



SAVANNAH
Institute for Business & Informatics

Academic Regulations and Policies guiding studentship at SIBI

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Student attendance policy

The attendance policy applies to students studying at all Savannah Institute for Business & Informatics (SIBI) on all programmes of study where attendance is expected as part of the minimum requirements.

The Institute is committed to providing support for students and a learning environment in which all students have the opportunity to meet all course and programme learning outcomes and encouraged to achieve their full potential in their studies.

In order to achieve course and programme learning outcomes, students are expected to attend all scheduled learning sessions (e.g. timetabled lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops and laboratory sessions) as stipulated by the appropriate School.

The only exception to the above should be in circumstances where ill health or other legitimate reasons prevent a student attendance. In this case, students should either submit a self-certification or medical certification or an application for consideration of Mitigating Circumstances

The Institute implements this policy by communicating attendance requirements to students and by monitoring attendance on various courses through roll call. A student whose attendance falls below 75% of sessions for any one course is sent a letter asking for justifiable explanation for non-attendance. Failure to respond to the letter within three weeks, the Institute then writes another letter of compulsory withdraw of the concerned student.

Plagiarism Guide

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism involves the act of taking the ideas, writings or inventions of another person and using these as if they were one's own, whether intentionally or not. Plagiarism occurs where there is no acknowledgement that the writings or ideas belong to or have come from another source.

Most academic writing involves building on the work of others and this is acceptable as long as their contribution is identified and fully acknowledged. It is not wrong in itself to use the ideas, writings or inventions of others, provided that whoever does so is honest about acknowledging the source of that information. Many aspects of plagiarism can be simply avoided through proper referencing. However, plagiarism extends beyond minor errors in referencing the work of others and also includes the reproduction of an entire paper or passage of work or of the ideas and views contained in such pieces of work.

In light of the above, the Institute takes plagiarism seriously in all cases. Students must avoid committing acts of plagiarism by following these guidelines and speaking to academic staff if they are uncertain about what plagiarism means. Those who are found to have plagiarised will be subject to the Institute's disciplinary procedures, which may result in penalties ranging from the deduction of credits and modules already achieved by students to compulsory termination of studies.

Good practice

Academic work is almost always drawn from other published information supplemented by the writer's own ideas, results or findings. Thus drawing from other work is entirely acceptable, but it is unacceptable not to acknowledge such work. Conventions or methods for making acknowledgements can vary slightly from subject to subject, and students should seek the advice of staff in their own School/Institute about ways of doing this. Generally, referencing systems fall into the Harvard (where the text citation is by author and date) and numeric (where the text citation is by using a number). Both systems refer readers to a list at the end of the piece of work where sufficient information is provided to enable the reader to locate the source for themselves.

When a student undertakes a piece of work that involves drawing on the writings or ideas of others, they must ensure that they acknowledge each contribution in the following manner:

- **Citations:** when a direct quotation, a figure, a general idea or other piece of information is taken from another source, the work and its source must be acknowledged and identified where it occurs in the text;
- **Quotations:** inverted commas must always be used to identify direct quotations, and the source of the quotation must be cited;
- **References:** the full details of all references and other sources must be listed in a section at the end of any piece of work, such as an essay, together with the full publication details. This is normally referred to as a “List of References” and it must include details of any and all sources of information that the student has referred to in producing their work. (This is slightly different to a Bibliography, which may also contain references and sources which, although not directly referred to in your work, you consulted in producing your work).

Examples of plagiarism

Case 1: blatant plagiarism

Examine the following example in which a student has simply inserted a passage of text (*in italics*) into their work directly from a book they have read:

University and college managers should consider implementing strategic frameworks if they wish to embrace good management standards. *One of the key problems in setting a strategic framework for a college or university is that the individual institution has both positive and negative constraints placed upon its freedom of action.* Managers are employed to resolve these issues effectively.

This is an example of bad practice as the student makes no attempt to distinguish the passage they have inserted from their own work. Thus, this constitutes a clear case of plagiarism. Simply changing a few key words in such a passage of text (e.g. replace ‘*problems*’ with ‘*difficulties*’) does not make it the student’s work and it is still considered to be an act of plagiarism.

Common Mistakes

Students may also find the following examples of common plagiarism mistakes made by other students useful when reflecting on their own work:

- “I thought it would be okay as long as I included the source in my bibliography” [without indicating a quotation had been used in the text]
- “I made lots of notes for my essay and couldn’t remember where I found the information”
- “I thought it would be okay to use material that I had purchased online”
- “I thought it would be okay to copy the text if I changed some of the words into my own”
- “I thought that plagiarism only applied to essays, I didn’t know that it also applies to oral presentations/group projects etc”
- “I thought it would be okay just to use my tutor’s notes”
- “I didn’t think that you needed to reference material found on the web”
- “I left it too late and just didn’t have time to reference my sources”

None of the above are acceptable reasons for failing to acknowledge the use of others’ work and thereby constitute plagiarism.

case 2: quoting the work of others

If a student wishes to cite a passage of text in order to support their own work, the correct way of doing so is to use quotation marks (e.g. "...") to show that the passage is someone else's work, as follows:

"One of the key problems in setting a strategic framework for a college or university is that the individual institution has both positive and negative constraints placed upon its freedom of action".

Case 3: Referencing the work of others

In addition to using quotation marks as above, students must also use a text citation. If the work being cited is a book, page numbers would also normally be required. Thus, using the Harvard system for a book:

"One of the key problems in setting a strategic framework for a college or university is that the individual institution has both positive and negative constraints placed upon its freedom of action" (Jones, 2001, p121).

The same reference could also be made to a book using the numeric system:

"One of the key problems in setting a strategic framework for a college or university is that the individual institution has both positive and negative constraints placed upon its freedom of action" (Ref.1, p121).

More often, a piece of work will have multiple references and this serves to show an examiner that the student is drawing from a number of sources. For example, articles by Brown and by Smith may be cited as follows in the Harvard system:

"It has been asserted that Higher Education in the Kenya continued to be poorly funded during the 1980's [Brown, 1991], whereas more modern writers [Smith, 2002] argue that the HE sector actually received, in real terms, more funding during this period than the thirty year period immediately preceding it".

or as follows using the numeric system:

"It has been asserted that Higher Education in the Kenya continued to be poorly funded during the 1980's [Ref 1], whereas more modern writers [Ref 2] argue that the HE sector actually received, in real terms, more funding during this period than the thirty year period immediately preceding it".

How SIBI will endeavour to reduce student plagiarism:

- Provide clear written guidance on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it in each course you study
- Alert you and your lecturer to the penalties employed when dealing with plagiarism cases
- Take steps to ensure that a consistent approach is applied when dealing with cases of suspected plagiarism across the Institute
- Take the issue of academic dishonesty very seriously and routinely investigate cases where students have plagiarised and apply appropriate penalties in all proven cases.

Mitigating Circumstances Policy

There are circumstances which, through no fault of the student, mean that the assessment (whether examinations or other types of assessment) has not accurately measured the student's ability or else could not be completed in a timely manner. Such circumstances are unfair to the student/s and are not an accurate representation of the expected level of performance. Examples include a student being ill on the day of an exam, a flood in a city preventing an exam taking place, or political upheaval disrupting the study and learning of a group of students. Such circumstances are described as 'mitigating circumstances'.

SIBI has a policy on *Mitigating Circumstances in relation to Assessment*. This policy applies to all SIBI students and all forms of assessment, and covers all modes and locations of study. Its purpose is to set out processes and responsibilities for dealing with mitigating circumstances in relation to assessment (including examinations) so that there is an open and transparent procedure, as well as to provide a framework to ensure that all students are treated equally irrespective of their mode of study, location or School.

Overview

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that all students are provided with the opportunities to learn on their programme of study and to ensure that students are properly and fairly assessed. 'Properly' means that an open and transparent process is followed. 'Fairly' means that the final judgement of each student's attainment is accurate and was undertaken equitably and in a reasonable timescale.

The majority of mitigating circumstances which need to be considered typically affect only a single student. More difficult cases arise when events are on a larger scale, e.g. when political upheaval disrupts the study and learning of a group of students so that they are not prepared for the scheduled exam. Factors to be considered include the number of students affected, the extent of the disruption, the delay until the next scheduled exam etc. These management actions are less common and therefore there are fewer examples of past practice to draw on. For this reason, the following guidance is more concerned with points of principle, than in providing specific actions to be taken in each circumstance.

In all such circumstances it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that appropriate action is taken.

Terminology

Mentor	<i>An academic member of staff assigned to an individual student to provide the first point of contact for advice or assistance on academic and non-academic matters.</i>
Mitigating Circumstances Board	<i>A committee of academic staff acting together to determine the impact of mitigating circumstances affecting one or more students, with the authority to agree on the extent of the impact and to advise the exam board on the action to be taken.</i>
Exam Board	<i>SIBI's Assessment, Progression and Award Boards: a group of academic staff involved in setting and marking assessment activities and in deciding on the award of credit, progression and award.</i>

Acceptable circumstances

Circumstances that would normally be recognised as grounds for consideration of mitigating circumstances might include:

- Significant illness or accident affecting the student

- Bereavement – death of a close relative or significant other
- Significant adverse personal or family circumstances
- Other significant exceptional factors that are outside the student's control,
- Circumstances affecting the Institute's ability to schedule, set or deliver courses and/or assessments, including marking of assessments, e.g. staff participation in industrial action, or problems affecting infrastructure or IT systems.
- Severe adverse weather, political unrest or natural disaster.

Events or circumstances that would not normally be considered grounds for consideration of mitigating circumstances include:

- Holidays or other events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected
- Assessments that are scheduled close together or on the same day, or that clash due to incorrect registration by the student
- Misreading the timetable for examinations or otherwise misunderstanding the requirements for assessment
- Inadequate planning or time management
- Last-minute or careless travel arrangements
- Consequences of paid employment
- Exam stress or panic attacks not supported by medical evidence

Mitigating circumstances affecting an individual student

When an individual student believes that mitigating circumstances, (e.g. illness), have affected their performance in assessment, it is their responsibility to initiate action by informing the School. In this policy, the committee with responsibility for such matters is termed the 'Mitigating Circumstances Board'. The Principal will appoint the Committee from School staff and will designate a Chair. Further information on the role of this committee is outlined below.

In all cases independent documentary evidence, such as medical certificates, must be provided to verify mitigating circumstances. Mentors may also provide information about circumstances based on meetings and conversations with the student, but do not necessarily attend the Mitigating Circumstances Committee. Student Support and Accommodation may, in addition, provide further supporting evidence.

Where an individual student has been affected he/she should contact their mentor for advice in the first instance to provide information on their situation.

To apply to have their circumstances considered, the student should complete the official application form obtainable from the admin office and submit it, with supporting evidence, (e.g. a medical certificate), to the Admin Office. The application form and supporting evidence must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked 'Mitigating Circumstances, Private and Confidential'. This will then be date-stamped and forwarded to the Mitigating Circumstances Board for consideration.

The form and supporting evidence must be submitted as soon as possible (normally within five working days) after the events under consideration occur and, if relating to examinations, within five working days of the end of the examination schedule.

The Committee will take into account the following factors when considering an application:

- Seriousness of circumstances;
- Evidence presented;
- Amount of work affected by the circumstances;
- Any results achieved under the circumstances which are inconsistent with unaffected periods of study.

Supporting documents should not be sent to the Exam Board. However, the Chair of the Mitigating Circumstances Board, or a designated representative from the Committee, should attend the Exam Board so that additional information may be provided as required.

The Committee should report to the Exam Board on the impact of mitigating circumstances and make a recommendation as to the action to be taken. The rationale behind any recommendations made by the Committee should be minuted to provide consistency over time and so that the Committee's representative on the Exam Board can refer to the rationale during the Board's decision-making process. Minutes will not be shared with the Board and any information provided verbally will be treated in strictest confidence by the Board.

In respect to mitigating circumstances, the Exam Board may take decisions related to credit, progression and award. It is expected that the Exam Board will normally accept the recommendations of the Mitigating Circumstances Committee, since the Committee has had access to full documentary evidence and has scrutinised the case in detail. If the Exam Board does not accept the recommendations (e.g. if there are issues regarding equitable treatment of students in the cohort), then it will record its reasons for so doing and will inform the Mitigating Circumstances Committee through the latter's representative at the Board.

Possible courses of action for the Exam Board

If examination/assessment was missed due to mitigating circumstances, the Board may recommend one of the following:

- Student is examined at next diet as 1st sitting;
- New examination paper is set;
- Different assessment task is considered (any new assessment task must be comparable to that missed, thereby ensuring equitable treatment of all students and the assurance of standards),

If mitigating circumstances affected performance in assessment/examination or delayed the submission of assessment, the Board may recommend one of the following:

- Remove any penalty normally applied for late submission;
- Modify grades in one or more courses to reflect expected performance based on other assessment;
- Modify grades in one or more courses to facilitate progression/award;
- Retake assessment with an opportunity to improve the grade.

Any alternative assessment or examination activity should be provided as close to the original date as is practical.

After the Exam Board

As a minimum the student should be informed by the Institute if their application has been unsuccessful. Correspondence will be by email to the student's official email account as soon as possible after the meeting of the Exam Board. If mitigating circumstances have been accepted and a reassessment opportunity has been offered, the student will be asked to indicate whether they wish to let the original result stand or to take a reassessment.

Health & Safety

We are aware that effective health and safety management can contribute towards organisational performance by reducing injuries, ill health, unnecessary losses and liabilities. To ensure this happens, we will create and maintain a positive health and safety culture which secures the commitment and participation of all staff and students to help us achieve high standards of health and safety management.

We will aim, so far as is reasonably possible, to conduct our activities without avoidable risk to the health and safety of our staff and others who may be affected by what we do.

We aim to achieve these standards by providing and maintaining:

- a working environment without avoidable risk to the health and safety of our staff, students, contractors, visitors and the general public, and with adequate facilities and arrangements for the welfare of staff at work.
- arrangements for ensuring safety and absence of avoidable risks to health in connection with using, handling, storing and transporting articles and substances.
- plant, equipment and systems of work that are safe and without avoidable risks to health.
- enough information, instruction, training and supervision so that staff know how to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own health and safety at work.