From collecting ... to connecting ...

BITS COLLEGE

Student Support Guideline

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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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Abbreviations

AB   Academic Board

CAARC   College Academic Affairs and Research Council

EM   Executive Management

QA   Quality Assurance

VPAAR   Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research

VPBA   Vice President for Business and Administration

1. BITS College

1.1 Brief Introduction

BITS College is a private higher learning institution with a vision of promoting excellence in the production, growth and dissemination of advanced scientific knowledge through teaching and research. The College is conceived, established and run by caring and committed educators and innovators who seek to improve the quality of higher education in the country through the introduction of innovative and enlightened education programmes that help students realize their potential. It aims at realizing this by engaging a management team experienced in education and business, a dedicated team of faculty and staff, well-designed academic programmes, world class educational facilities and cutting-edge technologies.

The executive officer of the College is the President assisted by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research (VPAAR) and the Vice President for Business and Administration (VPBA).

The highest decision-making body of the College is the Academic Board (AB). However, most academic and administration activities are carried out by the Executive Management (EM). The College Academic Affairs and Research Council (CAARC) is a standing committee accountable to the EM. The CAARC, working under the chairmanship of VPAAR, deliberates and decides on all academic matters of the College on behalf of the EM. At School level, the Head, program coordinators and staff members deliberate on the day-to-day academic matters in their respective academic committees.

Currently, the School of Systems and Technology is established under the College to offer four academic programs, namely:
- Master of Science Degree in Enterprise Systems Engineering
- Master of Science Degree in Information Technology Management
- Bachelor of Science Degree in Information Technology and Systems
- Bachelor of Science Degree in Software Engineering

This guideline has been produced for all new and existing students to support during their time at the College. The aim is to provide an overview of the range of academic and personal support that is available to students at the College

1.2 Definitions

- **Guidance** may be defined as a range of experiences to help students make personal, social, educational and career choices.
- **Counselling** may be seen as the empowerment of students to make decisions, solve problems, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties they may be experiencing.

2 General Guide

2.1 Student Support Office

The Office of Student Support located at the entrance of the College, is the first point of contact for all students and visitors for advice and guidance. The aim of the office is to respond to students' queries from start to finish resolving any issues presented in one area.

The college has experienced student service advisers who have a generic training and are therefore capable of giving students the required details. The personnel in charge will provide answers to all enquiries. They will also guide students through orientation of the College, answer queries and lead them to proper offices.

Students can come to the student service office to receive advice and guidance on all support areas including:

- Academic calendar and application
- Exam queries
- advice and guidance
- disabilities
- counseling
- extracurricular activities
- community service
- Internships
- research proposals
- student funding/finance

- Support for IT registration and eLearning
- Student records – including registration; enrolment, etc.
- ID Card access problems
- Replacement ID cards
- And many more enquiries.

2.2 Office Opening times

The student support office is open per the following schedules:

Working days:	Monday to Friday 8.30am – 7:30 PM
Week ends:	Saturday and Sunday 10.30am – 3:00 PM
Official Holidays:	Closed
Semester Break:	Monday to Friday 10:30 PM – 4:00 PM

2.3 Responsibility

The Student Support Office is accountable to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research (VPAAR) and provides leadership for all operational matters relating to supporting students in all matters during their stay in the College. The office is also responsible for the full implementation of the activities outlined in this guideline.

The College ensures the quality of student counseling and career guidance by:

- employing properly trained counselors
- conducting a systematic evaluation of activities of the office
- monitoring all enquiries
- focusing on the quality of the counseling in specific key areas
- Maintaining the allocation of resources and subsequently evaluating whether the resources are sufficient for the work involved.

3. Academic Support

3.1 Withdrawal

Students can go the student support office to get advice on how to complete the withdrawal process in cases of academic dismissal or withdrawal for personal reasons. If a student is not sure about his/her future or on how to continue his/her studies, the information point personnel can also arrange for support and counseling.

3.2 Academic Probation

Students with academic Probation have the right to consult the student support office. The Office works closely with academic advisors and organizes workshop every semester. The aim is to discuss collectively on the general matters related to academic activities. The Office also advises students on request on how to get tutoring if they are having trouble in the courses they failed and how to form proper study habits.

3.3 Library Services

The College library is open 7 days from 8:30 to 10:00 PM. While most of the materials are digital, students can also use the library to sit and read. There are also materials for students to borrow and return per the rules and regulation of the library.

3.4 IT Services

Students have full-fledged IT Services while at the College. The computer labs work 7 days from 8:30 to 10:00PM. Special arrangements have to be made if students want to spend the night working in the lab. As long as a student is registered, he/she can get service even out of office hours. IT services include access to

- Computer lab
- Library database
- Student information system
- Internet
- Email
- Learning management system
- Electronic resources
- Online consultation

3.5 Help with Internship and community service Opportunities

The Student support office works closely with the Research and Outreach Programs Office of the College in order to help students secure internships in partial fulfillment for graduation. It also helps students to find out their interests in community service activities and advises on the kinds of service that are acceptable for fulfilling requirements for graduation.

4. Personal Support

4.1 Disability Support

The Student Support Office provides advice, guidance and support for students with physical disabilities. It also works closely with students and staff to put in place any necessary support and adjustments to remove or reduce barriers to learning.

4.2 Guidance and Counseling

Being young adults, students may face different challenges such as adjustment to new peer groups and academic atmosphere. The need for student orientation, guidance and counseling services is, therefore, crucial. The Student Support Office has, therefore, a guidance and counselling unit that specially addresses the needs of students on an individual basis. Students may make private appointments, may be referred by parents, academic advisors or instructors.

The College ensures that counsellors are trained to at least Degree level and committed to maintaining their competence through continued professional development (CPD).

The Guidance and Counseling unit has the following roles and responsibilities.
- Provision of general orientation to new students
- Organize workshops on academic, social, emotional and related issues
- Individual Counseling
- Develop peer counseling system / Group counseling
- Establish different recreational and entertainment services.
- Establish a system to provide online orientation, guidance and counseling services.

4.3 Career Development

The Student Support Office organizes different sessions for students at various levels of their studies. Some of these sessions are described below.

First Year:

- A program to assist students to settle into College. This is done through developing

  - responsibilities,
  - study skills,
  - subject diaries,
  - self enhancement and stress management,
- Individual appointments as necessary
- Parental workshops

Second Year:

- Individual appointments as necessary,
- Monthly public seminar on information on study techniques and career development opportunities.

Third Year:

- Individual appointments as necessary,
- Guidance is provided to assist students in choice of elective courses
- Monthly public seminar on information on study techniques and career development opportunities.

Fourth Year:

- One timetabled class period per week which includes:

  - Preparation for work experience,
  - Preparation of CV's,
  - Interview preparation,
  - Other work and training opportunities,

4.4 Drop in Appointments

All students can also access the drop-in service that operates on specific days and time of the week. The Student Support Office will have the regular schedule of the drop-in services that will be changed every two months per the convenience of the counselor.

4.5. Confidentiality

The Student Support Office in general and the Guidance and Counseling unit in particular are required to keep information on students confidential. However, they may not always offer absolute confidentiality to their students.

In exceptional circumstances, a counsellor may take the decision to break confidentiality, with or without the student's consent. In this case his/her professional judgment will be used:

- if there is a risk of the student harming himself/herself or being harmed
- if there is risk of another person being harmed
- if there is risk of a serious crime being committed

 In these cases, the counsellor will refer the student/concern to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research (VPAAR) for immediate follow up and appropriate action.

5. Other College Support

5.1 Safety and Security

5.1.1 Emergency Services

In case of emergency, please contact the Campus safety and security office located in the ground floor of the College building

5.1.2 Building Safety

Students of the College are expected to coordinate with Campus safety personnel for safety procedures in the building.   Only those with training in the use of fire extinguishers are permitted to actually fight a fire.

5.2 First Aid

The College has first aid arrangements in place, including first aid kits and first aid facilities, to assist students and staff who are injured or become ill.

6. Contact

All enquiries should be addressed to:

BITS College
P.O. Box 33220
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 982 363636
Email: student.support@bitscollege.edu.et

7. References

1. Legislation of BITS College
2. Undergraduate Program Student Handbook