignment** page, expand **Submission Details**.
2. Select **Check submissions for plagiarism using SafeAssign**.
3. Optionally, select one or both options:
 - a. Allow students to view the SafeAssign originality reports on their submissions.
 - b. Exclude all student submissions for this assignment from the institutional or global reference databases.
4. Complete the **Create Assignment** page.
5. Click **Submit**.

"Exclude Submissions" Option

Today, both SafeAssignments (in pre-April 2014 Release Learn builds) and Learn Assignments with SafeAssign enabled (in April 2014 Release Learn builds and beyond) support features that call themselves "draft." In making the transition from SafeAssignments to Learn Assignments, SafeAssign needed to be able to support the Learn Assignment Draft feature while still providing functionality that supports the SafeAssignment Draft use case. For perspective, here's the difference between the two features:

SafeAssignments set to Draft (pre-April 2014 Release functionality) – The intent of a SafeAssignment set to "draft" is to have students submit papers for checking against SafeAssign sources, but not include the student papers in the Institutional Database. This way when a student re-submits a (presumably) revised version of the paper, SafeAssign does not flag the paper as matching against the previous "draft" submission. Students may only submit once to any SafeAssignment (including those set to "draft"); if a student wishes to re-submit, the instructor must clear the previous submission first (this is one of the constant complaints about SafeAssignments that is being alleviated by Learn Assignment integration). The other point to note is that the instructor and the student both have access to Originality Reports created for submissions to "draft" SafeAssignments.

Learn Assignment Drafts – The intent of a draft submission on a Learn Assignment is to allow the student to save their work prior to full submission, e.g. "I ran out of time, I'll save this for later and come back to it." Instructors are not able to see saved drafts on Learn Assignments at any time, and do not have visibility into the draft history once an assignment is submitted; saved drafts are entirely student-facing.

The April 2014 Release (and beyond) and SafeAssign integration with Learn Assignments supports multiple attempts by not checking attempts from a specific student to a specific assignment against previous attempts from the same student to the same assignment. This fulfill the use case of preventing matches from the same student and paper from appearing in Originality Reports.

Unfortunately, that is not the entire story. Users who are accustomed to the SafeAssignment Draft ability to allow students to essentially "check their work" against SafeAssign prior to submitting a final version need to be aware of the change in terminology and settings; while the Learn Assignment integration multiple-attempt logic covers part of that use case, it doesn't cover the case where students are submitting the same works to different assignments.

To support the second piece of the use case, the SafeAssign settings have an option to “Exclude Submissions” when creating the Learn Assignment. This option allows instructors to create Learn Assignments that do not include any student submissions in the Institutional or Global Reference Databases, fulfilling the required use case. Like other options on Learn Assignments, this option will be point-in-time and editable after assignment creation. If the option were changed at a later date, new submissions would honor the new state of the setting. An example use case:

An instructor would like a single Learn Assignment to allow non-final submissions, then a single "final" submission, and only the final submission should be included by SafeAssign in the Institutional database for reference against later submissions. This can be accomplished by:

1. Instructor creates a Learn Assignment with multiple attempts and enabling SafeAssign checking with the "exclude submissions" option initially turned on
2. Student submit their pre-final "draft" works, and submissions are not included in the Institutional or Global Databases
3. When the final submission is expected, the instructor unselects the "exclude submissions" option
4. Students submit their final works, and submissions are then included in the Institutional or Global Databases

Supported Files

SafeAssign only supports file types that are convertible to plain text. This includes the following file types: DOCX, DOC, PDF, TXT, ODT, RTF, HTML, and HTM. PowerPoint and spreadsheet files are not supported.

SafeAssign also accepts ZIP files and processes files that match any of these file types.

SafeAssign counts and displays the total number of attachments in a submission, as well as the number of attachments processed by SafeAssign. SafeAssign only processes and creates originality reports for attachments that match the supported file types. For unsupported file types, the SafeAssign originality report omits a matching score.

SafeAssign Originality Reports

After a paper is processed, a report is generated detailing the percentage of text in the submitted paper that matches existing sources. The report shows the suspected sources for each section of the submitted paper that returns a match. You can delete matching sources from the report and process it again. This is useful if the paper is a continuation of a previously submitted work by the same student.

Read the report carefully and investigate whether each block of text is properly attributed.

To learn more, see [SafeAssign Originality Reports](#).

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. 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 delete 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.

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SafeAssign Originality Report

A SafeAssign originality report provides detailed information about the matches found between a student's submitted paper and existing sources. Both instructors and students can use the report to review assignment submissions for plagiarism potential and create opportunities to identify how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase. When instructors create an assignment and choose to use the SafeAssign service, they determine if students can see the results of the report.

The report identifies all matching blocks of text. Instructors and their students need to determine if the matching text is properly referenced. Investigating each match prevents detection errors due to differences in citing standards.

The originality report displays the list of potential sources, and each source is highlighted in a different color. The report can display up to 30 colors to represent 30 different sources.

Note: Originality report information adapts to the screen it appears on, such as an iPad® or iPhone®.

Access the Report

When a SafeAssign report has finished processing, you can access it on the **Grade Assignment** page. Access the **Grade Assignment** page from the Grade Center or the **Needs Grading** page.

In the Grade Center, locate the assignment that you enabled the SafeAssign options for. When students have made their submissions, you see the needs grading icon—the exclamation mark. Access the cell's contextual menu and click the attempt.

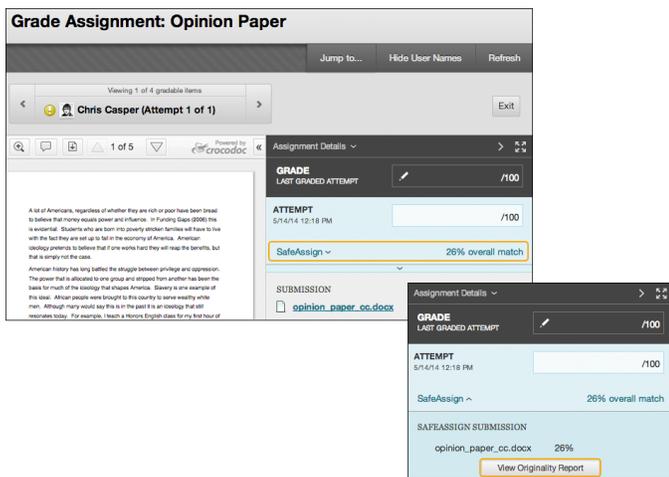
The screenshot shows the 'Grade Center : Full Grade Center' interface. At the top, there are buttons for 'Create Column', 'Create Calculated Column', 'Manage', and 'Reports'. Below these are 'Move To Top' and 'Email' buttons, and a 'Sort Columns By: Layout Po' dropdown. The main table has columns for 'Last Name', 'Username', 'Opinion Paper', 'Total', and 'Case Stu'. The 'Opinion Paper' column contains exclamation mark icons for all students. A contextual menu is open over the 'Opinion Paper' cell for 'Johnson', showing options: 'View Grade Details', 'Exempt Grade', and 'Attempt 5/14/14' (highlighted with a yellow box).

Last Name	Username	Opinion Paper	Total	Case Stu
Casper	ccasper	!		
Farrell	afarrell	!		
Gonzales	mgonzales	!		
Hernandez	jhern	--		
Johnson	rjohnson	!		

On the **Grade Assignment** page, a SafeAssign section appears in the grading sidebar. While the report is processing, the following statement appears: **Report in progress...**

When the report is ready to view, a percentage appears in the grading sidebar. Expand the SafeAssign link and click **View Originality Report** to view the results in a new window.



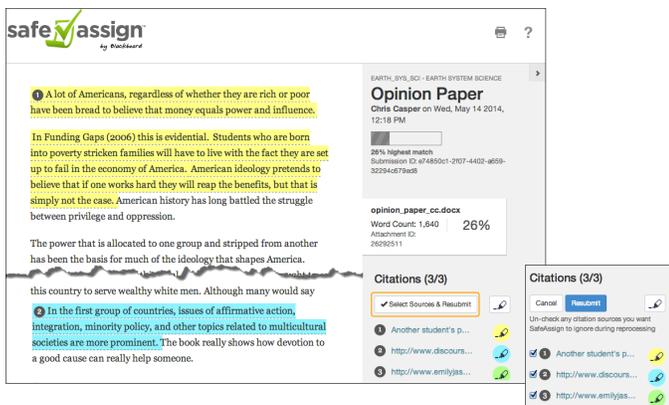


Report Layout

A SafeAssign originality report is divided into three areas:

- Report information
- Citations
- Manuscript text

If you need more room for viewing the paper's text, you can collapse the right panel with the right-pointing arrow. The highlighting colors remain in the collapsed view.



Report information

Report information appears in the right panel of the report. When you reduce the width of the viewing area, this information appears at the top. You can view data about the paper, such as the author, percent of matching text, word count, and when it was submitted. If students have included multiple attachments, they appear with the report information. You also have an option for viewing a printable version. This printable version is the most effective view of the report for users who rely on assistive technology to access Blackboard Learn. At the top of the page, click **Print** to view the printable version. Download the PDF to email to others.

Citations



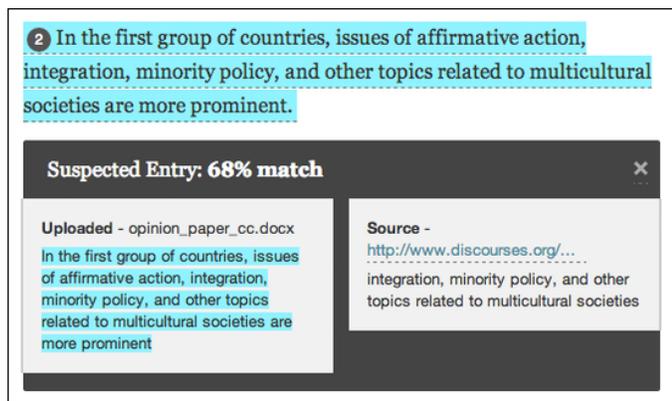
The sources that include text that matches the submitted paper's text are listed in the right panel of the report. You can expand the section to select sources, exclude them from the review, and process the paper again.

You can click **Select Sources and Resubmit** to determine which sources to include in the next report. **By default, all sources are included.** Clear the check box for each source you want to exclude from the results and resubmit. This is useful if a source is a previous work from the same student for the same assignment. You might also exclude a source if there is a reason that lengthy sections from the source appear in the paper. Processing the paper again generates a new value for the percent matching without using the excluded sources.

Manuscript text

The submitted paper appears in the left panel of the report. All matching blocks of text are identified. Each source has a color specific to the source—up to 30 unique colors for 30 different sources. Text matching a source is highlighted in the source color and identified with a number. In the right panel, you can click **Show/Hide All Highlighting** to turn source highlighting off and on for all sources at one time. You can turn the highlighting off and on for only one citation. Click **Remove** or **Show Highlighting** next to a citation.

Click a matching block of text to display information about the original source and the probability that the block or sentence was copied from the source.



The screenshot shows a text block from a manuscript with a blue highlight and a circled '2'. Below it is a dark grey box titled "Suspected Entry: 68% match" with a close button. Inside this box, there are two panels: "Uploaded" showing the file name "opinion_paper_cc.docx" and a snippet of the manuscript text, and "Source" showing a URL "http://www.discourses.org/..." and a snippet of the source text. Both snippets are highlighted in blue to show the match.

Use the pertinent findings in the report as you determine what grade to assign to the student on the **Grade Assignment** page.

Multiple Attachments and Attempts

SafeAssign recognizes a student's multiple attempts for an individual assignment as submitted by the same student for the same assignment. SafeAssign does not check the contents of the student's current attempt against content from previous submissions.

If a student includes more than one attachment with an assignment, they are listed in the report. Click a file name link to view the file's text in the left panel and view its word count in the right panel.



Attachments (2)	
bibliography.docx	10%
opinion_paper_cc2.docx	26%
Word Count: 1,638 Attachment ID: 26293251	

Interpret SafeAssign Scores

Sentence matching scores represent the percentage probability that two phrases have the same meaning. This number reflects 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. There is a 10 percent probability that they are similar by chance and not because the submitted paper includes content from the existing source—whether appropriately attributed or not.

The overall SafeAssign score indicates the probability that the submitted paper contains matches to existing sources. This score is a warning indicator only. Review papers to see if the matches are properly attributed.

- **Scores below 15 percent:** These papers typically include some quotes and few common phrases or blocks of text that match other documents. Typically, these papers do not require further analysis as there is no evidence of plagiarism.
- **Scores between 15 percent and 40 percent:** These papers include extensive quoted or paraphrased material, or they include plagiarism. Review these papers to determine if the matching text is properly referenced.
- **Scores over 40 percent:** A very high probability exists that text in these papers was copied from other sources. These papers include quoted or paraphrased text in excess, and need to be reviewed for plagiarism.



DirectSubmit

DirectSubmit generates SafeAssign reports on papers not uploaded to an assignment using the SafeAssign service. You can use DirectSubmit to add papers to the institutional database. Whenever possible, Blackboard advises creating assignments with the SafeAssign submission option selected.

DirectSubmit is not integrated with the Grade Center.

In one session using DirectSubmit, you can submit a single paper or submit multiple papers in a single ZIP file. DirectSubmit cannot process files that are larger than 10 MB.

How to Submit Papers Through DirectSubmit

1. On the **Control Panel**, expand the **Course Tools** section and click **SafeAssign**.
2. Click **DirectSubmit**. A list of folders and papers appears. This list includes papers already uploaded through DirectSubmit. Blackboard recommends not deleting files from DirectSubmit because this deletes them from the institutional database of existing materials.
3. Navigate to a folder where you want to upload the paper or ZIP file.
4. Click **Submit a Paper**.
Tip: If you receive an error that you are not logged in, check your browser settings. Your browser settings should allow third party cookies and website data.
5. Click **Upload File** and browse for the files. Alternatively, click **Copy/Paste Document** and add the document text in the box.
6. Select the upload options:
 - **Submit as Draft:** SafeAssign reports are generated, but the papers are not added to the institutional database and is not used to check other papers.
 - **Skip Plagiarism Checking:** Adds the papers to the institutional database without checking for content copied from other sources. Use this option to upload papers from an earlier course to ensure that current students are not reusing work.
7. Click **Submit**.

Shared and Private Folders

DirectSubmit shared folders are viewable by anyone with access to the DirectSubmit tool through your course. With shared folders, multiple instructors and teaching assistants can view submissions related to a course.

You can also use private folders to manage papers. Your private folders follow you and are available in any course where you have instructor-level privileges.



Supported File Types

DirectSubmit supports the following file types:

- Microsoft® Word document (DOC, DOCX)
- Rich Text Format (RTF)
- HTML (HTM, HTML)
- Text (TXT, TEXT)
- Zip-compressed multiple files (ZIP)
- Portable document format (PDF)
- Open document format (ODT)



Language Support in SafeAssign

SafeAssign Supports English-Based Languages

SafeAssign does more than translate words from one language to another. SafeAssign uses algorithms that make decisions about potential plagiarism based on word frequency, sentence structure, and other linguistic characteristics that are specific to the English language.

Support for Non-English-Based Languages

Blackboard has a partnership with an alternative plagiarism vendor, TurnItIn. TurnItIn integrates with Blackboard Learn and is available for international clients or anyone who needs support for non-English-based languages. To learn more, see www.turnitin.com.



SafeAssign FAQs

I want to restore a course I created that contains old SafeAssignments. Now that SafeAssign is integrated into regular Blackboard Learn assignments, what happens to my old SafeAssignments when I restore my course?

For import/export, SafeAssignments that reside within the previous (source) course are converted to Blackboard Learn assignments with SafeAssign enabled. Any submissions that were made to either SafeAssignments or regular assignments in the previous course will not be duplicated in the new courses. Additionally, any settings that were defined on SafeAssignments in the previous course will be applied to the newly created Blackboard Learn assignments with SafeAssign enabled in the new courses, such as availability dates, and points possible.

For exact copy and archive/restore, SafeAssignments that reside within the previous (source) course are not converted to Blackboard Learn assignments with SafeAssign enabled. Any submissions that were made to SafeAssignments in the previous course will be duplicated—for exact course copy, or recreated—for a course archive/restore.

Can I still use the SafeAssign Course Tool?

Yes. The SafeAssign course tool displays both old SafeAssignments and Blackboard Learn assignments with SafeAssign enabled.

Can I allow multiple attempts for assignments that use SafeAssign?

Yes. SafeAssign can now report on multiple attempts for one assignment. If more than one attempt is allowed, attachments for all attempts are visible in the report. Each new attempt is recognized as originating from the same student and the same assignment, and is not checked against content in previous attempts.

Can I create group assignments using SafeAssign?

Yes. SafeAssign can now report on group assignments. Submitting group members appear in the report. The report is linked to each individual student when viewing in the Grade Center.

What happens when I delete submissions? Can I restore them?

SafeAssign is a cloud service and student papers are stored in the SafeAssign database. SafeAssign maintains a referential link between the course/assignment/student or group AND the submission that a particular paper and the originality report is associated with. However, it is possible that a restored archive or an exact course copy (including submissions) could contain references to submissions that were previously deleted.

Example:

- 1. In week 1, a student submits to an assignment with SafeAssign enabled.**
- 2. At the end of the course, the instructor archives the course and deletes the course, assignment, or submission from Blackboard Learn.**
- 3. Later, the instructor restores the course using the course archive package.**



From SafeAssign's perspective, the "link" between the course, assignment, or submission and the underlying paper has been broken due to the instructor's actions in step 2. Therefore, in the restored course, the instructor cannot view the SafeAssign originality report for the submission. To restore the link between the SafeAssign data and the course/assignment/submission, click **Synchronize Course**.

Are there any changes to the process for submitting assignments?

No changes were made to the student process for submitting assignments with SafeAssign enabled.

Can I use anonymous and delegated grading with SafeAssign?

Yes. When grading anonymously is enabled, graders are unable to view SafeAssign information. When grading is complete, the plagiarism detection is run. You can follow up with any students who might have issues and modify grades, if necessary.

Does SafeAssign work elsewhere in Blackboard Learn, such as in Self & Peer Assessment, forums, or Content Collections?

Not at this time.

