

To: 5.1.2e @umail.leidenuniv.nl | 5.1.2e @umail.leidenuniv.nl]
From: LAW - Examencommissie
Sent: Mon 5.1.2e 10:45:15 AM
Subject: 5.1.2e decision Board of Examiners (exam fraud)
Received: Mon 5.1.2e 10:44:00 AM

Dear 5.1.2e

On 5.1.2e you submitted your thesis for the master's programme 5.1.2e Your thesis supervisor/examiner has found irregularities in your thesis that you submitted two weeks ago, irregularities that have given rise to a suspicion of fraud (use of artificial intelligence), because several sources referred to in the thesis do not exist. In accordance with the provisions contained in Article 6.2 of the [Rules and Regulations](#) (R&R), the supervisor reported 5.1.2e findings to the Board of Examiners. The supervisor notified you of the suspicion and of the fact that 5.1.2e reported this to the Board of Examiners.

The Board of Examiners has studied your thesis and the information given by the examiner and on 5.1.2e gave you an opportunity to state your views on the matter and its possible consequences. On 5.1.2e you responded to this request via email. You write:

"Thank you for your email for the opportunity to respond to the concerns raised. I take these allegations very seriously and would like to address them point by point:

I fully appreciate the gravity of this investigation and the additional work my mistakes have created for my supervisor and the Board of Examiners, and I offer my sincere apologies.

This is my first citation-related breach at Leiden. It arose from an ill-judged use of an AI formatting tool and from my own inexperience—not from any intention to deceive.

Explanation for citation error

After meeting my supervisor on 5.1.2e I received extensive comments, especially on Chapter 5, yet had only one week to rewrite the entire chapter. To save time I asked GPT to convert my footnotes into 5.1.2e style instead of using the usual reference-manager plug-in. I believed this fell within Level 3 "AI-assisted editing" permitted by the University's [guidance Scale of AI Use at Leiden University \(version 5.1.2e p. 3\)](#), which allows AI for language or formatting so long as the output is checked and cited. Regrettably, some citations were altered in the process, and, under deadline pressure, I failed to run a final manual verification.

I accept full responsibility for these referencing errors, welcome any educational measures the faculty considers appropriate, and stand ready to rewrite Chapter 5 in its entirety. I respectfully ask the Board to weigh these circumstances with care.

For example :

footnote 30:

The reference in footnote 30 is genuine: it should read 5.1.2e as shown in the original article. During my conversion of citations into 5.1.2e I asked GPT to format footnote. Because 5.1.2e work appears repeatedly in that thesis, the AI auto filled 5.1.2e name and invented a matching journal entry; pressed for time, I failed to catch the hallucination.

footnote 186:

This case exists. The correct authority for the statement on 5.1.2e is 5.1.2e which confirms that 5.1.2e I have replaced the citation accordingly and verified all other 5.1.2e case references. The error was a citation-management oversight, not an attempt to invent sources.

After reading the case, I then asked GPT to format my footnote in accordance with 5.1.2e but I did not anticipate that this would introduce formatting errors.

(...)

My writing process started with identifying key concepts related to 5.1.2e and then searching these keywords through the Leiden University Library catalogue and Google Scholar. When I found relevant articles or books, I carefully reviewed their citations and footnotes, which enabled me to discover additional academic sources and deepen my understanding.

I fully recognize the seriousness of my mistakes, particularly my failure to manually verify the citations after using AI formatting assistance, which constitutes a significant oversight on my part. I deeply regret this lapse in judgment and sincerely assure the Board that I am determined to improve my academic rigor and strictly adhere to all referencing guidelines in the future. I am ready and willing to accept any corrective measures or penalties deemed appropriate by the faculty to reinforce my commitment to academic integrity.”

Also on 5.1.2e you sent an email to your supervisor, writing:

“I am writing to apologize and to explain exactly what happened in Chapter 5 of my thesis. Under severe time pressure in the final hours before submission, I putted my source papers into ChatGPT and asked it to re-format the footnotes in proper 5.1.2e style. I believed it would simply tidy up the citations—but I did not realize it would “hallucinate” extra details and invent sources. That was entirely my fault, and I take full responsibility for this lapse in judgement.

When I first saw your email and realized seven footnotes were invalid, I was stunned and genuinely frightened. I have great respect for your guidance and for Leiden’s academic standards, and the thought that I may have let you—and the University—down has weighed on me heavily. I did not anticipate that an AI formatting shortcut could produce such serious errors, and I am deeply sorry for not double-checking.

I have already explained the situation fully to the Board of Examiners and asked for permission to rewrite a new thesis. I humbly ask you—and the Board—for one more chance to make this right. These past days I have barely slept, constantly worried about the consequences for my record and future.

Thank you for your patience and for the time you have already invested in supervising my work. I am truly ashamed of this mistake and determined to prove—through honest effort and your continued guidance—that I can meet the high standards expected of an LL.M. candidate at Leiden.”

The Board of Examiners considers as follows.

Pursuant to Article 6.1 R&R, insofar as relevant here, fraud is understood to mean “any action or omission that renders proper judgment of someone’s knowledge, insight, skills, (professional) attitude or reflection entirely or partially impossible, including in any event (...) making use of fictitious research data, graphs, literature and literature references.

It follows from this definition that for there to be fraud, the intention of the student is irrelevant.

There can be no doubt that you are guilty of fraud as defined in Article 6.1, because several sources that you refer to do not exist, such as the source mentioned in footnote 30, the source mentioned in footnote 186, the source mentioned in footnote 188 and the source mentioned in footnote 190, and also the sources mentioned in footnotes 197, 198 and 210. What you say in your email of 5.1.2e to the Board of Examiners does not alter these facts and cannot excuse or justify this. In this regard, the Board also notes that your supervisor – in an email informing the Board of Examiners of your email of 5.1.2e to 5.1.2e – informed us that the draft version you submitted via email on 5.1.2e also contained references to sources that do not exist, which casts doubt on the veracity of what you say in your e-mail to the Board of Examiners about being pressed for time.

The Board of Examiners further considers that the examiner in supervisor meetings has stressed that the use of AI was not allowed, and that you signed the following declaration of originality when you submitted the thesis:

have been clearly identified in footnotes and any and all quotations have been properly marked as such a full attribution made to the author(s) thereof.

I further certify that this work is the product of my own skills and abilities, that it does not contain any part that was produced via the aid, support or assistance of artificial intelligence, including translation systems, or other third parties, including natural persons."

There can be no doubt that you acted contrary to this declaration, because by your own admission you did use artificial intelligence. There can also be no doubt that you did so consciously. This means that you did not take the declaration seriously. It also means that you, in fact, lied when you signed the declaration.

With regard to the question of whether a sanction should be imposed and, if so, which sanction is appropriate, the Board of Examiners notes that fraud is regarded by the university as a serious offence, which in principle must be dealt with strictly. In the words of the Examination Appeals Board: "The starting point of the Board, as well as of the university, is that fraud in any form or scale is not tolerated within an academic environment." "The academic 'company' exists by virtue of trust in the integrity of the scholar. A (prospective) scholar must therefore refrain from fraud at all times (...)".

The Board of Examiners endorses this point of view, also in the light of the task assigned to it by law to guarantee the quality of the exams and examinations.

The Board of Examiners is of the opinion that you are guilty of serious fraud, by submitting a master thesis containing a number of references to sources that do not exist and by signing a declaration of originality that you knew in your case to be a lie. You have thus demonstrated a serious lack of academic integrity. Therefore, the Board is of the opinion that an official warning and declaring the result of your thesis invalid would not do justice to the facts and that there is no reason to give you an opportunity to repair the defects.

Therefore, the Board, by virtue of Article 7.12b paragraph 2 of the Higher Education Act (*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek, WHW*) and Article 6.3 sub b. *R&R*

- declares the result of your thesis invalid.

This means that you have to write a new thesis.

A note of this decision will be added to your electronic file (i.e. uSis), which will not be shared with other persons.

On behalf of the Board of Examiners of Leiden Law School,

5.1.2e

An [appeal](#) against this decision lies with the Examination Appeals Board, c/o Rapenburg 70 , PO Box 9500 , 2300 RA Leiden or via email: cbe@bb.leidenuniv.nl. An appeal must be lodged within six weeks after the decision having been emailed to you.