UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EAU CLAIRE

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

# Study Abroad



## USAC-GHANA

## FALL 2018

*Program Guide*

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**CONGRATULATIONS** on being accepted to the UW-Eau Claire study abroad program at the University of Ghana, offered through the University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC). Living and studying in a foreign culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

***Building upon existing foreign language skills***
***Gaining new perspectives on a chosen academic field***
***Increasing understanding of different cultures***
***Enhancing personal development***
***Developing different perspectives on U.S. culture***
***Gaining self-confidence and independence***
***Learning skills for the future international job market***

It is up to you to determine how you can best benefit from these possible advantages. This is your experience!

This program guide is to be used together with the general Study Abroad Handbook. The handbook has information that is valid for all study abroad programs. This guide will provide you with specific information for the Ghana program. It is designed to complement the handbook, study abroad orientation, information from USAC, and your individual pre-departure preparations.

Please realize that although this guide contains all of the information available at the time of printing, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer adviser will e-mail additional information throughout the semester. Please contact the Center for International Education staff, your peer adviser, and past program participants with your specific questions. You should also make use of the additional written and web resources listed towards the end of this guide.

Basic questions only <u>you</u> can answer include:

1) What are YOUR goals for this experience?
2) Given the way the program is set up; how can you best prepare to meet your goals? For example, if one of your goals is truly being immersed in Ghanaian culture, yet you are going with a group of UW-Eau Claire students, how can you ensure that you do not spend too much time with other Americans?

The information in this guide was current at the time of printing, though changes may occur at any time.

# General Information

## The Program

UW-Eau Claire and University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC) entered into a cooperative agreement for the Ghana program beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year. USAC Ghana classes and offices are located on the University of Ghana campus. Students will take a combination of USAC and University of Ghana courses on this program.

Abigail Thompson is the Resident Director for the USAC Ghana program. She is a native of Ghana and has worked for USAC for more than seven years. She earned her Master's degree from the University of Twente in the Netherlands and is fluent in Twi and English as well as other languages. As the resident director, Abigail arranges your housing and assists with your registration at the University of Ghana. She will also organize field trips and oversee your orientation and adjustment to life and academics in Ghana.

## USAC

USAC (whose offices are located at the University of Nevada-Reno) works with several member universities. These member universities guide the consortium and assist USAC with registration and transcript issuance for students participating on USAC programs.

You will be receiving information directly from USAC via your student "Gateway" account. The CIE is not copied on these messages. **Please forward any messages from USAC to Jenna Krosch (kroschjm@uwec.edu), the USAC-Ghana coordinator in the UW-Eau Claire Center for International Education (CIE).**

## The Location

The program is located at the University of Ghana-Legon. Legon is a suburb of Accra and located approximately 12 miles northeast of the Accra city center. Accra is Ghana's capital and largest city with approximately two million residents. The city is built around a port on the Gulf of Guinea and is the economic, political, and cultural center of the country. Accra is home to open-air markets, the National Museum with a collection of traditional Ghanaian art, stunning beaches, and several monuments important in understanding the history of the slave trade. You can find a more detailed description on the USAC website at http://usac.unr.edu/study-abroad-programs/ghana/accra/about/city.

## The University

The University of Ghana is the oldest and largest of all Ghanaian universities. Founded in 1948 as the University College of the Gold Coast, it was originally considered an affiliate college of the University of London. It gained full university status in 1961. The University of Ghana has a current student population of approximately 30,000 students. About 88% of enrolled students are pursuing a Bachelor's degree.

## Academic Calendar

Below is the calendar for **Fall 2018:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Depart from U.S. | August 10 |
| Arrival in Accra | August 11 |
| Mandatory Orientation | August 13-16 |
| City Tour & Welcome Dinner | August 17-18 |
| Courses Begin | August 20 |
| University of Ghana Courses End | November 16 |

| | |
|---|---|
| USAC Courses end | November 23 |
| Final Examinations | November 24 – December 8 |
| Move-Out of Housing | December 9 |

A detailed calendar, including field trips, is available on the USAC website: http://usac.unr.edu/study-abroad-programs/ghana/accra/calendars

**Please do not book your ticket until the dates are confirmed by USAC.** Although dates are typically finalized when the optional group flight is announced, you should buy a changeable ticket as USAC reserves the right to change dates if necessary**. Also, strikes at the University of Ghana, which are not uncommon, can change the regular university calendar.**

# ACADEMICS

*There is additional information on academic topics such as eligibility, registration, class attendance, credits and course load, grades, transcripts, and accessing the UW-Eau Claire library while abroad in your Study Abroad Handbook.*

## *Registration at UW-Eau Claire*

**Do not register for classes at UW-Eau Claire for the semester you will be abroad.** The semester before your program departs, Center for International Education (CIE) staff will work with the Registration Office to enroll you in the USAC-Ghana program under a **temporary course number (INTA 356)** for 12 credits. This temporary registration for 12 credits will appear on your billing statements. You do not need to complete any other registration at UW-Eau Claire. **Once your grade report from USAC and/or your transcript from University of Ghana arrives, your USAC and U of Ghana classes, credits, and grades will be posted on your UW-Eau Claire transcript.** The INTA 356 registration code will remain on your transcript so that the university can maintain historical records regarding who has studied abroad. However, the INTA credit units will be removed and the INTA course will not be graded.

## *Registration in Ghana*

As part of the USAC admissions process, you are required to submit a preliminary course registration. You will find the Course and Tour Registration Form in your USAC Gateway account. You will complete this form indicating which USAC courses and tours, along with two alternative courses in case any courses become unavailable. You will submit the completed form directly to USAC.

Once you arrive in Ghana, your registration will be finalized for the direct enrollment courses at the University of Ghana. Courses are subject to availability and approval of prerequisites which are determined by the University of Ghana. It is recommended that you have some back up courses in mind in the event time tables overlap or a course is no longer offered.

## *Credits and Course Load*

UW-Eau Claire and USAC requires students to take a minimum of 12 credits and a maximum of 18 credits. Most students take between 12-15 credits. Dropping below full-time status (12 credits) may result in loss of financial aid and/or insurance coverage and **must be approved in advance by the CIE.**

## *Classes*

Students will take a combination of USAC and University of Ghana courses. The USAC courses are program-specific courses taught by USAC professors to USAC Ghana students. U of Ghana courses are taught by University of Ghana professors to all Ghanaian and visiting international students in a variety of subject areas.

**USAC Courses:** USAC offers a variety of courses each semester. All students are required to take the **Twi Conversation and Culture I course.** As such, you will most likely take at least three credits of USAC courses. To see which courses will be offered when you are abroad and for full course descriptions, please visit the USAC page and click on your term: http://usac.unr.edu/study-abroad-programs/ghana/accra/courses.

Please note that the Ghanaian Culture and Natural Resources Field Study course has an additional fee for field trips.

**U of Ghana Courses:** The University of Ghana-Legon is a comprehensive university; you can choose from classes across the university as long as you meet the pre-requisites.

When reviewing course information, please keep the following in mind:

1. Students should note that **odd-numbered courses are typically offered in the fall semester** and even-numbered courses typically are offered in the spring semester. Courses ending with 00 are offered during both semesters.

2. Sometimes, students may be limited to taking courses from just one level – for example, all 200-level or all 300-level. Due to class and exam scheduling, it may be difficult to take courses from different levels like you are used to doing at UW-Eau Claire.

3. Students should be prepared to be somewhat flexible with regard to course selection since course offerings have been known to change with little prior notice.

## *Course Equivalencies*

Many courses you can take at University of Ghana have already been evaluated for UW-Eau Claire credit. To find courses that have been evaluated for the University of Ghana, go to the Transfer Credit Wizard site: https://my.uwec.edu/psp/PUBLIC/EMPLOYEE/HRMS/c/EAU_SS_CUSTOM.EAU_TRNCRDWZ.GBL

Please keep in mind that this is a historical record of past course equivalences. There is no guarantee that the same courses will be offered in the future, or that they will be offered during the term during which you will be abroad.

1. Choose "Ghana" from the "Country" pull down menu, then hit "Search"
2. Select "Univ of Ghana" by clicking the link.

## *Grades*

Grades on the U of Ghana transcript appear on the A-F scale. The letter grade on your U of Ghana transcript will be posted on your UW-Eau Claire transcript.

**Note that UW- Eau Claire students abroad are not allowed to take classes pass/fail, and that grades from Ghana are figured into your UW-Eau Claire GPA.**

### *Transcripts and Credit Transfer*

USAC will send a grade report for your USAC courses and a U of Ghana transcript for courses taken at the U of Ghana. Both documents will be sent to UW-Eau Claire upon completion of the program. However, your grades cannot be posted to your UW-Eau Claire record until UW-Eau Claire receives an **official grade report** directly from USAC. The U of Ghana transcript may arrive later than the USAC courses on your grade report, so your UWEC degree audit may not be fully updated right away.

**If you are asked to complete a transcript release form by USAC, please have the transcript sent to the Center for International Education (see Contacts page for full address).**

**If you are a senior** studying abroad for your last semester, be sure to read the information about transcripts in your Study Abroad Handbook as studying abroad may cause a graduation delay.

### *Academics in Ghana*

Returned students most often describe academic life at the University of Ghana as "different." They go on to explain that, while they didn't find classes there more or less difficult than classes at home, they definitely did need to adjust to a new way of teaching and learning.

The Ghanaian university model is based on the British academic system. In that system, the professor lectures and the students are expected to study independently to deepen their knowledge of the subject matter. Unlike some U.S. universities, your Ghanaian class will be centered on the professors' lectures instead of collaborative learning.

In regards to assessment, there are very few assignments or quizzes. Professors expect students to take responsibility for their own education and organize their time accordingly. They do not provide assignments or schedule assessments to make sure that students are staying on top of their studies. In fact, your only assignment may be your final exam, which is often worth 100% of your grade.

Past students have also described the professor/student relationship as more formal than what students experience in the United States. Informal forms of address (e.g. "Hey Dr. H.") and personal questions/informal conversation (e.g. "How was your weekend? I'll stop by your office to chat later this week.") is typically not appropriate in Ghana. In the relationship, each of you has a formal role. As the student, you show respect in how you address him/her and the topics you choose.

Students of European ancestry have noted that they are often the only white student in the class. Because of this, white students may find themselves the focus of attention as you look, speak, and perhaps think differently than your classmates. Professors may call on you in class to give a U.S. perspective. Some students come to enjoy this extra attention; others do not. Just remind your professor and classmates that you are giving your opinion, not that of all Americans.

## Money Matters

*Information about how payments are made, when they are due, the UW - Eau Claire withdrawal/refund deadlines, financial aid, scholarships, budgeting and ways to bring*

*money abroad is in your Study Abroad Handbook.*

## Cost Estimate

You can find the most current Cost Estimate for your program, in an easily printable format, on the CIE Ghana webpage. Be sure you are looking at the correct term. Remember that the cost estimate includes what you pay to UW-Eau Claire, what you pay to USAC, and what you pay directly to other vendors.

## USAC Payments & Refund Policy

If you have any questions about paying your optional tour fees, please contact Shamberli Hicks in the USAC Accounting Office. You can reach her by telephone at 1-866-404-USAC (8722) or e-mail at shamberli.hicks@usac.edu You can pay with credit card, check, or money order.

In addition to the UW-Eau Claire refund policy outlined in the "Money Matters" section of the Study Abroad Handbook, USAC has its own financial policies related to payment, cancellations, and changes. You can learn more about the withdrawal deadlines and penalties by referring to your copies of the USAC Program Agreement and Program Fee & Options.

## Personal Travel

The amount spent on personal travel varies greatly from student to student. It depends on your budget and your priorities. Students who want to be involved in their host community generally spend less time (and money) traveling. Others travel every weekend with correspondingly high costs and fewer close connections in their new home. A past participant estimated spending $300 on personal travel for the semester, which allowed her to travel about every other weekend.

## Currency Exchange

The currency of Ghana is the New Cedi (GH₵). The word cedi is derived from the Akan word for cowry shell (cowry shells were once used in Ghana as a form of currency). One cedi is divided into 100 pesewas.

The exchange rate as of December 2017 was 1 U.S. Dollar = 4.49388 Ghanaian New Cedi. You can find current exchange rates at http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/.

## The New Cedi

The Ghanaian New Ghana cedi was introduced in July 2007 at a rate equal to 10,000 second Cedis. Basically, four zeroes were lopped off the value of the old Ghanaian cedi. For the most part, Ghanaians have adjusted, but you'll still hear people asking for 10,000 Cedis when they really want just want 1 Cedi.

## Travelers Checks

According to past participants, **traveler's checks are *not* widely accepted in Ghana.** Barclays is the only bank that exchanges traveler's checks. However, the exchange fees are quite high. Some banks may require you to set up an account or wait two weeks to gain access to funds as they are concerned with fraud. Traveler's checks are becoming more and more rare and difficult to use in general. Before cashing a check, ASK what the fee is.

## Credit/Debit Cards and ATMs

Credit cards and debit cards are rarely accepted as a form of payment by local businesses as Ghana is primarily a cash-based society. Typically, credit cards would only be accepted at a large, Western hotel chains. Visa

is the most widely accepted card. That said, credit card fraud is a real problem in Ghana. The U.S. State Department recommends avoiding credit card use if possible as they have experienced a growing number of travelers who have been victims of credit card fraud. If you use your credit card, don't let the card out of your sight. Go with the card or ask that the machine be brought to you.

You will mainly use your debit/credit card to withdraw money but it is good to have a card and cash as a back-up plan if you travel outside of Ghana. ATMs only take Visa, not MasterCard (or very rarely). You should contact your bank to make sure your debit or credit card will work overseas and make sure that you don't need a special PIN number. Take care to request your PIN early for your credit card. Oftentimes, they have to send you your PIN through U.S. Mail after the card is already set up. Also, if you are traveling to rural areas, make sure to withdraw cash before leaving the city.

### *Cash*

Ghana is a cash oriented society so you can expect to use cash when paying for most items. If you have to withdraw money from an ATM, but sure to divide it up and not keep all of it in one place.

### *Scholarships*

USAC offers a variety of scholarships for students. To see more information, visit USAC's Scholarship website. You will have optional scholarship applications applied to your USAC Gateway account when they are open. Students are able to apply for all scholarships they are eligible for and can be awarded more than one scholarship.

USAC also offers an alliance scholarship just for UWEC students on one of their specialty programs. This application will be applied to your UWEC study abroad account in September for spring students and **in March for Summer/Fall/Academic Year students**. Your UWEC Study Abroad Coordinator, Jenna, will email you when it is available. The number of awards will vary by term. Amounts will vary between $250 - $500.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

*Additional information on these issues, as well as information on CISI insurance, is included in the Health Issues and Safety Abroad sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.*

### *Medical Facilities and Medications in Ghana*

Medical facilities in Ghana are limited, particularly outside Accra. You will learn more about medical facilities in Accra/Legon during your onsite orientation upon arrival.

Mental health resources can also be difficult to come by. It is recommended that you work with the USAC resident director and CISI insurance if you would like to see a therapist. Please contact Jenna (kroschjm@uwec) if you would like to start the process of identifying English speaking therapists in the Accra area.

If you take any medications on a regular basis, you should carry adequate supplies of any needed prescription medicines, along with copies of the prescriptions, the generic name of the drugs, and a supply of preferred over-the-counter medications.

We strongly recommend that you have a complete physical prior to studying abroad in

Ghana so that you can address most medical concerns prior to your departure.

### *Health Insurance*

As part of your program fees to USAC, you receive health insurance. Your USAC health insurance cards will be handed out at the on-site orientation in Legon. This insurance is in addition to the CISI insurance that you will receive through the UW system policy. You are not able to opt out of either one, both are required as they do have different levels of coverage.

### *Food and Waterborne Illness*

Diarrheal illness is very common in Ghana. Typical causes are unclean water, contaminated food, and unclean hands. Thorough hand washing prior to food preparation and eating can help diminish the risk of diarrheal disease. However, other diseases can be contracted from unclean water and food. Please see the Ghana CDC information Stay Healthy and Safe/Eat and drink safely for more information.

**Water:** Be careful with your water source. Drink bottled water/beverages from factory-sealed containers and avoid ice as it may have been made from unclean water. You may wish to use bottled water for brushing your teeth, as well.

**Food:** You should be sure to eat hot foods hot, and cold foods cold. Eat raw fruits and vegetables only if you have washed them in clean water or peeled them. Do not eat raw or undercooked meat, eggs, or fish. Do not eat or drink unpasteurized dairy.

Do not take unnecessary risks with your health. You may find yourself in a situation where it would be culturally offensive not to eat something that is offered to you. You will have to decide what to do in those situations on an individual basis. There is no one right answer, but one suggestion might be to say that you like something ELSE that is being offered better than the dish you think would be unsafe to eat. That way, you'll be given more of the dish that you do like. Just be careful!

**Cholera:** Ghana experienced a cholera outbreak in fall 2014, with nearly 28,000 cases reported and 217 deaths as of November 29, 2014. Cholera is a bacterial disease that is spread through eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water. In about 5% of the cases, infected people have a severe disease characterized by profuse diarrhea, vomiting, and leg cramps. The rapid loss of fluids can lead to dehydration, shock, and death without proper treatment. Make sure to seek medical treatment if you experience any of these symptoms or think you may have been exposed to cholera.

**Diarrheal illness:** You may want to ask your doctor about bringing prescription or over-the counter medications to Ghana in case you get sick. If you do fall ill, make sure that you stay hydrated as dehydration is a serious concern for those with diarrhea.

**Schistosomiasis:** Schistosomiasis is caused by a parasitic worm that is spread by fresh water snails. The larval stage of the worm can burrow through your skin when in contact with contaminated fresh water. Avoid wading, swimming, bathing, washing in, or drinking from bodies of fresh water such as canals, lakes, rivers, streams, or springs.

## *Zika Virus*

The CDC does warn that there is a risk for the Zika virus in Ghana. The Zika infection, in pregnant women, can cause serious birth defects so the CDC does not recommend travel to Ghana for women who are pregnant. All travelers should strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites. If you have concerns over this, please consult with your doctor.

## *Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever*

As of July 2017, Ghana had experienced no confirmed cases of Ebola. Concerns continue to exist about the possibility of the outbreak spreading to other countries through the travel of infected individuals. In fact, the United States, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Spain, and the United Kingdom have experienced Ebola cases through an infected traveler. An Outbreak Distribution Map is available on the CDC site if you would like to see the last outbreak.

Although much is unknown about Ebola, the virus is spread through direct contact through broken skin or mucous membranes with

- a sick person's blood or body fluids (urine, feces, vomit, and semen),
- objects (such as needles) that have been contaminated with infected body fluids, and
- infected animals.

As a result, those at the highest risk include healthcare workers and family/friends of patients with Ebola. The lack of treatment options and the mortality rates associated with the virus have caused alarm and **UW-Eau Claire strongly encourages students research the CDC and State Department before traveling to Ebola-affected countries or other countries in West Africa, as the known Ebola cases are always changing.**

## *Prevent Bug Bites*

Bugs (mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas) can spread a number of diseases in Ghana. Malaria, zika and yellow fever (described below) are carried by mosquitos. Some others diseases spread by insects in Ghana such as dengue, leishmaniosis, and African sleeping sickness, cannot be prevented with a vaccine.

**The best way to avoid malaria and other diseases spread by insects is to prevent bug bites!** To minimize bites:

- Cover up with clothing. Wear garments with a high neckline (or a bandana around the neck), long sleeves, and long pants.
- Use a DEET-containing insect repellent on exposed skin AND permethrin, an insecticide, on clothing.
- Avoid shiny jewelry and perfumed cosmetics, as they attract mosquitoes.
- Remain indoors at dusk or after dark.
- When travelling on your own, choose accommodations with tidy grounds and air conditioning or with windows having well-fitting screens. Use mosquito netting elsewhere.
- Check that bed netting has no holes or rips.
- Tuck netting under your mattress.
- Avoid unproven preventatives, such as mosquito coils or Avon Skin-So-Soft. While these are popular folklore insect repellents in the United States, they perform poorly in scientific studies.

## *Malaria*

Malaria is a serious but preventable disease carried by mosquitoes. According to the CDC, malaria is present in all parts of Ghana and it is

recommended that most travelers take prescription medicine before, during, and after their trip to prevent malaria. Anti-malaria pills must be started prior to arriving in Ghana and must be taken through the entire duration of the visit to Ghana and continued after returning to the United States. The duration of time before/after the program will vary depending on the medication your doctor prescribes.

**You should discuss your malaria prevention strategy with your doctor, since personal travel plans may affect it.** When talking with your doctor, please discuss the program location and your personal travel plans. What you will do about malaria prevention is a decision you must make with your doctor. Neither the CIE nor USAC-Ghana can make this decision for you. If you decide to take anti-malaria medication, follow the instructions from your physician carefully. **Remember that malaria is rarely acquired if you've taken the proper precautions.**

If you become ill, early treatment is essential. Consider any flu-like illness in a malarial area to be malaria until proven otherwise.

Common symptoms of malaria include fever and chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches, and dizziness. **See a physician promptly!** Delay in seeking medical care increases the chances of complications. Per the CDC, "Malaria symptoms will occur at least 7 to 9 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Fever in the first week of travel in a malaria-risk area is unlikely to be malaria; however, you should see a doctor right away if you develop a fever during your program. Malaria may cause anemia and jaundice. Malaria infections with Plasmodium falciparum, if not promptly treated, may cause kidney failure, coma, and death. Despite using the protective measures outlined above, **travelers may still develop malaria up to a year after returning from a malarious area.** You should see a doctor immediately if you develop a fever anytime during the year following your return and tell the physician of your travel.

To learn more about malaria, please visit the CDC website: http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/malaria.

### *Yellow Fever*

Yellow fever is a risk in Ghana and so the CDC recommends this vaccine for all travelers to Ghana. **The government of Ghana requires proof of yellow fever vaccination from all travelers.** You will need to show proof of vaccination to the immigration agent when you enter Ghana.

Like malaria, yellow fever is transmitted primarily through the bite of infected mosquitoes. The majority of persons with yellow fever have no illness to mild illness. However, in severe cases, those with yellow fever may die. As such, yellow fever vaccine is required for entry into Ghana. A single dose protects against the disease for 10 years or more.

**Please note:** At the time of printing (December 2017), the CDC has announced that there is a shortage of Yellow Fever Vaccines in the United States. There are only a few clinics that have the approved vaccine and can administer vaccinations. Due to this, you may need to travel to obtain the vaccine. Please see this website: https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/news-

announcements/yellow-fever-vaccine-access to learn more and to accurately plan where you can obtain the vaccination. **Advanced planning is a must, as the vaccine is still required by the Ghanian government.**

To learn more about yellow fever and the vaccination, please visit the CDC website http://www.cdc.gov/yellowfever/ and discuss with your doctor.

## *Other Vaccinations*

**Routine vaccines:** The CDC recommends that all routine vaccinations be up-to-date before any travel. These include the following vaccines:

- measles-mumps-rubella (MMR),
- diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis,
- varicella (chickenpox),
- polio, and
- yearly flu shot.

**Recommended for most travelers:** You should also discuss the following vaccinations with your doctors: Typhoid and Hepatitis A. Both of these are recommended for most travelers to Ghana and are transmitted through contaminated food and water.

**Recommended for some travelers.** Hepatitis B, meningitis, and rabies are recommended for some travelers based on travel plans and length of stay. Meningococcal (meningitis) is a particular concern for students traveling in the dry season (Dec-June).

To learn more, please visit the CDC website: http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/extended_student/ghana.

## *Paying for Immunizations*

You should check to see if your health insurance covers the cost of travel-related immunizations. Some do, some do not. If your immunizations are not covered by your health insurance and you receive financial aid, you may want to meet with the Financial Aid Office to inquire if the cost of immunizations can be added to your financial aid budget. Past students have indicated that immunizations and anti-malarial medications have cost about $500.

## *Where to Get Immunizations*

- UW-Eau Claire's Student Health Service offers travel health consultation at a minimal cost as well as some immunizations (Hepatitis A, tetanus, Hepatitis B, etc.) Call (715)-836-5360 for current pricing and to make an appointment.
- International Travel Clinic at Mayo Health System in Eau Claire. The Mayo Clinic in Eau Claire can provide a pre-trip consultation and vaccinations. Call (715)-838-6171.
- Use the CDC site to see where you can obtain the Yellow Fever Vaccine: https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/search-for-stamaril-clinics
- Ask your primary doctor at home if he/she can refer you to a travel medicine clinic.

## *Safety in Ghana*

**Crime:** Pick-pocketing, purse-snatching, and various scams are the most common forms of crime confronting visitors. Please follow the common-sense advice below for staying safe in Ghana:

- Travel in groups.
- Do not travel at night.
- Avoid communal taxis.

- Limit the display of jewelry or cash. Better yet, leave the jewelry at home and use a money belt.
- Pay close attention to your surroundings and the people around you, particularly after making a purchase or withdrawing money from the ATM.
- Avoid going to public beaches on your own due to the risk of theft and sexual assault.
- Keep hotel/hostel doors locked.

Safety in and around Accra/Legon will be discussed during orientation in Ghana. For specific information on crime and road safety in Ghana, see the Ghana Consular Information Sheet in this guide.

If you are the victim of a crime, or if you are arrested abroad, get in touch with the nearest U.S. consulate or embassy. U.S. consular offices will do what they can to help U.S. citizens in serious legal, medical, or financial difficulties. They can often direct you to a reliable doctor or clinic, help you contact family, or re-issue your passport.

**Water safety:** Drownings and water-related accidents due to Ghana's rough surf have been reported by U.S. citizens. The CDC recommends the following:

- Swim only in designated swimming areas. Obey lifeguards and warning flags on beaches.
- Practice safe boating, follow all boating safety laws, do not drink alcohol if driving a boat, and always wear a life jacket.
- Do not dive into shallow water.
- Do not swim in fresh water in developing areas or where sanitation is poor.
- Avoid swallowing water when swimming. Untreated water can carry germs that can make you sick.
- To prevent infections, wear shoes on beaches where there may be animal waste.

**Schistosomiasis:** Schistosomiasis, a parasitic infection that can be spread in fresh water, is found in Ghana. Avoid swimming in fresh or unchlorinated water, such as lakes, ponds, or rivers.

**Vehicle safety.** Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of U.S. citizen deaths in Ghana. Road conditions and vehicle maintenance may not meet U.S. standards in many parts of the country. Also, traffic is often chaotic with vehicles of all sizes, motorcycles, bikes, people on foot, and animals sharing the same traffic lanes thus increasing the risk for crashes. Many of these things you cannot control. However, you can control many basic choices related to your transportation:

- Be smart when you are traveling on foot, use sidewalks and crosswalks, and pay attention to the traffic around you.
- Choose a safe vehicle such as official taxis or buses.
- Think about the driver. Are they licensed? Have they been drinking alcohol? Feeling uncomfortable about the driver? Wait for the next taxi or bus!
- Travel in daylight hours.
- Wear a seatbelt.
- Sit in the backseat of cars or taxis.
- Avoid traveling via motorbikes or motorbike taxis. Many crashes are caused by inexperienced motorbike drivers.

The Centers for Disease Control offers a comprehensive list of suggestions about how to select safe transportation. Please see the Ghana page and read the following section: Stay Healthy and Safe/Select safe transportation.

### *Emergency Contacts*

General emergency procedures are described in the Study Abroad Handbook, and the USAC resident director is available if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card at orientation; be sure to keep it in your wallet at all times. The information is also on the Contact Names & Addresses page of this guide.

### *911 Equivalent in Ghana*

If you are in an emergency situation in Ghana, you will need to know how to reach the local police, fire, or ambulance services. In Ghana, you have more than one option to reach emergency services.

1. Fire: 192
2. Police: 999 or 171
3. Ambulance: 776111-5

**We suggest you save these numbers in your cell phone in case you need to use them quickly.**

The U.S. State Department also provides a list of 911 numbers abroad. Like Ghana, in some countries there are different numbers for fire, police, and ambulance. Plan ahead and research numbers before you go.

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

*Passport information is included in your Study Abroad Handbook.*

### *Visa*

A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country. The CIE will post basic information about the current visa options for U.S. citizens for study in Ghana to the Learning Content section of your online study abroad account during the semester prior to departure. **However, it is your responsibility to keep up-to-date about student visa requirements for Ghana, to apply for and receive a visa from a Ghana consulate or embassy in a timely manner.** Please read the "Visa" section of your Study Abroad Handbook for more information about what you should do to keep up-to-date on visa requirements.

### *Proof of Yellow Fever Vaccination*

All travelers to Ghana are required to show proof of yellow fever vaccination when they enter the country. Please pack this documentation in your carry-on bag and be prepared to show it to the immigration agent when you enter Ghana.

## PACKING TIPS

*In addition to the general packing information in your Study Abroad Handbook, you should know the following about Ghana.*

### *Climate*

Ghana has a tropical climate, but temperatures will vary with the season and elevation. Temperatures will range from a low of 70 F to a high of 90+ F. In most areas, the highest temperatures occur in March, the lowest in August. Typically, Ghana has two rainy seasons: April to July and September to November. As such, you should be sure to pack a raincoat and umbrella.

### *What to Pack*

Your Peer Advisor will give you a packing list at the second orientation later in the semester prior to departure.

## GETTING TO GHANA

### *Travel Arrangements*

It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to Accra. USAC provides group flight information. **USAC strongly recommends that students take the group flight**. However, you are free to make your own travel arrangements as long as you arrive in Accra on the designated arrival day.

Please note that you must arrive in time for orientation. Students who miss orientation will be charged $100 by USAC. **USAC will send you information on flights and arrival via your USAC Student Gateway Account.**

## SETTLING IN

### *Orientation*

You will have orientation the first five days after you arrive. Orientation includes a USAC and U of Ghana orientation as well as a tour of the city and an included excursion. After orientation, you will start your courses.

### *Housing Options*

After your acceptance to USAC, you were asked to submit a housing questionnaire via your Gateway account, where you indicated your housing preferences. You are given the choice of a single or double room. Keep in mind the single room is slightly more expensive. You are responsible for paying your housing directly to USAC.

### *Housing over the Winter Break*

Between semesters, if you are an academic year student, you will be provided with housing during the break at an extra fee of 56 Cedi per week, paid in cash to the International Programs Office.

### *Residence Halls*

The University of Ghana believes in community living as an essential part of student life and primarily houses students in an on-campus Residence Hall. You will live with other USAC and international students, as well as Ghanaian students.

All USAC students will reside in the campus International Residence Hall (often referred to as ISH) on the University of Ghana campus. Click here to view pictures. The Residence Hall also has a restaurant, an internet café, a small grocery store, hand-washing & laundry facilities, as well as a reading room. There is no air conditioning in the rooms, but there are ceiling fans.

**Meals:** Communal kitchenettes (where you can cook) include a stove and refrigerator and are available on each floor for student use in the Residence Hall. If you want your own electric stove, you should budget an additional $20-$30. You will need to bring or purchase your own cooking utensils. Cooking in the Residence Halls can be difficult. Students enjoy eating out in Accra and trying the unique cuisine in the area. There are a variety of inexpensive restaurants on campus and in the nearby neighborhoods.

**Bathrooms:** There are stall/group bathrooms and showers on each floor of the housing. The housing staff cleans them and keeps them very tidy. They are not co-ed. Warm water in

Ghana is very rare. Past students haven't minded this as the weather is hot and humid. Water is not heated electronically, but in large black tanks, which absorb heat from the sun. Your best chance at a warm shower might be in the middle of the day.

**Laundry:** There are laundry facilities in the dorm building for all students to use which include facilities for hand-washing clothes; otherwise Laundromats are in the surrounding neighborhood nearby. Local cleaners will come around at set times to take students orders to wash. Soap, laundry detergent, and clothes pins are available for purchase in Accra. Be careful with delicate items, as the detergent tends to be very potent. You may not want to give these to a cleaner. There are no dryers and line drying will be your only option.

**Telephone:** There are no phones in the international hall. However, you can buy a cell phone upon arrival.

**Electricity:** You will experience many power outages while in Ghana. These outages are usually never planned and can happen at any time. Past students have said that they eventually get used to them, but it can be frustrating when you are working on an assignment or cooking a meal. Some outages happen at night, so it is recommended that you bring a flashlight or headlamp to use.

### *Personal Property Insurance*

USAC is not responsible for loss or theft of personal items while you are abroad, traveling, and in your program housing. If you would like to protect your personal items while abroad, you may purchase additional personal property and/or liability coverage by contacting CISI. For questions regarding the additional insurance, you will be able to contact CISI once you are enrolled for your health insurance, later in the semester.

You may also want to discuss this insurance with your parents and your insurance agent in the U.S.

**Students bringing computers, smart phones, cameras, or other high-end items are encouraged to considering purchasing personal property insurance.**

### *Community Involvement*

USAC Ghana offers a number of volunteer and service opportunities for students wishing to become more involved in the local community. Many past students have found volunteer work to be very rewarding and helped them better understand and appreciate the Ghanaian culture.

## COMMUNICATION

*Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire email address and telephone calls through your computer (SKYPE) is in your Study Abroad Handbook.*

### *Time Difference*

Ghana is six hours ahead of Eau Claire. For example, when it is 1:00 p.m. on a Thursday in Eau Claire, it is 7:00 p.m. on Thursday in Ghana.

### *E-mail/Internet*

There are several Internet cafés on campus and in the Residence Hall where you will be living. You will have use of the Internet and computers in these cafés at a very nominal rate. The International Programs Office also

provides free Internet access and computer usage for international students. Internet speed may be slower than what you are used to in the U.S.

### *Snail-mail*

You will be able to receive mail at the USAC-Ghana office.

Student Name
University Studies Abroad Consortium
Private Mail Bag LG 26
Accra, Ghana

### *Telephone Information*

**Calling from the U.S. to Ghana:** If you want to call someone in Ghana before you arrive, you must first dial 011, which is the international dialing code. Next, dial 233, the country code for Ghana, then the area code (30 for Accra area) and the rest of the number.

**From Ghana to the U.S.:** To call the United States from Ghana, dial:
00 - 1 - Area Code - Land Phone Number
00 - 1 - 10 Digit Mobile Number

**Cell phones:** Cell phones are very common in Ghana. Some past participants have found it economical and convenient to purchase cell phones for their time abroad. You can discuss how to purchase a cell phone during your orientation in Ghana. If you choose to bring a cell phone from the US, be sure to contact your American carrier and ask them to unlock your phone. It is also recommended that you understand how to turn off the data and roaming features so that you do not run up your bill. Some American carriers offer international plans, so that is something to also consider.

## CULTURAL NOTES

### *General Information*

Ghana has a rich and complex history. It was the first African country to acquire independence from European rule, yet it has avoided many of the ethnic conflicts and resource wars that have plagued many countries in Africa. We encourage you to learn more about Ghana prior to your departure. A good first step is reading the "everyculture.com" entry for Ghana at www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Ghana.html.

### *Manners*

Ghanaians place great emphasis on politeness, hospitality, and formality. You may find that proper greetings and respect for one's elders hold greater importance in Ghana than they do in the U.S.

**Greetings:** It is important to take the time to greet people (acquaintances and close friends), shake hands with each member of the family or group, and ask about each other's health and families.

**Age and social status:** Ghanaians attach great respect to age and social status. If you are of traditional college age, many people that you meet will be older than you. You should keep this idea in mind when interacting with Ghanaians. For example, you should show much respect to your professors as they are presumably older than you and have special status as highly educated people.

Here are some tips from past participants about manners in Ghana

**Don't eat and walk at the same time.** While it is common here to do 'fast food' and take a bite of our pizza or drink a sip of our soda

while we meander towards the table, it is considered rude in Ghana to not be fully seated before the meal is touched. The practice of eating and walking is more acceptable for Oborunis (foreigners) than Obibinis (Africans), but that is only because they expect us to follow our own cultural habits. Remember, when in Ghana, do as the Ghanaians do (to some extent).

**When you have food in front of you, invite those around you to share in the meal…**It's pleasant and polite, and it's a nice surprise to the Ghanaians that you invite to have a bite.

**Do not drink to excess, if at all.** It is considered foolish (meaning the true sense of the word: of a fool's behavior) to drink to the point of tipsy-ness or drunkenness. Ghanaians rarely drink, and if they do, it's almost always behind closed doors in the home.

**If you don't understand something, ask!** Ghanaians are wonderful people and love to share information with you. In addition, they will most likely be both impressed and surprised at how willing and interested you are in learning (whether it's about culture, place, recommendations, or anything else!)

**That being said, do not challenge cultural practices outright if you do not agree with them.** You are a visitor in Ghana. It is not your duty, nor place, to discriminate against the culture. You may, and will likely, see things that you disagree with, including corporal (physical) punishment to those who are misbehaving, the bribing of officials, discrimination against other African descendants, etc. This was very hard for me, to be honest. As a future psychologist and social worker (and as a humanitarian and "save the whales/trees/polar bears/children" kind of person) watching these things happen, well, it sucked, frankly. It is okay, and acceptable, to express your opinion, but remember that your opinion means no more or less than anyone else's, no matter how strongly you feel about it.

**Don't do anything that your grandmother wouldn't like.** Don't go walking around in short skirts and a low-cut shirt or be flamboyant in your romantic relationships, should you decide to have one there. Be polite.

## Travel While Abroad

*See additional travel information in your Study Abroad Handbook.*

### *Field Trips*

Two USAC-organized field trips are conducted each semester in Ghana. Past examples include, Ankobra beach resort, Nzulezo stilt village, Cape Coast Slave Castle and Kakum National park. These trips generally take place on weekends and are included in the program fees. The exact dates and sites may change at the discretion of the Resident Director. Additional field tours (Northern Ghana and Eco Volta tours) are offered by USAC for an additional charge.

# WEB RESOURCES FOR GHANA

| *City* |
| --- |
| **Lonely Planet Accra:** https://www.lonelyplanet.com/ghana/accra |
| **Ghana Tourism Board:** http://www.ghana.travel |
| ***Culture*** |
| **Ghana Broadcasting Corporation:** http://www.gbcghana.com/ |
| **Online Newspapers-Ghana:** http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/ghana.htm |
| ***Country*** |
| **Ghana Tourism Board:** http://www.touringghana.com/ |
| **Touring Ghana:** www.touringghana.com/ |
| **Lonely Planet Ghana:** https://www.lonelyplanet.com/ghana |

# CONTACT NAMES & ADDRESSES

**GENERAL UW-EAU CLAIRE & CISI CONTACT INFORMATION IS IN YOUR STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK.**

## *USAC*

In Ghana

Abigail Thompson, Resident Director
Cladia Tawiah Amoako, Assistant
USAC Ghana Office
14 & 15 International House
Anne Jiagge Road
University of Ghana Legon
Legon Accra
GHANA
Tel. +233 (30) 2515320
Emergency Cell
Abigail: +233 (24) 4332716
Claudia: +233 (24) 4757218
Email: usacgh@ug.edu.gh

In the US

University Studies Abroad Consortium
MS 0323 / University of Nevada, Reno
Reno, NV 89557-0323
Toll free: 1-866-404-USAC (8722)
Tel: 1-775-784-6569
Fax: 1-775-784-6010
Email: usac@unr.edu
www.usac.unr.edu

Jenna Schumann
Ghana Program Advisor
Jenna.schumann@usac.edu
775-682-5893

## *UW-Eau Claire*

Center for International Education
Jenna Krosch
Study Abroad Coordinator
E-mail: kroschjm@uwec.edu

3 Schofield Hall
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Eau Claire, WI 54702
Phone: (715) 836-4411
Fax: (715) 836-4948

## *Ghana Embassy in Washington D.C.*

3512 International Dr., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008
Tel. 202-686-4250
http://www.ghanaembassy.org/

## *US Embassy in Ghana*

No. 24 Fourth Circular Road
Cantonments
P.O. Box 194
Accra, Ghana
Tel. American Citizens Services:
(233) 30-2741-570
Tel. After Hours/Emergency:
(233) 30-2741-755 or
(233) 30-2741-000
Email: ACSaccra@state.gov
http://ghana.usembassy.gov/index.html




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