SafeAssign is a tool in Blackboard that uses the Internet to compare your written assignments against a database of journal articles, other texts, and papers submitted by students worldwide. SafeAssign identifies similarities between your document and these other texts.

NOTE: Copying anything (even just a few words or phrases) violates UTSPH academic rules. UTSPH enforces this rule rigorously. In all your work at UTSPH, you must use your own words to explain your understanding of the materials you have read. When you directly quote another person’s words, you must put the words in quotation marks and reference the original source, including page number. Quotations should be used very rarely.

The information here will help you avoid violating university policy about copying material written by others.

You can use SafeAssign to:

- check the originality of your own work BEFORE you submit it to an instructor.
- identify parts of your writing that you need to rewrite because they borrow ideas or words from others.

NOTE: A low score on a SafeAssign report does NOT guarantee that you are submitting original work; it is simply one tool among many that you should use to make sure that your work is original and that you have properly referenced your source materials.

You can use SafeAssign on Bb, even if none of your classes uses Bb.
How to submit papers using SafeAssign

Enrolling in the “SPH SafeAssign” course *(you need to do this only once)*

- Once you are in Blackboard, click the "Organizations" tab at the top of the page.
- In the “organization search” box on the left, type "SafeAssign", and click "Go".
- The "SPH SafeAssign" course will appear. Click "Enroll", then "Submit". This will add the course to your Organization list (found under the Organizations tab), which should be present on the Blackboard site the next time you login. See Figure 1.

Submitting papers using SafeAssign

- Once you are in Blackboard, click the “Organizations” tab (top of page).
- Click "SPH SafeAssign" to enter the course.
- Click the "SafeAssign" link on the left side of the page.
- You will see a link to submit your assignment. Click it and you will see a page similar to Figure 2.
Figure 2: Upload Safe Assignment

Upload your file using the Browse button.

NOTE: Do NOT check the box in section 3 (Global Reference Database). If you do so, your paper will be permanently added to the global SafeAssign database, and future submissions of your paper by your instructor will result in a “hit” for copied material.

Click on the “submit” button at the bottom right of the screen. It may take 30 minutes or sometimes longer for the results to be posted. You may exit from Blackboard and return later to check results.

Viewing the results of the plagiarism check

- Login to Blackboard as before and select the “SPH SafeAssign” course.
- Click on “gradebook” (link is on the left side of the page). See Figure 3.
Click the exclamation mark in the SafeAssign table, “Calculated Grade” column. See Figure 4.

Percent Matching

This score gives you an indication of how much text was found to be very similar to a source. Any matching should be checked because no copying is allowed.

A high percentage matching score usually indicates that you have followed your original source too closely. A score of 90 percent means that there is a 90 percent probability that these two sentences express the same idea, even if the words are not identical. However, a high match score does not necessarily mean that you copied material. For example, citations and lists of references are usually marked as matching other sources, because other sources have cited the same resources. Matching citations do not count as copying.
Alternatively, a low match score may still indicate that you borrowed a sentence or phrase, and you must edit your work to be original. Further, a 0% matching score is not a guarantee that your work is completely original, as SafeAssign compares your work against a limited database and does not search every one of the approximately 45,000 journals published.

Use your good judgement! Do not copy the words or ideas of others!

In your SafeAssign report, check to make sure that:

- When quoted text matches the original source exactly word-for-word, you put the quote in quotation marks and cite the original source correctly with the page number for the quotation.
- When you paraphrase or summarize ideas or facts from a source, you use your own words to explain those ideas or report those facts.
- You correctly cite the source for each idea or fact that you obtained from another source (whether or not it is an exact quotation).
- You revise and restate in your own words any phrases that match more than a few (3 or 4) words in a source.
From this information, you will be able to:

- Interpret the results of the SafeAssign report.
- Identify sentence matching and basic steps needed to investigate whether matching text is properly referenced or not.

Click the link under the column titled "SA Report" to view the results of the query. See Figure 5.

![SafeAssign Report](image)

You will see a screen similar to Figure 6. The sources of each match will be listed (in the example, one source is indicated by the number 1 in a green circle). Also, in Figure 6 you will see the document text with the same circle and number and text in color. The colored text was found in the indicated source.
If you select the “highlight all”, the source and document text will be color coded to match. This function simplifies finding the matched text and is an easy indicator for where the source material can be found.

When you place your cursor on a phrase in your document that is marked as matching, a pop-up window will show your text on one line, and the text of the similar source material on another line.