



DECISION OF THE CENTRAL ACADEMIC ETHICS COMMISSION OF VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

On the complaint submitted by B. K., a student of the /Unit/ of Vilnius University, on 27 June 2025

The Central Academic Ethics Commission (hereinafter the ‘Commission’) received a complaint submitted via the study information system on 27 June 2025 by B. K., a first-year student of the /Unit/ of Vilnius University (hereinafter the ‘Complainant’), which appealed against the decision of the Academic Ethics Commission of the Unit of 16 June 2025 (hereinafter the ‘Unit Commission’).

In the contested decision, the Unit Commission notes that, during the interim assessment of /course unit/ on 26 May 2025, the Complainant used artificial intelligence tools and other sources in an unauthorised manner. Having been warned about this by the lecturer, the Complainant left the classroom shortly afterwards and later entered part of the answers into the system after the fact. Following an oral hearing of the appeal of lecturer M. J. and the explanations of the Complainant, the Unit Commission concluded that the Complainant had committed a gross violation of academic ethics and recommended expulsion from the University.

In the complaint, the Complainant states that during the interim assessment in question, he used artificial intelligence tools in an attempt to clarify the meaning of certain questions. However, once the lecturer drew attention to this, he realised that he would no longer receive a passing grade. Consequently, and due to feeling unwell, he left the classroom without completing the assessment. The Complainant also explained that he later re-entered the system only in order to formally complete the test by selecting random answers for the unanswered questions. The Complainant acknowledges having improperly used artificial intelligence but emphasises that the violation occurred during an interim rather than a final assessment, and that this was his first violation of academic ethics. In his view, these circumstances suggest that the violation should be regarded as less serious. On this basis, the Complainant requests a reconsideration of the Unit Commission’s decision to classify his actions as a gross violation of academic ethics and to recommend his expulsion from the University, arguing that such a decision is disproportionate.

Having examined the Complainant's complaint and supporting documents, together with the materials and explanations provided by the Unit Commission at the Commission's request, the Commission hereby notes that:

1. In its activities, the Commission is guided by the Code of Academic Ethics of Vilnius University approved by the Senate of Vilnius University (current version approved by Resolution No. SPN-54 of 21 October 2020 of the Senate of Vilnius University) (hereinafter the 'Code of Academic Ethics') and the Regulations of the Central Academic Ethics Commission of Vilnius University (current version approved by Resolution No. SPN-55 of 21 October 2020 of the Senate of Vilnius University) (hereinafter the 'Commission Regulations'). The Commission Regulations define the Commission's competence and the decisions that it can possibly make, and describe the Commission's operating procedures. In its decisions, the Commission only comments on matters that fall under its competency.

2. Item 13(1) of the Commission Regulations stipulates that, when examining complaints, the Commission assesses the legality and/or validity of decisions taken by unit commissions, as well as possible inaction by unit commissions. This means that the Commission does not normally re-examine the case already assessed by a unit commission but rather evaluates whether the unit commission clearly and thoroughly substantiated its decision, acted within its competency, followed the relevant legal acts and procedures, and considered all relevant circumstances.

It should also be noted that the Commission examines complaints in accordance with the principles set out in Article 25(5) of the Statute (Item 33 of the Commission Regulations), including the principle of dispositiveness. This principle implies, inter alia, that the contested decision is primarily reviewed in the aspects and to the extent highlighted by the Complainant in their complaint.

3. In the present case, the Complainant does not deny the fact of the academic ethics violation itself but contests that part of the Unit Commission's decision which classified the misconduct as a gross violation of academic ethics and recommended the penalty of expulsion from the University.

The Commission notes that, as set out in Item 24 of the Code of Academic Ethics, 'gross violations of academic ethics shall be deemed to be violations recognised as such by a reasoned decision of the Commission or the Unit Commission, taking into account their impact, extent, damage, recurrence and other characteristics'. Accordingly, when assessing whether an academic ethics violation qualifies as gross, the Commission must evaluate it in the context of the criteria for gross violations established in the Code of Academic Ethics and provide a clear and substantiated justification for its decision.

Gross violations of academic ethics entail the most severe consequences: the Regulations of the Unit Commission provide that, if a gross violation is established, the Commission may recommend that the student who committed the violation be expelled from the University.

4. The Commission notes that, in the present case, the seriousness of the violation is primarily determined by its nature. At the University, academic integrity is required throughout the entire course of study – from beginning to end – regardless of the year of study or the type and form of assessment. Academic dishonesty, under any circumstances, is strictly prohibited and not tolerated. University regulations (the Code of Academic Ethics and the Study Regulations) recognise copying and other forms of academic dishonesty as among the most serious breaches of academic ethics.

The seriousness of the violation of academic ethics in the case under consideration is further aggravated by its persistence: the Complainant used unauthorised tools during the assessment, persisted in doing so even after being warned by the lecturer, and, moreover, continued the assessment by logging into the system after leaving the classroom. These circumstances demonstrate that the Complainant was fully aware of his actions and of their unauthorised and unethical nature (having been explicitly warned), and therefore his behaviour cannot be regarded as accidental, unintentional, or committed out of ignorance.

In the Commission's view, these circumstances significantly outweigh the arguments provided by the Complainant (that the violation occurred for the first time and not during a final assessment). All of these circumstances are thoroughly described and analysed in the contested decision of the Unit Commission. Having considered the above, the Commission concludes that the Unit Commission adopted a reasoned, detailed, and well-substantiated decision. There are therefore no grounds to amend or annul the decision or to uphold the Complainant's appeal.

5. The Commission hereby notes that, in accordance with Item 39 of the Commission Regulations, the depersonalised Commission's decisions (or summaries thereof) are published on the University's website. The Commission explains that it is done with the aim to more clearly define the ethical standards applied at the University, to raise the University community's awareness of examples of inappropriate and intolerable behaviour as well as the examples of good practice in the activities of commissions, and to encourage adherence to the principles of academic ethics introduced and fostered by the University in activities both within and beyond the University.

In light of the foregoing, and in accordance with Items 13(1), 35(2), and 35(3) of the Commission Regulations, the Central Academic Ethics Commission hereby decides:

1. To dismiss the complaint submitted by B. K., a student of the /Unit/ of Vilnius University, on 27 June 2025.
2. To make the depersonalised decision of the Commission publicly available.

The Commission's decision was adopted unanimously, with seven members of the Commission voting in favour.

Chairperson

Assoc. Prof. Dr Vígita Vèbraité