

From: [REDACTED] 5.1.2e <[REDACTED] 5.1.2e @law.leidenuniv.nl>
Sent: Wednesday, [REDACTED] 5.1.2e 2:57 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
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<[REDACTED] 5.1.2e @LAW.leidenuniv.nl>
Subject: [REDACTED] 5.1.2e (Urgent) Request for assessment of plagiarism case: severe or moderate
Importance: High

Dear Board of Examiners of the Adv.LL.M. programs,

With this email I aim to report and ask your decision on what we (the Programme Board with the Thesis coordinator) see as a severe, or possibly moderate to severe, case of plagiarism in one of our theses.

The case came up during the current thesis grading process in our Adv.LL.M. on [REDACTED] 5.1.2e
[REDACTED] 5.1.2e

It concerns the following thesis (see the Turnitin report attached):

[REDACTED] 5.1.2e : [REDACTED] 5.1.2e
[REDACTED] 5.1.2e

Supervisor: [REDACTED] 5.1.2e

Following the Plagiarism Protocol Section 4.2 step 3, I am now submitting the requested report based on our initial assessment of this being a severe case. I am requesting the Board of Examiners:

- either to confirm our initial classification of this being a severe case of plagiarism, or to de-escalate this case to qualify as moderate

in order to help steer us regarding the consequences for the student and the handling of the case.

Whether or not the thesis can be resubmitted (and the student can complete the program within the current year) will depend on the qualification of the severity, as per the end of Section III of the Plagiarism Protocol (attached):

2. In cases of moderate plagiarism (i.e. plagiarism that is more than minor but not considered severe), imposition of penalty points ranging from 1.0 to 2.0 accompanied by a written reprimand. The student will be required to resubmit the paper or thesis with the plagiarism corrected. ;
3. In cases of severe, intentional, plagiarism, a failing grade for the assessment, a written reprimand, and the requirement that they resubmit a new paper or thesis on a new topic within a specified timeframe;

Our initial assessment of the case as *severe* is based on:

- the amount of text copied without proper attribution: up to full pages copied from a source that is referenced elsewhere in the thesis, but not where the large amounts of text were copied (see more detailed notes at the bottom of this email)
- The fact that the copied text includes literally copied footnotes (so the attribution in the copied text has also been copied)
- The fact that repeated remarks by the supervisor flagging issues with proper attribution (also regarding the specific large parts of copied text) have not been followed up

- Minor cases of lack of quotation marks or references appear throughout the thesis
- Some parts that stand out by showing no similarity match in Turnitin seem to point at unacknowledged use of generative AI (although it is, and in the current state remains, uncertain whether this only concerns polishing grammar and spelling, or generating entire pieces of text).

However, I would like to stress that by no means do we want to imply there are malicious intentions involved (which may be a critical component for a case to be qualified as severe). Having said that, we do feel a responsibility towards upholding the academic standards of the program, and the expectations that are implied in the title that we confer upon passing a thesis and completing the program. In this respect it may be significant to know that, as 5.1.2e and 5.1.2e, we have called in the student in 5.1.2e 5.1.2e and 5.1.2e to discuss concerns about the student's performance and understanding of the academic standards (FYI: 5.1.2e did pass all courses, but most of the grades were marginal passes, and have relied on retakes and/or group work). In those conversations, the student reassured us 5.1.2e would do everything to do better on both performance and understanding of the standards, and that 5.1.2e would not need extra help from us with that. This also means that we did not give specific instructions to the thesis supervisor, so there would be no prejudice from their side. In retrospect, this may have led to the situation that the issues only came to our attention with the final version.

Following the plagiarism protocol (Section 4.2, with an initial assessment of this case as severe), the thesis coordinator and 5.1.2e flagged the issue to 5.1.2e on 5.1.2e (step 1). We notified and consulted the thesis supervisor, and then invited the student for a meeting with the Program board, Thesis coordinator and Thesis supervisor (step 2). This meeting took place this morning, Wednesday 5.1.2e at 9:00-9:30, and the student was given the opportunity to respond. The meeting, 5.1.2e was recorded for documentation and transparency. The student acknowledged the concerns and has expressed willingness to repair the problematic areas.

We are very much aware that there is a lot at stake for the student: not completing the program (by failing the thesis) would have severe financial consequences (repayment of the scholarship), as would having to reregister for the next academic year in case 5.1.2e would be asked to write a completely new thesis. The student has started to realize this: after the meeting this morning, 5.1.2e reached out to 5.1.2e asking for further clarification on the consequences and on what 5.1.2e can do. FYI: this follow up meeting is being planned for tomorrow (Thursday 5.1.2e to be held with 5.1.2e and Thesis Coordinator.

With this email, I attach:

- The current Plagiarism Protocol (referred to above)
- The Turnitin report of the Student's thesis
- The email inviting the student for the conversation

I also copy in (below) the more detailed notes prepared by 5.1.2e in preparation for the meeting with the student. If necessary, upon request, we can also make the recording of the conversation with the student available to the board of examiners.

Apologies for asking for putting some time pressure on the process, but in the interest of the student and given our 5.1.2e, we would appreciate if you can get back to us asap.

Best wishes, 5.1.2e

More detailed notes:

- Multiple pages of text had severe issues with plagiarism. Most notably, starting on page 19 of the thesis through page 26, text was copied from 5.1.2e without proper attribution. At times, it was entire pages of text that were copied, and the same footnotes were used, and 5.1.2e was not cited.
 - Note: 5.1.2e PDF submission had a 44% similarity score (higher in PDF than the 36% in DOC version for whatever reason).
- Further, there are also concerns of generative AI, particularly where text was not copied
 - For example, in the executive summary (99%) and main findings (97%), also p. 8 (87%), p. 11 (80%), p. 12 (77%), p. 13 (99%), p. 18 (94%), among others.

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Limited responsiveness and availability on 5.1.2e

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