

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
Usage Guidelines for SafeAssign Plagiarism Prevention Software

(Approved by Academic Council and the Provost 9/24/12)

SafeAssign is plagiarism prevention software hosted within the Blackboard learning environment. SafeAssign provides an originality report to the instructor (and in some cases the student) that must be reviewed to determine if plagiarism has occurred. The Duquesne University definition of plagiarism can be found in the *Academic Integrity Policy* available on the Academic Affairs website. SafeAssign is intended to be one of the various resources—including the University Writing Center, Libraries, and the instructor—to help students properly cite and attribute other works and to become better writers.

SafeAssign can be used in a course at the discretion of the instructor. That is, it is optional for an instructor to use the software. However, the instructor may require its use in a course by applying the procedures described below.

1. Assign a unique code number to each student. The code number should not be any official university identifier and new numbers should be assigned for each class.
2. Inform students that prior to submitting work to SafeAssign they must remove all identifying information from the paper, including information that would allow one to deduce the identity of the author. Tell students that if they do not remove identifying information, such as in the paper's header and footer, cover page, and information elsewhere in the paper, their name will be associated with their paper and it may appear in future originality reports.
3. Have students put the student code on their paper (in a header or footer or at the top of the first page) and in the name of the computer file with a term code (ex.: 1234-fa12.doc, B345fa12.docx, fa12123C.pdf, etc.)
4. Save the paper in a format that can be opened by Microsoft Word and submit it to SafeAssign.
5. Carefully review the Safe Assign Originality Report to determine if there are incidents of plagiarism.

Note that at any time an instructor may submit a paper to SafeAssign via the Direct Submit option if all identifying information has been removed from the document.

It is recommended that if an instructor requires SafeAssign usage in the class these procedures be included in the syllabus. Further, if an instructor elects to use SafeAssign via Direct Submit, which does not require student involvement, it is recommended that this intention be clearly stated in the syllabus.

Notification and permission

It is recommended that an instructor

- Explain to students that they have the option to decide whether a paper is included in the Global Reference database. Tell students if they decide to include their paper, SafeAssign will maintain a copy of their paper indefinitely and compare all submitted papers against it, which means their paper could be returned as a matching source on future students' originality reports and SafeAssign can use their paper as it sees fit to provide its services.

Usage

It is recommended that an instructor

- Use SafeAssign to help students learn from their mistakes: 1) Use draft mode—alone or together with final mode. 2) Share the originality report with students. 3) Clearly notify students if the instructor intends to use the Direct Submit option, which excludes student involvement (i.e., does not inform students that their papers are being submitted and does not share originality reports with students).
- Teach students about source use and misuse for the discipline. Be explicit about the conventions. Do not view SafeAssign as a substitute for instruction in proper source use and integration.
- Review originality reports carefully to check whether material flagged as copied is, in fact, misused. A SafeAssign originality report without any supporting documentation should not be used as the sole basis for a plagiarism accusation.