

UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

Main Library: Similarity and AI Report Issuing Unit (SARIU)

Subject: Guidelines for the Centralized Submission of Documents for Similarity and AI Detection

1. Introduction and Purpose

In accordance with the approved Terms of Reference (TOR) (Annexure 1) at the 518th Senate meeting, the **Similarity and AI Report Issuing Unit (SARIU)** has been established in the Main Library to manage academic integrity services centrally. The primary objective of the SARIU is to uphold the University's commitment to originality, institutional quality assurance, and academic ethics by providing standardized, reliable, and institutionally approved similarity and AI detection reports through authorized software platforms.

2. Scope of Services

The SARIU provides assessment services for a wide range of scholarly outputs, including:

- **Undergraduate Level:** Assignments, project reports, research reports/dissertations, and research papers.
- **Postgraduate Level:** Dissertations, coursework reports/assignments, theses, and research papers.
- **Staff and Institutional Research:** Research papers of academic/non-academic staff, conference papers, and grant-funded research proposals and research papers.
- **Publications:** Manuscripts intended for indexed or peer-reviewed journals, symposium papers, and conference papers.

3. Submission Protocol

To ensure institutional authentication and accountability, all submissions must adhere to the following procedural requirements:

- **Authorized Channels:** All requests must be submitted via official University of Colombo email accounts.
- **Primary Contact:** Submissions should be directed to the designated SARIU email address: similarity.ai@lib.cmb.ac.lk
- **Contact number:** 0112586432

4. Technical Specifications and Compliance

Documents that do not meet the following criteria will not be processed:

Feature	Requirement
File Format	Microsoft Word (.doc / .docx) or PDF.
Max File Size	100 MB per submission.
Large Files	May be submitted as two separate files or by temporarily removing images (textual content must remain unaltered).
Document Content	Must include bibliography and references; the SARIU will exclude these during report generation.

5. Institutional Recognition and Quality Assurance

- Official Status: SARIU reports are recognized as official University of Colombo documents for all academic and administrative purposes.
- Approved Software: Assessments are conducted using institutionally approved platforms, namely Turnitin and Drillbit.
- Confidentiality: All documents are handled in accordance with the University's data protection policies and used solely for assessment purposes. Documents submitted will not be added to the software repository.

6. Administrative Responsibility

Rector of the Sri Palee Campus, Deans of Faculties, Directors of Institutes, Heads of Departments, and Coordinators of Postgraduate Units/Programmes are requested to ensure that all staff and students are informed of this centralized procedure. Adherence to these guidelines is essential for maintaining institutional uniformity and quality assurance standards.

Library, University of Colombo

09th February 2026

Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Similarity and AI Report Issuing Unit (SARIU)

Main Library – University of Colombo

1. Introduction

The University of Colombo (UOC), as the leading higher education institution in Sri Lanka, accords paramount importance to the preservation of academic integrity, originality, and ethical standards in scholarly and research practices. In the context of a rapidly expanding volume of research outputs generated by undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as academic and non-academic staff, and in light of the accelerated adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) assisted writing technologies, the need for a structured, centralized, and institutionally governed mechanism for the systematic assessment of textual similarity and AI-assisted content in academic work has become increasingly imperative. In response to this institutional imperative, the Main Library of the University of Colombo shall establish a dedicated unit to centrally manage similarity and AI detection services across the University, thereby supporting research quality assurance, promoting responsible scholarly practices, and upholding institutional and international standards of academic integrity.

2. Establishment of the SARIU

A dedicated unit designated as the SARIU shall be established under the administrative purview of the Main Library, University of Colombo. The unit shall function under the overall supervision of a Deputy Librarian or a Senior Assistant Librarian appointed by the Library Administration. SARIU shall operate as a centralized service entity, providing similarity and AI detection services to all Faculties, Institutes, School, Campus, and Branch Libraries of the University of Colombo, thereby ensuring uniformity, consistency, and institutional oversight in the assessment of scholarly outputs.

3. Objectives of the SARIU

- To ensure the maintenance of academic integrity and originality in scholarly work submitted to the University of Colombo
- To provide standardized, reliable, and institutionally approved similarity and AI detection reports through the use of authorized software platforms
- To support students, academics, and researchers in enhancing the quality, originality, and ethical standards of academic writing and research outputs
- To assist campus, faculties, institutes and administrative authorities in research quality assurance processes and in ensuring compliance with university policies and internationally recognized academic standards

4. Scope of the SARIU Services

SARIU shall provide similarity and AI detection services using the following approved software platforms:

- *Turnitin Similarity and AI Detection Software*
- *Drillbit Similarity and AI Detection Software*

The services shall encompass, but not be limited to, the following categories of scholarly and academic outputs:

- Undergraduate assignments, projects, and research submissions
- Master's-level dissertations and coursework reports
- MPhil and PhD theses
- Research outputs produced by academic and non-academic staff
- Manuscripts intended for submission to indexed or peer-reviewed journals
- Conference and symposium papers, grant-funded research outputs, and institutional research submissions

5. Eligibility to Request Reports

Requests for similarity and AI detection reports may be submitted by the following categories of users:

- Undergraduate students
- Postgraduate students
- Academic staff members
- Non-academic staff members
- Faculties, Institutes, School, Campus, and Branch Libraries of the University of Colombo

All requests shall be submitted exclusively through an official University of Colombo email address, thereby ensuring institutional authentication and accountability.

6. Submission and Request Procedure

6.1 Request Channels

Requests for similarity and AI detection reports shall be submitted through one of the following official channels:

- The designated official email address of SARIU; or
- The official Google Form published on the Main Library website of the University of Colombo

6.2 Submission Format

- Documents shall be submitted in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or Portable Document Format (PDF)
- The maximum permissible file size per submission shall be 100 MB

In instances where the document exceeds the prescribed file size limit:

- The document may be submitted as two separate files; or
- Images may be temporarily removed solely for the purpose of conducting similarity and AI detection, without altering the textual content

7. Software Allocation Policy

To ensure equitable access, cost efficiency, and methodological consistency in similarity and AI detection, the SARIU shall adhere to the following software allocation policy:

7.1 Undergraduate Students

- All documents submitted by undergraduate students shall be assessed exclusively using *Drillbit Similarity and AI Detection Software*
- Requests for *Turnitin* reports from undergraduate students shall be considered only upon formal recommendation by the Head of Department, using the designated special request form made available through the Main Library website

7.2 Master's Degree Students

- Documents submitted by Master's degree students shall be assessed initially using *Drillbit Similarity and AI Detection Software*
- Final submissions shall be assessed using *Turnitin Similarity and AI Detection Software*

7.3 MPhil and PhD Students

- All similarity and AI detection assessments for MPhil and PhD submissions shall be conducted exclusively using *Turnitin Similarity and AI Detection Software*

7.4 Academic and Non-Academic Staff

- All documents submitted by academic and non-academic staff members shall be assessed using *Turnitin Similarity and AI Detection Software*

7.5 Publications

- Any document intended for submission to an indexed or peer-reviewed journal, or to an academic conference, shall be assessed using *Turnitin Similarity and AI Detection Software*, irrespective of the category of the requesting user.

8. Frequency of Checks

- Each document submitted to the SARIU shall be subjected to a maximum of two (02) similarity and AI detection checks
- A third similarity and AI detection check shall be permitted only upon submission of a written justification and subject to the prior approval of the Deputy Librarian or Senior Assistant Librarian (SARIU)
- This limitation is imposed in view of the finite number of annual submissions available under the licensed similarity and AI detection software platforms

9. Turnaround Time

- Similarity and AI detection reports shall be issued **within two (02) working days** from the time of receiving a complete and valid request
- Delays caused by incomplete submissions or technical issues shall be communicated to the requester promptly

10. Issuance and Authentication of Reports

- All similarity and AI detection reports shall be generated using standardized settings approved by the Main Library, including the exclusion of bibliographies and matches below eight-word phrases
- All reports shall be officially authenticated and issued under the signature of the Deputy Librarian or the Senior Assistant Librarian in charge of SARIU
- Reports issued by SARIU shall be recognized as official documents of the University of Colombo for academic and administrative purposes

11. Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations

- All documents submitted to the SARIU shall be treated with strict confidentiality
- Submitted documents shall be used exclusively for the purpose of conducting similarity and AI detection analyses
- No document shall be shared, stored, archived, or reused beyond the scope required for report generation
- All SARIU staff members shall comply with University policies and regulations relating to data protection, academic ethics, and confidentiality

12. Roles and Responsibilities

Deputy Librarian / Senior Assistant Librarian (SARIU)

- Provide overall supervision and administrative oversight of the unit
- Review and approve special requests
- Authenticate and authorize the issuance of similarity and AI detection reports
- Report usage statistics and operational summaries to the Library Administration as required

Assigned Library Staff

- Receive, verify, and process requests submitted to the SARIU
- Upload submitted documents to the approved similarity and AI detection software platforms
- Generate, format, and prepare reports in accordance with approved standards
- Maintain accurate submission records, logs, and relevant documentation

13. Monitoring and Review

- Usage statistics, turnaround times, and the performance of similarity and AI detection software shall be reviewed periodically to ensure efficiency and compliance
- These Terms of Reference may be reviewed and revised, as necessary, in response to:
 - Availability or changes in licensed software;
 - Budgetary considerations;
 - Revisions to institutional or national academic integrity policies; and
 - Technological advancements in similarity and AI detection methodologies.

14. Effective Date

These Terms of Reference shall come into effect from the date of Senate approval and shall remain in force until amended or replaced by a subsequent Terms of Reference.

Approved by:

The 41st Library Quality Assurance Committee (LibQAC) meeting held on 30th December 2025.