

# Ghana - IP Bulletin 2013-14

## Introduction

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The IP Bulletin is the International Programs (IP) "catalog" and provides academic information about the program in Ghana.

## General Information

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The Program in Ghana offers a combination of regular university course work and cultural immersion. Study in the Republic of Ghana affords students a rare opportunity to discover West Africa's rich and diverse cultures and fascinating history, to experience its current economic and social challenges firsthand, and to explore its captivating musical and artistic creativity.

IP students participate in the academic year at the University of Ghana in Legon. Students who are admitted for the full year are expected to complete the academic year in Ghana.

## Academic Calendar

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The academic year normally runs from mid-August through mid to late May. Each semester is 16 weeks long, with 13 weeks of lecture, one week of review, and two weeks of exams. Student plans must be flexible, however, since disruptions in the calendar are common.

## Academic Culture

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The typical student in Ghana has twelve years of education before entering college and spends approximately four years completing a bachelor's degree. Only about ten percent of the country's students gain access to one of Ghana's eight public universities. In contrast more than sixty percent of students in California go on to higher education. Undergraduate education is very significant in Ghana since most professional jobs require a college degree; securing enrollment in the university is crucial to professional advancement. Many more Ghanaian students would like to attend than can be accepted by the small number of universities. Students should understand that because they have obtained places that might have gone to local students, they must take their studies seriously and act responsibly so as not to be viewed as misusing rare educational opportunities and the university's scarce resources.

Ghanaian university students are about the same age as IP students but because they come from a more traditional society and have attended boarding schools for their secondary education, they are generally more conservative and more respectful of authority. They tend to form friendships with those who come from the same area of the country or who went to the same schools as they did and thus may sometimes be reserved in making new international friends, despite their genuine friendliness and interest in Americans.

In secondary school Ghanaian students specialize in science, agricultural science, arts and humanities, or business; they take a less varied but more intense curriculum than the average American student and consequently, they are well grounded in their areas of interest by the time they reach the university.

### Flexibility, Independence, and Motivation

As a student in Ghana, you must be prepared for the challenges of life in a developing country and must demonstrate respect for its people. It helps to be flexible, culturally open, and ready for the conditions of a far less affluent environment than that found in California.

You must have serious academic motivation and be willing to pursue your studies with a significant degree of independence. You should be flexible in your academic plans and capable of doing independent work and directed research.

Note that the oral communication characteristic of Ghanaian society applies to the university and classroom as well. This means that there is less concern with providing consistent, explicit written announcements and more reliance on person-to-person communication. You should cultivate relations with your Ghanaian classmates and keep in touch with other students and the Study Center for current information.

In case of disruption or strikes at the university, which are possible, the Study Center will attempt to organize substitute classes and other activities designed to keep students' academic progress on track as much as possible. You should be prepared to cope with delays, substitute classes, and other departures from normal academic calendars and processes. Instead of giving way to frustration, you should exercise patience and ingenuity in adapting to the changes and making the most of the experience. Furthermore, you might consider the interruptions a learning opportunity and ask who is striking and why; what organizations or groups are involved; and what is the larger political and cultural context of the disruption.

### Instructors and Courses

The University of Ghana operates on a semester system and is more British in its structure and methods. This system requires a higher level of independence and self-motivation in seeking out information and resources.

This may mean having more patience in seeking internet resources and persistence in seeking resources. Instructors generally are called lecturers. Students should be prepared to listen carefully to lecturers who have Ghanaian, West African, British and other accents and to cope with the sometimes poor-quality sound systems that are used. There is a schedule of classes and students register on line at the international programs office, but students may have to go to some departments to register for some courses as well. Most instructors provide a course outline and bibliography during the first two weeks of the class, but not beforehand.

There are generally three types of courses—lectures, seminars, and studio courses in the arts and performance. Lecture courses are large and somewhat different from CSU lecture courses in their objectives. Classroom time is often used for the transmission of information. Students attend lectures primarily to take notes and listen, not to discuss the subject matter, although lecturers in some classes allow time for questions or pose questions to the students or assign group activities and projects.

Some lectures are complemented by a separate “tutorial” in which students have more opportunity for questions and discussion and for exchanging opinions with Ghanaian students. Seminar courses allow for more discussion and debate. You are responsible for obtaining the reading materials for your classes. In large classes the instructor may give the readings to a class leader who makes them available for photocopying. Because books are expensive and difficult to obtain, and because libraries do not have the resources necessary to support all the course work, lecturers frequently cannot assign readings to be done ahead of time and discussed in class. Even though not all readings are discussed in class, students are expected to read the items on the bibliography and be able to discuss or cite them on their exams. You should be prepared to invest time and effort into searching out resources and opportunities to enhance your academic experience.

Most lecturers are quite interested in helping international students. If there is no time to answer questions after class, students can visit faculty members during their office hours for further discussion. Faculty members usually are available for discussions during office hours or by appointment; however, sometimes a lecturer may have to attend to other commitments, in which case you should understand that this is a necessity of life in Ghana and you should be gracious in scheduling or rescheduling an appointment. You should especially take care to be cooperative and respectful.

### **Registration Process**

Since University of Ghana students do not take courses outside their majors (as students do at universities in the US) academic activity is more compartmentalized. International students, however, are permitted to take courses in a variety of disciplines. The university publishes a schedule of courses and a student handbook that lists all department courses, but the timetables are not posted until shortly before classes begin. IP students must go to each department in which they want to take courses and register for the courses with each individual department, and must be prepared to deal with conflicting class times.

### **Library Facilities**

Library facilities at the University of Ghana are relatively good by African standards but poor by US standards. The Balme Library, the main library, has multiple copies of a limited number of textbooks, reading rooms for study, and a catalog organized differently from CSU libraries. Many of the materials are dated and access to materials is further limited because books have been stolen or misplaced. A new on line library (<http://library.ug.edu.gh>) helps as well as the new 24 hour reading at the Balme library. The University Bookstore and Accra Bookstores are great resources for additional Academic resources.

Many academic departments have their own reading rooms with basic texts for the courses taught by the department. Furthermore, all the halls of residences have libraries and reading rooms where students can study. There is also a small collection of books at the Study Center and it may be possible for students to use the library of the Institute of African Studies (Kwame Nkrumah Complex), which has a good collection of books on Africa and is air-conditioned. Students are urged to bring current books in the field in which they plan to study.

### **Assessment and Grading**

There is sometimes one midterm exam and always a final comprehensive exam, which usually is in essay format, lasts about three hours, and counts for as much as 70 to 100 percent of the grade. Some lecturers tend to emphasize memorization of facts over critical thinking and expect students to repeat the lecture material on exams. Others expect more independent work from students and expect them to give evidence of having mastered the readings listed on the bibliographies. Instructors generally look for writing that displays a strong grasp of the subject matter, that offers logical argument, and that demonstrates proficient writing ability. In addition to the final exam, many classes also have “continuous assessment” (attendance, quizzes, assignments, papers, class presentations and group assignments) during the term, that can count to up to 30% of your grades.

Class attendance is very important; absences may result in lower grades.

In the Ghanaian university, the importance of course grades is not immediately apparent because Ghanaian students focus on comprehensive exam results that come later in their university studies or on the grades that are officially recorded at the end of the year; nevertheless, Ghanaian students are quite competitive. This means that you must take responsibility for investing time and effort to expand your study outside the classroom to make the most of their courses and academic experience.

The grading system used at the University of Ghana is comparable to the grading scale used at the CSU.

## Academic Program

The University of Ghana is similar to the British university model in that undergraduate students enroll in a program of study that is relatively fixed and highly focused within the particular subject.

Full-year programs at the University of Ghana integrate students into regular university courses in a wide range of disciplines. The program begins with a mandatory on-site orientation classes (see Orientation in the Participant Guide for details).

IP students have non-degree status and are allowed to select any course appropriate to their academic study plan with the approval of the Liaison Officer. Courses are available in a wide variety of disciplines.

Course work is recommended in African studies, anthropology, archaeology, development studies, dramatic arts, geography, history, linguistics, political science, religious studies, and sociology. Some courses in the Faculty of Agriculture are appropriate for CSU students. Many departments require fieldwork. Outstanding field research is conducted by the departments of sociology and archaeology and in many of the field sciences. With the exception of biology, students should be careful about planning to take laboratory science courses as laboratory equipment is not always available. Also, courses in business administration tend to be very crowded and extremely competitive.

Most courses are worth three semester units, but some courses are only one or two units and a few are more than 3. Therefore, students must calculate the total number of quarter units for which they are registered, not the number of courses to ensure that they meet the 15-unit minimum load.

All students, regardless of the curriculum they are following, are required to take:

- the equivalent of 15 CSU units each semester,
- Ghanaian Society and Culture (taken in the Fall semester),
- Asante Twi language course each semester, and
- Service Learning in Semester 2.

Below is an example of the academic schedule for the year in Ghana:

Semester 1 (Fall Semester)	Units	Semester 2 (Spring Semester)	Units
Asante Twi Language I	3	Asante Twi Language II	3
Ghana Society and Culture	3	Service Learning	3
Electives	<u>9</u>	Electives	<u>9</u>
Minimum number of units required for Fall	15	Minimum number of units required for Spring	15

### Course Coding and Levels

All degree programs have letter and number codes beginning with four letters signifying a department or subject, followed by a three-digit number as shown in the table below.

Course Numbers and Levels at the University of Ghana	
Level 100 (first year) courses (100-199)	Level 300 (third year) courses (300-399)
Level 200 (second year) courses (200-299)	Level 400 (fourth year) courses (400-499)

The third digit in the number code represents the semester in which the course is offered as follows:

- zero (0) is assigned to courses that are offered in both semesters,
- odd numbers (1,3,5,7,9) are assigned to courses offered in the first semester, and
- even numbers are assigned to courses offered in the second semester.

For example, SOCI 301 (Foundations of Social Thought) is a first semester course, and SOCI 302 (Perspective in Social Theory) is a second semester course.

Generally, first year courses are numbered 100-199 are introductory courses taken by University of Ghana students in their first year of university study and are not open to IP students except for some dance and language courses. Second year courses numbered 200-299 are also lower division although some exceptions may apply, depending on course content. Most third year courses numbered 300-399 are equivalent to upper division courses with some exceptions depending on course content; e.g. some courses in studio art, language, dance, music and other study areas may be lower division. Fourth year courses numbered 400-499 are considered equivalent to upper division courses.

### Unit Conversion Guidelines

For every credit earned at the University of Ghana, an IP student earns one CSU semester unit. To convert the value of CSU semester units into CSU quarter units, multiply the CSU semester units by 1.5.

## Academic Reporting

In addition to units and grades, the OIP reports each course attempted to the student's campus by reporting the title of the course taken and the CSU home campus department in which the course is closely related. This method of reporting means that students will need to furnish course descriptions, syllabi, and other course materials to their advisors in order to apply for credit towards specific major, minor, or general education requirements. Students should expect to complete campus-based forms (petitions or course substitution requests) with the assistance of their advisor(s). If courses are not needed for specific degree requirements, then it is usually not necessary to complete any other forms.

Academic Reports for students attending the University of Ghana can take a minimum of six months to finalize, and sometimes longer. Graduating seniors should take this into account when submitting their graduation forms at their home campus.

## Courses

### Required Courses

#### **AFST 001 Asante Twi Language I (3)**

This is a basic course in Asante Twi for beginners covering the Twi alphabet and sounds; verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, postpositions, and interrogatives; and simple expressions such as greetings, numbers, days of the week, etc. Taken in the fall semester. Lower division.

#### **AFST 002 Asante Twi Language II (3)**

This course continues the basic study of the language, reading and writing, and everyday conversational skills with practical study in market places, restaurants, etc. Taken in the spring semester. Lower division.

#### **AFST 301 Ghana Society and Culture (3)**

Topics covered include the history of Ghana; the city of Accra and its people, language, communication, and society; politics, democracy, and human rights; the slave trade; festivals, rituals, and music; political economy since independence; and arts and crafts of Ghana. Lectures are supplemented by lessons in Twi and drumming, development initiatives, and field trips to museums,

historic sites, festivals, and craft centers. Texts are selected readings in Ghanaian culture and social systems in the library of the Study Center. Assessment is based on class participation, a journal and final paper. Taken in the fall semester. Upper division.

#### **SVLN 302 Service Learning (3)**

The course provides students with the opportunity to acquire experiential knowledge and practical involvement on the respective issues in an area of interest to the student. The student has a range of agencies and organizations which work on topical issues in Africa to choose from. The students work with the organization for a specific number of hours per week to gain first hand insights into the issues at stake. The broad areas of interest include creative arts, development, education, environment, health and culture. Taken in the spring semester, this is required course for all IP participants. Upper division.

### University Courses

Students are advised to consult the university's websites for specific course offerings.

Admission to courses is subject to availability, approval of the host university and the particular department's prerequisites. Just as is the case with any CSU catalog, not all of the courses are offered every semester so students should be flexible with their selection of courses.

Students who wish to study music at the University of Ghana should note that their Music Department offers courses primarily in African music and offers few courses, if any, in western music. Therefore music students should be prepared to study in a department which is well stocked with a range of African traditional music instruments.

To find course offerings, visit the University of Ghana website, <http://www.ug.edu.gh/> and under "Academics", click on "Faculties". Then click on the faculty (or School) to find departments and course descriptions. For instance, to find descriptions of courses offered through the English Department, enter [www.ug.edu.gh](http://www.ug.edu.gh/), click the links: "Academics"; "Faculties", "Faculty of Arts" "Department of English" and finally "Courses".

If you have any questions regarding accessing course information, please contact Elsie Gaisie or Rose Walls at [calstategha@gmail.com](mailto:calstategha@gmail.com).