

From: [REDACTED] 5.1.2e <[REDACTED] 5.1.2e@law.leidenuniv.nl>
Sent: Tuesday, [REDACTED] 5.1.2e 4:37 PM
To: LAW - Advanced Master Board of Examiners
<AdvancedMasterBoardOfExaminers@LAW.leidenuniv.nl>
Cc: [REDACTED] 5.1.2e <[REDACTED] 5.1.2e@LAW.leidenuniv.nl>; [REDACTED] 5.1.2e
<[REDACTED] 5.1.2e@law.leidenuniv.nl>; [REDACTED] 5.1.2e <[REDACTED] 5.1.2e@law.leidenuniv.nl>
Subject: suspected case of fraud in Adv LLM thesis

Dear Advanced Master Board of Examiners,

I am writing to report a case of suspected fraud in an LLM Adv thesis in the [REDACTED] 5.1.2e [REDACTED] 5.1.2e program. This is a complex case and we would very much welcome the advice of the Exam Board on how to deal with it.

We suspect that the student in question, [REDACTED] 5.1.2e did not fully write [REDACTED] 5.1.2e LLM thesis [REDACTED] 5.1.2e and tried to throw off the plagiarism check. This is based on the following elements:

- During a meeting between the student, [REDACTED] 5.1.2e and myself, the student admitted to having asked for help with [REDACTED] 5.1.2e thesis to [REDACTED] 5.1.2e before the final submission. [REDACTED] 5.1.2e said [REDACTED] 5.1.2e was scrambling for time and asked a friend for help in formatting citations in the footnotes. [REDACTED] 5.1.2e was not very clear on when [REDACTED] 5.1.2e asked for help, first saying it was in [REDACTED] 5.1.2e before the final submission, then beginning of [REDACTED] 5.1.2e
 - o This explanation is not entirely persuasive as at that point in time [REDACTED] 5.1.2e had lots of time on [REDACTED] 5.1.2e hands to format the citations in the footnotes. We are worried about the extent to which a third person may have helped in writing the thesis, in addition to formatting the citations, especially because there was a dramatic increase in the quality of the draft between the first submission in [REDACTED] 5.1.2e (which was not up to standards, and that [REDACTED] 5.1.2e failed to resubmit) and the submission of the full draft for comments on [REDACTED] 5.1.2e. In any event, the student should have formatted the thesis [REDACTED] 5.1.2e
- During the same meeting, [REDACTED] 5.1.2e admitted to using a software to check that [REDACTED] 5.1.2e text was free of plagiarism. Because the bibliography appeared as a match, [REDACTED] 5.1.2e said [REDACTED] 5.1.2e hyphenated some words in the bibliography in order to throw off the plagiarism check. Similarly, [REDACTED] 5.1.2e said [REDACTED] 5.1.2e hyphenated some words (such as [REDACTED] 5.1.2e) in the main body of the thesis because they recurred often and [REDACTED] 5.1.2e was worried about plagiarism.
 - o Again, this explanation is not entirely persuasive as these hyphenated words in the main body of the thesis appear in the draft version submitted for comments on [REDACTED] 5.1.2e [REDACTED] 5.1.2e and were removed from the version that was submitted for grading. Moreover, there are tens – maybe hundreds – of words that are hyphenated in the draft version submitted on [REDACTED] 5.1.2e including nontechnical words such as “however”, “important”, [REDACTED] 5.1.2e etc.
 - o There is a sentence in hidden font (in white, that blends against the white background of the document) on p 7, and a stray “s” on p 9. The student could not really explain why this hidden text is there. There is also other text in hidden font in the table of abbreviations; the student admitted to using the hidden font to help with the alignment of the table, and we do not find that problematic. What seems a bit strange is that the table of abbreviations was nicely formatted in the draft version submitted on [REDACTED] 5.1.2e, and contains no hidden text.
- The bibliography in the final version of the thesis contains a number of sources that are not cited in the main body of the thesis. When we pointed this out to the student, [REDACTED] 5.1.2e explained that [REDACTED] 5.1.2e did not have time to update the bibliography before the final

submission. 5.1.2e had deleted some sources and added other, and these changes are not reflected in the final version.

It bears emphasising that the examination of the Turnitin report did not reveal any issues with plagiarism. Turnitin only flagged the use of hidden text in the thesis, which triggered the subsequent steps that we have taken to investigate the issue. We attach 5.1.2e thesis submission (both the originally submitted file, and a copy with the hidden text highlighted in red), the drafts that 5.1.2e previously submitted, and the notes of our meeting with the student. Should you need anything else, please do not hesitate to ask.

We would have graded the thesis with 5.1.2e and then applied a 0.5 penalty for late submission (the thesis was submitted 2 days late with no explanation). We would be grateful for your advice on whether any further penalties are warranted. We will inform the student that we have reported the case to the Board of Examiners.

Kind regards,
5.1.2e

5.1.2e
5.1.2e
5.1.2e