



THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF GHANA

Ghana operates on a 6-3-4-4 system:	Primary School	--	6 years
	Junior High School	--	3 years
	Senior High School	--	4 years
	University Bachelor's degree	--	4 years

Language: The sole official language of instruction throughout the Ghanaian educational system is English. Students may study in any of eleven local languages for much of the first three years, after which English becomes the medium. Students continue to study a local language and French as classroom subjects through at least the ninth grade. All textbooks and materials are otherwise in English.

Junior High School (JHS): At the JHS, English, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Integrated Science including Agricultural Science, a Ghanaian language, Technical, Vocational, Information and Communication

Senior High School (SHS): Over 280,000 Ghanaian students take the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) at the end of JHS 3 (ninth grade) in nine or ten subjects. Admission to Senior High School is competitive: only 70,000 students can be admitted into the 500 secondary schools. The leading public secondary schools sending students to the United States include Achimota School, Wesley Girls' HS, Presbyterian Boys' High School, Mfantsipim School, Holy Child School, St. Augustine's College, Prempeh College, each graduating 300-700 students annually. The private high schools in the country are Ghana International and Faith Montessori (A-level curriculum), SOS-Herman Gmeiner International College, Tema International, and Lincoln Community (IB curriculum), and Ghana Christian International (WASSCE and A-levels); these institutions together graduate a total of 200 students each year.

In the public schools, all students take a Core curriculum consisting of English Language, Integrated Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies. Each student also takes three or four Elective subjects, chosen from one of seven groups: Sciences, "Arts" (social sciences and humanities), Vocational (visual arts or home economics), Technical, Business, or Agriculture. The secondary school transcript should contain a letter or percentage grade for each subject, for each of three terms, for the three years of Senior High School, equivalent to the tenth through twelfth grades. Students' Term Reports (report cards) contain rank in class for each subject as well as grades for classwork and end of term exams. The grading system is tough: 80-100% is usually an A, a grade rarely awarded. Transcripts with all A's are unlikely to be genuine.

At the end of Senior High School (twelfth grade), all students take the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination, or WASSCE, (SSCE through 2005; WASSCE beginning in 2006) in each of their seven or eight subjects. These exams are given nationwide in May-June each year, but the results are not available until the following October. Grading is exceptionally tough: fewer than 3% of grades are A's, and 40% of students fail any given exam. C's and D's can be quite competitive grades.

The minimum university standard for admission to post-secondary education is a 'C-' average on the SSSCE, with passes (A-E) in all subjects. U.S. universities should not admit Ghanaian students who have not attained at least this level. Students are expected to retake exams in subjects they have failed. Colleges should require a photocopy of the SSSCE Statement of Results bearing an original signature and stamp from the headmaster or headmistress, as well as the transcript. You are strongly encouraged to verify these documents at source, through the West African Examinations Council's online system at www.ghana.waecdirect.org. The student provides you with a PIN number that they purchase for the equivalent of \$3 (available any post office or WAEC regional office), that is used to retrieve a printable copy of their WAEC results. This is the fastest and most reliable way of verifying a student's results from Ghana.

University Education: Ghana's tertiary institutions enroll over 100,000 students in undergraduate, graduate, certificate and diploma programs in a full range of academic and professional fields. The public universities are:

University of Ghana at Legon, Accra
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi
University of Cape Coast
University of Education at Winneba
University of Development Studies, Tamale
Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration/Greenhill College, Accra
University of Mines and Technology, Tarkwa

Twenty-one private institutions are also accredited by the National Accreditation Board (www.nab.gov.gh) to award Bachelor's degrees. Their enrollment totals less than 5,000, but they are expected to become a recognized force during the next decade. Ten public polytechnics offer three-year Higher National Diplomas in applied business and technology fields. The HND is not equivalent to a Bachelor's degree, but undergraduate transfer credit can be awarded, as is also the case for Teacher Training Colleges and other tertiary non-degree programs.

Ghanaian university admission is highly competitive, especially in fields such as medicine, engineering, law, and pharmacy. The quality of education is considered reasonably high, evidence that human resources are more significant than material resources. In an effort to attract international enrollment, all Ghanaian universities operate on a modular, semester system. The University of Ghana is committed to 10% international population and attracts significant numbers of American students, as well as students from Africa and Europe. The United Nations University operates several programs on campus in fields of health and development.

Ghanaians in the United States: 3,664 Ghanaians are enrolled in U.S. institutions. Their influence is significant: in 2008, newly enrolling Ghanaian students were awarded \$8 million in financial assistance for study in the United States. Ghana is one of the few countries in Africa whose public school graduates can attain admission to the most competitive universities in the United States.

Testing: The SAT is offered six times a year at four locations in two cities. The GRE, GMAT and TOEFL are offered every day at computer-based test centers in Accra. Although we want students to demonstrate their commitment and competitiveness, we advocate the use of testing only as warranted, and discourage institutions from requiring the TOEFL of students who can adequately demonstrate their English proficiency by other means.

Educational Advising: The Educational Advising Centers in Accra and Kumasi sponsored by the Public Affairs Section of the United States Embassy serve over 20,000 students per year in a wide range of programs designed to strengthen students' applications and their readiness for U.S. higher education. We are eager to work with you to make it possible for more Ghanaian students to enroll in your institution. Please contact the Educational Advisors, in Accra or Kumasi, and refer your Ghanaian applicants to us for any assistance that we can provide.

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We welcome visits, recruiting or otherwise, and can readily assemble an audience for your presentations. Come and visit, and let us treat you to Ghanaian hospitality!