

GHANA

Fall, Spring, and Academic Year



2012-2013 Program Guide



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The University of California, in accordance with applicable Federal and State law and University policy, does not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy,* disability, age, medical condition (cancer-related), ancestry, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran or special disabled veteran. The University also prohibits sexual harassment. This nondiscrimination policy covers admission, access, and treatment in University programs and activities. Inquiries regarding the University's student-related nondiscrimination policies may be directed to the campus Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action office.

*Pregnancy includes pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth.



▶ Scan to get this guide on your Smartphone.

YOUR UCEAP NETWORK

Local UCEAP Support

Campus EAP Office

The Campus EAP Office coordinates recruitment, student selection, orientations, and academic advising; and serves as your primary contact during the application process.

UCEAP Systemwide Office

The UCEAP Systemwide Office establishes and operates programs and coordinates UCEAP administration for all UC campuses from its headquarters in Goleta, California. You will work closely with the following Systemwide Office staff:

Program Advisors provide academic and operational program information to you and your campus as well as administrative support for all aspects of your participation.

Operations Specialists manage the logistics of the program. They coordinate document requirements, visa application instructions, health and safety precautions, acceptance and placement by host institutions, arrival and on-site orientation, and housing arrangements.

Academic Specialists advise on academic policies, review courses taken abroad for UC credit, and document your registration, grades, petitions and academic records.

Student Finance Accountants assist primarily with UCEAP statements, program fee collection, and financial aid disbursements (in conjunction with your campus Financial Aid Office).

Contact Information

Program Advisor

TBA

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Operations Specialist

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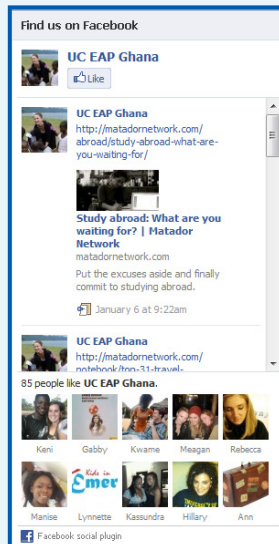
UCEAP Systemwide Office

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► **Join the Conversation!**
Meet fellow UCEAP participants and alumni on Facebook.



UCEAP Online

Bookmark your **Participants** program page. This resource lists requirements and policies you need to know before you go abroad, including your Predeparture Checklist, *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*, Program Calendar, UCEAP Student Budgets, and payment instructions.

Connect with us! Join our Facebook network via the **UCEAP Ghana page**.

Study Center Abroad

UCEAP Ghana is administered by a UCEAP Resident Director. Staff will advise you on academic matters, assist with housing, and provide information on cultural activities.

Professor Rose Walls, Resident Director
 Sharon Okantey, UCEAP Program Coordinator
 University of California Study Center
 University of Ghana, PO Box 3
 Legon, Ghana, West Africa

Phone (calling from the U.S.): (011-233-30) 2500-147

Phone (calling from Ghana): 030-2500-147

E-mail: uceapgha@africaonline.com.gh

Cell Phone: 011-233-20-817-4466 if calling from USA

Phone Number Codes

U.S. international code **011**

(dial this to call from the U.S.)

Ghana country code **233**

Legon city code **030**

Approximate Time Difference

Add 8 hours

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

Try to learn Twi immediately. It is both fun and beneficial.

By studying and attending lectures in African history, I gained a different point of view from what I've received from American professors.

In America everything is spoon-fed to us in terms of resources and opportunities. Be prepared to search out opportunities and find resources.

You'll need to work independently and be motivated to get the most out of your courses.

Because higher education in Ghana is based on the British system, the lecture style was almost dictation with limited discussion, but access to professors is great. The British academic style requires that you do a lot more independent work.

Studying one of the local languages was very beneficial. The professors weren't as concerned with our writing and grammar abilities as they were with our conversation skills.

”

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Program Calendar

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

Learning to cope with delays, substitute classes, and other departures from normal academic calendars and processes is important for a positive experience. Exercise patience and ingenuity in adapting to the changes and making the most of the experience. In case of disruption or strikes at the university, UCEAP will attempt to organize substitute classes and other activities designed to keep your academic progress on track.

Academic Culture

Only about 10 percent of the country's students attend one of Ghana's six public universities. Since most professional jobs require a college degree, enrollment in the university is crucial to professional advancement. Ghanaian students take their university studies seriously.

You have obtained a place in the university that might have gone to a local student; therefore, take your classes seriously and act responsibly so as not to be viewed as misusing the educational opportunity and the university's scarce resources.

Although they are about the same age as UC students, Ghanaian university students come from a more traditional society and have attended boarding schools for their secondary education; therefore, they are generally more conservative and respectful of authority. Despite their genuine friendliness and interest in Americans, Ghanaians may be reserved when it comes to making new friends outside their established circles.

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 are consequently well grounded in their majors by the time they reach the university.

Flexibility, Independence, and Motivation

You are expected to show courtesy and respect when interacting with faculty, administrators, classmates, and student helpers. Your behavior should reflect positively on UC and UCEAP.

Be prepared for the challenges of life in a developing country and demonstrate respect for the Ghanaian people. It helps to be flexible, culturally open, and ready for the varying conditions of a far less affluent and comfortable environment than that found in California.

Be motivated and willing to pursue your studies with independence; be flexible in your academic plans and open to unique opportunities that may arise.

The oral communication characteristic of Ghanaian society applies to the university and classroom. There is less concern with providing consistent, explicit written announcements and more reliance on person-to-person communication. Cultivate relations with your Ghanaian classmates and keep in touch with other international students and the Study Center for current information.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“ Don't think that just because you don't have to buy books you don't have to study.

The Special Study Project was the best part of my academic experience. It allowed me to go out into the field and interview women in politics.

Make friends with Ghanaian students in each class. They'll look out for you and make sure you don't miss anything.

As a foreigner, it's hard to make friends—but everyone's generally friendly and helpful, especially in class. It's also hard to get used to being one of only 50 to 60 white faces in the whole place. Needless to say, I get noticed when I go anywhere, but it's an interesting experience.

”

Instructors and Courses

The universities in Ghana are more British than American in structure and method. Instructors generally are called lecturers. You will need to listen carefully to lecturers who have accents and occasionally cope with poor-quality sound systems. Most instructors provide a course outline and a bibliography during the first two weeks of the class, but not beforehand.

The curriculum is organized into faculties, colleges, and schools each with different websites with varying amounts of information. You will need to be patient when searching for course information on the University of Ghana website.

Coursework is recommended in African studies, agriculture, anthropology, archaeology, development studies, dramatic arts, geography, history, linguistics, political science, religious studies, and sociology. Some departments require fieldwork. Outstanding field research is conducted by the departments of sociology and archaeology and in the field sciences. With the exception of biology, be careful about taking laboratory science courses as laboratory equipment is not always available. Courses in business administration tend to be very crowded.

There is a schedule of classes, but you will have to go to each department to register for your courses. There are generally three types of courses: 1) lectures, 2) seminars, and 3) studio courses in the arts and performance. Lecture courses are large and rather different from UC lecture courses in their objectives. Students attend lectures primarily to take notes and listen, not to discuss the subject matter, although some lecturers allow time for questions or pose questions to the students. Some lectures are complemented by a separate tutorial in which you will have more opportunity for questions and discussion. The tutorials are generally conducted by teachers' assistants. Seminar courses allow for more discussion and debate.

You are responsible for obtaining reading materials for your classes. Books are expensive and difficult to obtain and libraries do not have the resources necessary to support all coursework; therefore, lecturers frequently cannot assign readings to be done ahead of time and discussed in class. In large classes, the instructor may give the readings to a class leader who makes them available for photocopying. Though not all readings are discussed in class, you will be expected to read most of the items on the bibliography and cite them on your exams. Be prepared to invest time and effort into searching out resources and opportunities to enhance your academic experience. You will need to make photocopies for most of your courses.

Most lecturers are interested in helping international students. If there is no time to answer questions after class, you can visit faculty members during their office hours for further discussion. Faculty members usually are available during office hours or by appointment; sometimes a lecturer may be obligated to other commitments, in which case understand that this is a necessity of life in Ghana and be gracious about rescheduling an appointment. Be especially cooperative and respectful if you are working with an independent study project advisor (see *Independent Study* in this chapter).

Keep all syllabi, bibliographies, papers, tests (if returned by the instructor), and other course information for use upon return to your UC campus.

- ▶ Attendance is important; absences may result in lower grades.
- ▶ It is difficult to determine when grades will be available. Fall grades can come in anytime between early January and late March. Spring grades can come in anytime between early June and late September

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“Don't bother with too many clothes; bring books, especially specialized texts.”

Exams and Grading

To make the most of your courses and academic experience, independently invest time and effort to expand your study beyond the classroom. Some lecturers emphasize memorization of facts over critical analysis and expect students to reproduce the lecture material on exams. Others expect more independent work from students and expect them to give evidence of having mastered the readings listed in the bibliographies. There is sometimes a midterm exam and always a final comprehensive exam, which is usually in essay format, lasts about three hours, and counts for as much as 70 to 100 percent of the final grade. Because of the difficulty of final exams, it is recommended that you study for exams in groups, especially with Ghanaian students who are familiar with the required command of readings and know what to anticipate as possible exam topics. You may also go to the Balme Library to see copies of previous exams from course lecturers. They can be useful as examples. In addition to the final exam, many classes have continuous assessment (attendance, quizzes, assignments, papers, group projects, and class presentations) which can count for 30 percent of the final grade in some departments.

Past UCEAP participants who felt that a course was so easy that they did not need to attend lectures or take the class seriously were later surprised by the difficulty of the final exam.

Local students take all their courses in the same year or level (100, 200, 300, or 400), and the exam schedule is based on class levels. If you take courses from different levels, you may have conflicts in your final exam schedule. If you have a schedule conflict, promptly ask the UCEAP Resident Director for advice on how to make arrangements to resolve the conflict.

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.

- ▶ For more detailed information about grades, see the [Academic Information chapter](#) of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*.

Books

You are urged to take reference books as well as key articles in the field in which you plan to study.

The university bookstore is the best source of textbooks and supplies, although sometimes books are difficult to obtain.

Library facilities at the University of Ghana are considered relatively good by African standards but limited by U.S. 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 UC libraries. Many of the materials are dated, in poor condition, and disorganized. The library is crowded by many students trying to access few materials; access to materials is further limited because some books have been stolen, defaced, or misplaced. New improvements to the Balme Library include a 24-hour reading room and [online services](#).

Many academic departments have their own reading rooms with basic texts for the courses taught by the department. It may also be possible for you to use the library of the African Studies Institute, which has a good collection of books on Africa.

The Study Center also has a collection of books that you may use. Consider leaving books with the UCEAP Study Center or the University of Ghana library after the program. Such donations are always welcome and they benefit future students.

Program Description

As a UCEAP student you have non-degree status and are allowed to select any course appropriate to your academic study plan with the approval of the UCEAP Resident Director, although some courses may be limited to students who are majoring in that subject.

Courses are assigned a University of Ghana course number related to the level (100, 200, 300, 400). You may not take 100-level courses except for language courses and certain performing arts courses. Levels 100 and 200 are lower division. UCEAP recommends the 300 and 400-level courses which are upper division. Class size is smaller at the upper levels.

Required:

- Minimum of 24 UC quarter units each term, approximately six courses. Most courses are 4 UC quarter units (3 U. of Ghana credits); some are 3 units and a few are more than 4.
- Ghana Society and Culture course during first three weeks of your program (3 UC quarter units). Counts toward 24 unit minimum.
- MyEAP Study List registration.
- Special Study Project form if you do a research project or internship for academic credit.

Registration Process

Academic activity is more compartmentalized than in the U.S. because University of Ghana students do not take courses outside their majors or levels. As an international student, however, you may take courses in a variety of disciplines and levels. The university publishes a list of courses and a student handbook that lists all department courses, but the timetables (schedules) are not posted until shortly before classes begin. Be prepared to deal with conflicting class schedules.

You must register for courses with each individual University of Ghana department. This takes time and extreme patience as you will need to physically go to each department. There is no central registration process at the University of Ghana. The process will be covered during your on-site orientation.

Once you have completed your University of Ghana registration, you will then complete your MyEAP Registration Study list. Instructions will be provided after arrival.

► Only one research project or internship per student is permitted.

► Be flexible and take advantage of the assistance of the UCEAP Resident Director and supervising instructor in Ghana to focus and refine your topic.

Independent Study

Independent study, called a UCEAP **Special Study Project**, can enrich your experience in Ghana with fieldwork, research, or an internship. You may design a project on a topic related to West Africa, especially Ghana, which may include research or internship activities.

Special Study Projects are under the general direction of the UCEAP Resident Director and the supervision of a local faculty member or other qualified professional on-site. They are normally worth 4 UC quarter units although units vary depending on the type and amount of work involved, and they are graded with a letter grade (the P/NP option is not permitted).

Community service and volunteer opportunities, which may be developed into a Special Study Project, are available at many local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and schools including the University Hospital, the National Theatre, and the Family and Development Programme. A few spots are available competitively at international organizations such as the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). There are a number of institutes or projects on the University of Ghana campus that might offer opportunities for research or internships. The Study Center will provide information after arrival on service opportunities and NGOs. A tentative list is available [here](#).

Prior to Departure:

- Research possible study topics or internships and consult appropriate UC campus faculty members for advice. It may be possible to develop a project related to the research interests of a UC faculty member or to your long-term research or honors work at your UC campus.
- Take a research methods course. If this is not possible, find an introductory research methods text in your field of interest and take the text with you to Ghana.
- Write a preliminary proposal. Instructions for completing and submitting the proposal are in the UCEAP Predeparture Checklist.
- Establish a second topic in case the first one does not work out.
- Refer to your campus library for instructions for using the California Digital Library.

On Site in Ghana:

Complete a **Special Study Project** form and a formal research proposal or plan of study in consultation with the UCEAP Resident Director and the host university faculty member or other designated supervisor. At this time, you will refine your topic or possibly shift it to better fit the resources available or the cultural-political environment in Ghana. Remember to be respectful and professional in your relations with your supervisors.

The proposal requires:

- Title
- Explanation of the topic, including the objective of the study
- Methodology to be used
- Expected result (including the type of work to be submitted for a grade)
- Outline of the steps to implement the project
- List of sources to be consulted (bibliography, archives, exhibit, performances, interviewees, etc., as appropriate to the topic)

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

Ghana will always have a place in my heart. She is teaching me how to give, how to live, and how to be.

I've become a more mature, more understanding, and more patient person because of my experiences in Ghana.

Traveling around Ghana and West Africa was worth every second of discomfort I experienced.

”

EXTENDING UCEAP PARTICIPATION

Plan Ahead to Extend

Extending your EAP participation is possible. If you are considering an extension, submit a Departmental and College Pre-Approval to Extend (DPA) form prior to departure. Submitting the approved DPA does not obligate you to extend nor guarantee approval, but the completed DPA will expedite the process if you decide to extend.

Once abroad, make an appointment with the Study Center. The Resident Director will submit to UCEAP a Request for Final Approval (RFA) form. UCEAP must receive the request by the deadline indicated on the form. If you do not submit an approved DPA before departure, submit a Petition to Extend form. The Petition to Extend requires campus and department approval and can take up to eight weeks to process.

Extension approval is based on a number of factors including program criteria, academic and behavioral performance, the support of your UC campus department, and available space.

Once your extension has been approved, notification will be sent to your UC campus registrar, Financial Aid Office, and Campus EAP Office. For information about the steps you need to take in regards to finances, see the [Extension of Participation](#) chapter of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

Definitely read about Ghana before you go.

Be aware of the history of colonialism and try to understand what is going on around you.

The cultural and social things cannot really be understood prior to departure. Come with an open mind (rather than expectations). It's the best formula for social learning.

”

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Educate Yourself

Get acquainted with your new host city, country, and culture before you leave the U.S. Travel guides and travel-related websites such as [Lonely Planet](#) are excellent resources. Take at least one travel guide about Ghana and Africa with you as travel guides are not readily available in Ghana.

Past students have found the following guides useful: *Lonely Planet's Africa on a Shoestring and West Africa*; the *Bradt Travel Guide to Ghana*, and the *Rough Guide to West Africa*.

Keep up with current events by reading articles in newspapers, magazines, and journals. The periodical [Ghana News](#), which can be accessed online via the World News Network, is recommended.

Some useful websites include:

- www.ghana.gov.gh
- www.noworriesghana.com
- ghanaweb.com

You will also need to understand the local culture and history. These sources should help you prepare before departure.

Recommended Books

Achebe, Chinua	<i>Anthills of the Savannah</i> , New York: Anchor Press, 1988; <i>Things Fall Apart</i> , Lodi: Everbind Anthologies, 2007.
Aidoo, Ama Ata	<i>No Sweetness Here and Other Stories</i> , Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1995; <i>Changes: A Love Story</i> , New York: Feminist Press, 1993.
Angelou, Maya	<i>All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes</i> , Random House, 1991.
Armah, Ayi Kwei	<i>The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born: a Novel</i> , London: Heinemann, 1969; <i>The Healers: An Historical Novel</i> , Kenya: East African Publishing, 1978; and <i>Two Thousand Seasons</i> , London: Heinemann, 1979.
Buah, F.K.	<i>A History of Ghana</i> , London: MacMillan Education Ltd., 2009.
Gocking, Roger S.	<i>The History of Ghana</i> , Westport: Greenwood Press, 2005.
Gyekye, Kwame	<i>An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme</i> , revised ed., Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995; and <i>Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience</i> , New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
Kuada, John E. and Yao Chachah	<i>Ghana: Understanding the People and Their Culture</i> , Accra: Woeli Publishing, 1999.
Nkrumah, Kwame	<i>Africa Must Unite</i> , Accra: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

White people get constant attention. People assume they're rich, which makes the bargaining process hard.

Many Ghanaians think that all Americans are rich because of how Americans are portrayed in the media and because of America's influence worldwide.

The time passes both quickly and slowly. Although Ghana is nice, you may feel homesick at times.

I ran into some problems with Christian fanaticism and the male chauvinistic attitude. However, I knew I would go through an adjustment period.

”

Opoku, Kofi Asare

Hearing and Keeping: Akan Proverbs, Accra: Asempa Publishers, Christian Council of Ghana, 1997.

Utlely, Ian

Ghana—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture, London: Kuperard, 2009.

The Akan Language

Following are some everyday Ghanaian words in the Akan language:

Come: *Bra*Fire: *Ogya*Man: *Obarima*Go: *Ko*Water: *Nsu*Woman: *Oba*Sit down: *Tena ase*Moon: *Osram*Human: *Onipa*Drink: *Nom*Sun: *Owia*Child: *Oba*Eat: *Didi*Father: *Agya*Foreigner: *Obruni*Food: *Aduane*Mother: *Ena*African: *Obibini*Stone: *Obo*

Social Conduct

As a UCEAP student, you will need to adapt to conditions that may be considerably different than what you have ever experienced and modify some lifestyle behaviors. Even the most basic behaviors—talking, eating, and sleeping—may be different in the context of your host country. If you can successfully adapt, you will gain a deep understanding of Ghanaian culture, new and potentially lifelong friendships, and a different approach to things you currently take for granted (e.g., running water). Regardless of your ethnic background or economic status in the U.S., you will stand out in Ghana as an American. It will take some time to understand the implications of words and body language in any new culture. Pay attention to the information provided during UCEAP orientations and take advantage of the knowledge and experience of Study Center staff as they advise you about appropriate behavior.

Some students find the pace of life much slower, and for some this is extremely difficult. It is especially difficult if you have a more rigid view of time and are trying to meet deadlines that you believe are important while everyone around you seems to be on a different schedule. It is common for appointments to be delayed and for Ghanaians to arrive to meetings late. Anticipate tardiness—it is not a sign of rudeness and should never be raised as an issue or Ghanaians will take offense. Put simply by the former UCEAP Liaison Officer, “There are clocks and there is time. In Ghana, we go by time.”

Modern Ghanaian society is a mixture of traditional and Western customs. Ghanaians consider family values, respect for seniority, and the significance of proper social behavior to be very important. Conformity to social norms is expected.

To transition culturally and adapt to life in Ghana, you may need to make some temporary but essential compromises with who you are as an American and as a person. For example, female students may not be able to exercise the independence available to them in the United States, political discussions should be minimized, and you may want to consider keeping to yourself some of your personal beliefs. You must be ready to develop techniques and personal strategies for coping.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

The hardest part of adjusting is dealing with those people who obviously just want something from you.

Christianity is common subject of conversation. Some Ghanaians may continually ask you about religion and what you practice.

Never assume anything about a Ghanaian based upon appearance, dress, etc. Don't assume anyone is rich or poor, can or can't read, or speak English.

”

- ▶ **The UCEAP Student Budget does not include funds for the purchase of clothing abroad.**

Stay academically motivated and focused, and regard yourself less as a tourist and more as a serious student. Although Ghanaians are generally accepting of cultural errors made by foreigners, do not display behavior that could be perceived as rude, disrespectful, or arrogant by locals, especially toward older persons. Cultural sensitivity should always be strictly observed while traveling anywhere.

Interpersonal Communications

Ghana is a society that relies on oral communication rather than communicating in writing. The Study Center and other local entities will often rely on information to get to you by word of mouth. You are expected to actively listen, ask questions, and remain in regular contact with the Study Center and your peers for information. The Study Center also uses a mailbox system, bulletin boards, and a phone tree to disburse information. Stay alert and check phone messages and your mailbox several times each week. In addition, information can be sporadic and unpredictable, coming on short notice. This is largely a cultural phenomenon. Approach this difference with patience and flexibility.

In general, Ghanaians tend to dislike, and avoid, confrontation and will use laughter to diffuse serious or tense situations. As a consequence, UCEAP students have felt Ghanaians can be disrespectful by laughing and lightheartedly commenting during awkward moments. Understand this behavior is in no way meant to disrespect or insult others; it is a cultural coping mechanism.

Greetings are important in Ghanaian culture. It is customary to shake hands when you meet or leave people. Ghanaians are extremely polite and typically greet everyone they meet or speak to on the phone. Failing to greet someone is impolite. Use your right hand for greeting, waving, exchanging money, drinking, shaking hands, and if possible, eating. Ghanaians make some allowances for left-handedness, but trying to use your right hand shows respect. Ghanaians do not eat with their left hand, as this is generally considered unclean. It is important that you always greet people, even if you are in a hurry; not greeting people appropriately is viewed as extremely offensive.

In conversation, people often stand close to one another.

Ghanaians will regularly ask for a student's phone number and address very early in a conversation, even if they have never met before. The majority will be harmless but you should expect to be called regularly if you share your phone number. Do not give your dorm address.

Attire

Ghanaians are meticulous about their attire. Ghanaian students dress more formally on campus. Cleanliness is a sign of respect, and clothes should be relatively conservative. You will have to **hand wash** all of your clothes or pay someone to wash them for you. This will be hard on your clothes.

Ghanaians dress more conservatively than American students. UC students tend to dress more casually at formal occasions. Many UCEAP students have commented that they felt underdressed at times. Ghanaians also express offense when foreign students wear “raggedy” clothing to school.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...



Wearing dirty clothes to class is a sign of disrespect to fellow students and lecturers. Cool cotton dresses, jeans, and shirts are good.

Pay attention to how Ghanaian males and females interact. Follow their guidelines for social norms.

Women on UCEAP often find that they have to fight the impression many Ghanaian men have that American women are 'easy.'



Take lightweight clothing that can be hand washed and drip-dried (cotton is best). Most wash will be dry cleaned or laundered by hand. You should take lightweight trousers and a jacket for nights during cooler weather. Clothes that cover more skin are also good barriers against the sun and mosquito bites. Returnees suggest ironing clothes after air drying them to remove parasites or insects. This also helps with mold which is a very real problem due to the high humidity.

Pack 1–2 days' worth of clothes in your carry-on luggage. If your luggage is delayed, you will have some clothes until you are able to retrieve your luggage. UCEAP students have had such problems in the past.

- Skirts and shorts typically are knee-length or longer; covering the thighs is highly recommended.
- Do not show your midriff, unless at the beach.
- Sandals are acceptable shoes to wear, though flip-flops are regarded as shower shoes.
- In the presence of a chief, queen mothers, or elder, remove headwear. This includes earphones.
- Brightly colored clothes are acceptable.

Personal hygiene and a neat appearance are very important. Also, Ghana is humid; take small handkerchiefs to use for sweat. Sweating freely is considered offensive and low class.

Relationships

African-American Students

African-American students sometimes go to Ghana with expectations of being more easily or rapidly accepted into African culture. In reality, Ghanaians see all Americans, regardless of their skin color, as foreigners who are unfamiliar with African culture or mores. A book that treats this subject sensitively is Maya Angelou's memoir, *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes*.

Male-Female Interactions

Past male students have commented that interaction with local women is not easy. Ghanaian women are more reserved than American women. Do not take this as a sign of disinterest or aloofness.

Ghanaians may not see a relationship with a foreigner as legitimate. They may have another serious relationship while dating you and not consider it unfaithful.

Lonely Planet's *Healthy Travel—Africa* provides some insight on social expectations and queues between men and women in African society. It is important for males to be aware of what fellow female UCEAP students will experience; the attention they receive is greater than what males will experience.

Female Students and Harassment

Be careful about dating. Avoid inviting men to your room as some men might view this as an invitation for sex. American women are accustomed to the concept of platonic friendship with males, which does not necessarily translate in Ghanaian culture. Going out with or talking with a man may have a different

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“The culture shock is huge, but the only way to get over it is by immersing yourself in it. Everyone goes through it, so talk about it with your friends and get through it together.”

”

meaning in Ghana than you may intend. Your actions are stronger than your words. “No” does not always mean no in Ghana.

Be prepared for attention from local males. “Bring me to America” and “marry me” are common requests, mostly from men off campus. It is common for female students in Ghana to receive marriage proposals. It may be difficult in the beginning to distinguish sexual harassment from routine attention. If harassment becomes unbearable, notify the Study Center.

There are steps you can take to minimize harassment:

- Integrate into the community
- Make friends with local women
- Learn from local women about self-protection
- Dress and behave according to local customs
- Stay in control and keep your senses; stay sober and alert
- Have a buddy system and travel in groups
- Follow your intuition if something “doesn’t feel right” and immediately remove yourself from the situation

It is understandable that harassment can escalate if you feel angry and exasperated because of the harassment. Confrontations only elicit further attention, thus it is best to respond as follows:

- Ignore the harassment
- Pretend confusion or lack of understanding
- Move away from the situation

Sexual Orientation

Ghana is very conservative, and there is little understanding of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender relationships. Homosexuality in Ghana is illegal. Although there is a small gay community, there is no “scene” and a large portion of Ghanaian society does not accept that such activity exists.

It is common for Ghanaian men and women to hold hands or walk arm-in-arm with friends of the same gender, but this is a sign of friendship and not of sexual orientation. Being sensible about revealing one’s sexual orientation is advisable. Being “out” can invite harassment and physical attack. Avoid open demonstrations of your preference. At the same time, there is no pressure to disclose your sexual orientation.

► Additional information about passports, visas, and other required documents is provided in the [UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad](#) and on the UCEAP website.

ARRIVAL & ORIENTATION

Travel Documents

After arrival you will be required to give your passport to the Ghana Immigration Service for resident permit processing. During this time, which can last anywhere from two to six weeks, you may not leave Ghana. The Study Center and the host university conduct the required three-week orientation and help facilitate the resident permit process. You can read more about this local government requirement on the [Ghana Immigration Service](#) website.

Visa Requirement

All nationalities require a visitor's visa to study in Ghana. A visa is an endorsement issued by Ghana authorities before your departure. The visitor's visa grants you permission to enter and reside in Ghana. A return airline ticket is not required to obtain a student visa.

A multiple-entry visa is also available if you are considering travel to another country. You do not need a host university acceptance letter to apply for a visitor's visa at the Ghanaian embassy.

Students who extend their stay must renew their resident's permit with Ghana immigration.

Certificate of Yellow Fever Immunization

The government in Ghana requires yellow fever vaccination before arrival. Upon arrival, you may need to present a valid international certificate of yellow fever vaccination or you will not be allowed to stay in the country. You should be immunized at the time you complete your UCEAP Health Clearance on your UC campus.

U.S. Department of State Registration

UCEAP strongly recommends that you sign up for the U.S. Department of State's free [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (formerly known as "Travel Registration" or "Registration with Embassies") to receive the latest travel updates and information.

Photocopies

Make photocopies of all important documents, including the identification page of your passport, vaccination certificates, travelers check receipts, airline tickets, your student ID and birth certificate, etc., and leave a set of copies at home with a parent or guardian. Spending a few moments copying documents now can save time if something is lost or stolen.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

If you can't afford to lose it, don't take it!

You can buy beautiful and inexpensive clothing in Ghana. Most people buy material and take it to a tailor to have a dress or shirt made. This is a fun and inexpensive way to fit into Ghanaian culture, so don't pack too much.

Petty theft is common in Ghana, so don't take anything you don't want to lose.

Take fun things like photos. A favorite African pastime is to visit people and look at pictures.

Take a pair of good walking shoes.

Mosquito repellent and mosquito netting are crucial!

”

Packing Tips

UCEAP students have found that they could buy most of the things they need in Ghana. They note that the mosquito nets sold at the pharmacy by the University of Ghana campus are less expensive than they would be in the U.S.

When packing, be aware that, in Ghana, it is illegal to wear any military clothing or sportswear with a camouflage design.

See the section on attire in this guide.

Essential

- Antimalarial medication (see the [Health](#) chapter in this guide)
- Mosquito repellent with high DEET level (30 percent recommended)
- Mosquito netting
- Fiber supplement and multivitamins
- Anti-itch cream/hydrocortisone
- Anti-cold/fever medicine
- Anti-rash/fungal cream
- Treatment for upset stomach and diarrhea (e.g., Pepto-Bismol or Imodium)
- Electric plug adapters and transformer (see *Electrical Appliances* in this chapter)
- Small luggage locks
- Twin-size bed linens (two sets) and a pillow
- Quick-dry microfiber towels
- Antibacterial hand sanitizer
- USB flash drives (pen drives)
- Sunscreen
- Multiple nice outfits for formal occasions and outings
- Lightweight, easy-to-care-for clothing that can be hand washed and dripdried
- Lightweight rain gear
- Sturdy, comfortable shoes with straps (e.g., Teva, Chakos)
- LCD self-powered flashlight

Optional

- Laptop with lock (computer viruses are a problem in Africa; make sure you have the latest anti-virus software)
- Money belt
- Padlock for dorm room closet (padlocks are also available in any Ghanaian market including the on-campus “Bush Canteen”)
- Conversion chart to the metric system
- Earplugs (the dorms can be noisy)
- Favorite cosmetics or toiletries
- Favorite paperback books
- Lightweight American gifts for new friends, especially if you are invited to a Ghanaian home (suggestions: Frisbees; T-shirts with city, state, or campus logos; UC pens or pencils; decals; baseball caps; or California postcards, posters, or scenic calendars)
- Swimsuit or beachwear
- Favorite cooking spices and recipes
- Snacks like candy and granola bars
- White T-shirts and black pants or tights for the practical dance course
- Water filter – if desired, though bottled water is readily available.

Climate

Ghana lies entirely within the tropics. The average temperature is between 70°F (21°C) and 90°F (32°C) and humidity can be quite high. There are two rainy seasons (April to June and September to November) and one dry season (December to March). Severe torrential rain falls during the annual wet seasons. This causes floods in low-lying areas, and riverbanks overflow easily. The sewage system in Accra and surrounding regions is inadequate even during periods of normal precipitation. During the floods, the system is severely overburdened.

To protect yourself during hot weather:

- Protect against sun and heat by wearing sunscreen and a hat, and staying hydrated. Watch for mild to moderate signs of dehydration: dry, sticky mouth; sleepiness or tiredness; thirst; headache; clammy skin; dizziness or lightheadedness; constipation, etc. Watch for heat stroke signs: hot or flushed dry skin, rapid heart rate, confusion, or loss of consciousness. Take oral rehydration salts (available at pharmacies on campus).
- Wear sunglasses with 100% UV protection.

Photography

It is illegal to take pictures of military sites, government buildings (including post offices), and airports in Ghana. You cannot photograph military personnel, police, or anyone in uniform. This includes all borders and border stations. Tourists have had cameras confiscated.

Electrical Appliances

Voltage is 240V (U.S. is 110 volts). Transformer and adapter plugs are needed to use appliances from home. Both round and flat three-pronged plugs are commonly used. You can purchase irons, blow dryers, and electric razors in the U.S. or abroad with built-in adapters for all currents. Markets on campus and in town sell plug converters, though the quality may be substandard.

- ▶ When traveling always carry your passport, airline ticket, prescription medications, and money on your person. Never put valuables in your checked luggage.

Travel and Arrival

UCEAP Group Flight

UCEAP arranges for group travel to Accra. Due to the travel time between California and Ghana, most students are extremely tired and disoriented when they arrive. The airport in Accra is confusing and full of people offering their services.

If you are on the group flight, the Study Center will pick you up at the airport, help you navigate through customs and immigration, and transport you and your luggage to the campus for initial orientation. This is a great benefit to the UCEAP Ghana program.

You will make reservations directly with the travel agency (Travel Cuts) by using the Student Group Flight Information and Reservation form provided in the Pre-departure Checklist, and pay Travel Cuts directly. Even if you are on financial aid you must purchase your own airplane ticket. The Financial Aid Office will not do it for you.

Failure to attend the on-site orientation is cause for dismissal from the program (UCEAP Student Agreement, Section 10). More detailed arrival information and directions to the check-in point are provided before departure.

The program dates can change due to unforeseen circumstances, and you are responsible for any fees associated with tickets. UCEAP is not responsible for any unrecoverable transportation charges you may incur for travel arrangements.

When you arrive, enter the arrival area and walk toward the immigration desk marked "Other Travelers" and wait in line behind the red line until it is your turn. Before going through immigration and customs, you will need to complete an arrival card. The card must be legible and in CAPS with contact information for the University of Ghana. The form should be distributed in-flight. If you do not get the form before arrival, make sure you get one before going through immigration and customs. Forms are available on the left as you enter the customs hall.

If you choose not to arrive on the official arrival date, you may not be met at the airport. UCEAP strongly recommends that you take the group flight.

Financial Aid Students

Your financial aid package is based on the UCEAP Student Budget for the program. The estimated round-trip airfare is based on the cost of the UCEAP-arranged group flight to Ghana. If your independent travel costs are greater than the airfare estimate in the UCEAP Student Budget, notify your financial aid counselors. Neither UCEAP nor the Financial Aid Office can guarantee that the additional cost will be funded by financial aid.

► **Your attendance at all orientation sessions is mandatory (UCEAP Student Agreement, Section 10).**

Orientation

Before departure, view the first hour of Disc 1 of the May 2008 Ghana Orientation DVD at the Campus EAP Office. If you have time, take advantage of the information on the remainder of the DVDs.

After arrival in Legon (Accra), you will attend a three-week required orientation. This includes an academic course called Ghana Society and Culture for which you earn 3 UC quarter units and a grade. The course includes lectures by University of Ghana faculty members, field study trips, and basic Twi lessons. Topics include culture and religion, arts and crafts, music and dance, education and traditional governance, politics, and gender. You will keep a journal and have assignments based on the study trip to Cape Coast, lectures, and other activities.

In addition to the academic session, you will attend a mandatory orientation provided by the UCEAP Study Center that covers:

- Information on travel, health, safety, money matters, markets, food, and practical living tips
 - Visits to historic sites
 - Music and dance lessons
 - Participation in a traditional festival or other field trips
 - An introduction to your local student guide, who will be with you throughout orientation
 - Academic information, including available courses and host institution and MyEAP Study List Registration
- **After the orientation in Ghana and throughout the program, it is vital that you attend all meetings called by the Study Center, respond promptly to messages, and maintain contact with the UCEAP Resident Director and Study Center staff.**

► The UCEAP Student Budget does not include funds for recreational travel abroad.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

The University of Ghana is located in the Legon district of northern Accra about 11 miles from Accra.

Public transportation—including buses, taxis, and trains—is available in Ghana. The preferred method of transportation is taxi. Train travel is slow and can be dangerous.

Tro-Tros

A tro-tro is a general term for any public transportation vehicle other than a bus or taxi that is designed to carry many people. These minivans provide a vital public service transporting up to 20 passengers around the city and countryside. Tro-tros are typically old, 12-passenger VW vans. Similar to shared taxis, tro-tros will run along fixed routes, have fixed fares, and will rarely run with less than capacity. Tro-tro drivers use hand signals indicating their destination. Students should get familiar with these hand signals. There is little to no preventive maintenance performed on some commercial vehicles in Ghana; tro-tros and other vehicles tend to be in poor condition. Driving standards are also poor. As a result, tro-tros are regularly involved in serious accidents. Tro-tro accidents regularly result in loss of life to all occupants. You must use common sense before boarding a vehicle. If in doubt, wait for the next vehicle.

Use extreme caution when crossing the street as taxi and tro-tro drivers often speed and drive recklessly. Bicycles are not recommended due to theft and safety concerns. A few students use bicycles on campus but rarely go into Accra on them.

Buses

Vanef STC government-run buses are considered among the best in West Africa, and are probably the safest and fastest way to travel long distances. STC operates between Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi, Tamale, Cape Coast, and other main cities. These buses have two classes: 1) express (with air-conditioning), which are faster and considerably more comfortable, and 2) ordinary. There are also several new private bus services (e.g., VIP, VVIP, OA, M-Plaza, etc.) that provide high-quality intercity services to major cities throughout Ghana and West Africa.

Purchasing bus tickets can be challenging. Buses frequently fill up very early. You may need to purchase your ticket a day or two prior to your trip as seats may not be available on the day you want to leave. Some bus stations do not sell tickets in advance and you will need to go to the station very early (4:00 or 5:00 am) to get a seat for travel that day.

Buses frequently run late. Former UCEAP students recommend purchasing tickets for the morning so you arrive at your destination on time.

Vanef STC Phone: 233-302-221-912

Taxis

Taxis are widely available and fairly inexpensive but are not well maintained. It is best if you charter taxis and do not share them with strangers. Dropping, or fixed-price taxis, are more expensive but preferable to shared taxis. Most taxis do not have meters, but a taxi ride anywhere in the city should not cost more than GHS 15-20 (roughly USD 10-12.00). Prices are negotiable. Always agree on a fare before getting into the vehicle. Fares will vary based on the time of day (rush hour, late night, during bad weather, etc.) Taxis on campus have a fixed rate. Do not use unregistered taxis at any time. There are sufficient registered taxis in Accra to transport all passengers without the need to use unregistered vehicles. Female students are strongly discouraged from traveling alone in taxis at night. Returnees report that taxi drivers may be irritable or unfriendly.

► It is important that you carefully read all of the information available in the [UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad](#) and discuss it with the person who will assist you with your finances while you are abroad.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Understanding Your Finances

Understanding your finances before, during, and after your program is crucial to having a successful time abroad. The following list outlines just a few of the many things you will need to know before departure.

Detailed information on the following topics can be found in the [Money Matters](#) chapter of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*:

- Contact information for finance questions
- How to estimate the cost of your program
- Budget instructions and information
- How to and who can make payments to UCEAP
- UCEAP student account information
- Banking before and after arrival
- Fees and penalties
- Loan information
- How financial aid works while abroad (how do I get my financial aid from my home campus and how are my fees paid?)
- Various forms (e.g., direct deposit, etc.)

MyEAP Student Account

Your MyEAP Student Account is similar to your UC campus financial account. It will be available as soon as you are selected for your program in MyEAP. You can make payments through this account using e-checks or credit cards (MasterCard or Discover). The fees that you owe UCEAP will be applied to your account after your program predeparture withdrawal date, which is listed in MyEAP. For the amount due to UCEAP prior to fees being posted on your account, refer to the UCEAP Student Budget Payment Vouchers. Program fees are subject to change.

UCEAP Student Budget

Carefully review your [UCEAP Student Budget](#).

Your UCEAP Student Budget lists the fees you will pay to UCEAP and an estimate of the personal expenses you will need to plan for. It does not include the cost of recreational travel or personal entertainment. Review your UCEAP Student Budget frequently. The Payment Vouchers are on the second page of the UCEAP Student Budget.

Instructions

- **Download** and **print** your UCEAP Student Budget and Payment Vouchers.
- Note the deadlines on the Payment Vouchers.
- Give the UCEAP Student Budget and Payment Vouchers to the person responsible for paying your UCEAP bills. Sign this person up for Third Party Authorization so they can make payments online.

For further information see the [Money Matters](#) chapter of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad* and the Money Matters tab of your Participants Portal. If you will be receiving financial aid, see also the [UCEAP Financial Assistance](#) web page.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

The easiest money to change is large bills (\$50s and \$100s). There is a much better rate for larger bills than smaller ones.

”

Handling Money Abroad

- ▶ The official currency unit in Ghana is the cedi (abbreviated GHC).
- ▶ Be cautious about carrying and displaying money and expensive personal items. Use ATMS with caution.

The majority of UCEAP students use their ATM card from a home account in the U.S. to access money in Ghana. ATM cards must have the Visa logo. Make sure your PIN does not exceed four characters. Withdrawals from your U.S. bank account can take time to post, so be careful not to overdraw.

Cashing travelers checks can be time consuming. Once abroad, you can change money into cedis on campus, at one of the many Forex Bureaus in Accra, or at the airport. Currency exchange is also available at most banks. The exchange rate is about 25 percent better for cash than it is for travelers checks.

Conduct foreign currency transactions only through registered banks and licensed foreign exchange bureaus. Currency transactions with private citizens are illegal.

Do not have checks sent to you in Ghana. Checks can take up to six weeks to clear.

You can open a bank account at Barclays Bank or the Standard Bank on campus and then receive additional money through wire transfers into the account. This will allow you to access money from ATMs, which can be found on campus in Accra and throughout other big cities. Bank of America is associated with Barclays Bank, so if you have an account with Bank of America you will not be charged an international fee for withdrawals and wire transfers.

Western Union can be used to transfer funds to Ghana, although past students say the charges are high and conversion rates are low.

Credit Cards

UCEAP and the U.S. Embassy in Ghana strongly advise against the use of credit cards in Ghana or anywhere else in Africa. Credit card fraud is a major problem in Ghana. It is more common to use cash rather than credit cards. Returnees report that Visa is the best credit card to use, and that MasterCard and American Express are seldom accepted throughout Ghana. Refrain from using a credit card unless absolutely necessary.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

Humor helps with everything. Try to joke with people who appear to be offering an unfair price when you're shopping. Speaking in Twi will also help get a good price.

People love titles here. Use 'sir,' 'ma'am,' and proper greetings such as 'good morning/afternoon/evening.' Ghanaians appreciate being greeted when you enter a room. If you respect their presence, they'll respect yours.

”

COMMUNICATIONS ABROAD

Local & International Calls

► Time difference: add 8 hours

All UCEAP students obtain cell phones in Ghana, which allow you to receive calls free of charge. Basic Nokia cell phones cost between \$20–\$50. A prepaid card is needed to make outgoing calls. Phone credit recharge cards are widely available and can be purchased in units of \$1 to \$10. Local calls typically cost less than 5 cents per minute; international calls vary from 10-20 cents per minute. You can take a cell phone to Ghana that operates on the GSM network and purchase a SIM card locally; however, the fee for decoding the U.S. cell phone is more expensive than buying a new phone in Ghana.

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), the technology for transmitting voice conversations via the Internet, is popular with students who take a laptop abroad. Social networking software such as [Skype](#) is commonly used to make free or low-cost calls over the Internet. Most UCEAP students take laptops to Ghana and use the wireless Internet in the Study Center to Skype with family in the U.S.

Computer Access & Use

WiFi

WiFi connectivity is now available at the Ghana Hostels on campus. Students can connect to WiFi Internet using their laptops, smartphones, and other Internet devices. To access the service, students must purchase a voucher that is available at the Afric Xpress pay point on campus and at the Ghana Hostels.

E-mail

There are private facilities on the University of Ghana campus where you can set up an account for a monthly cost. There are Internet cafés on campus and in town that are located very near the residence halls. The Office of International Programs also has free Internet access.

Keep MyEAP updated with any new contact information (cell phone and e-mail address), as this is UCEAP's primary means of contacting you.

Computers

The Study Center recommends that you take a laptop as wireless Internet is available in the Study Center. You must equip your laptop with the latest anti-virus software; computer viruses are common in Africa. The Study Center also has computers that you can use during office hours. Free wireless Internet is available at the American Corner on campus. In 2010 the U.S. embassy opened the [American Corner](#), equipped with new computers, books, periodicals, and other media.

Ghana uses a different electric current than what is used in the U.S. and electricity can be sporadic, so you will need both an adapter and a surge protector. You may also consider purchasing a portable hard drive or CD-ROMs for data storage, as some students have found that flash drives were destroyed by viruses.

Internet access may be much slower and sometimes unreliable. Adjust your expectations.

Postal & Courier Services

Shipping often results in more expense and trouble than anticipated. Take a good look at what you plan to ship and decide if the items are really necessary and worth the effort and expense. Do not ship prescription medications, computers/laptops, or cameras, especially if new (the items may be subject to expensive duty). It may be less expensive to pay the airline an excess baggage fee than to pay customs duty for shipping goods abroad. Returnees report that airport staff have been known to demand bribes.

You must be present when shipped luggage arrives abroad. The Study Center will not collect luggage shipped in advance, and staff will not pick up luggage that must be claimed at a customs office or dock. You may not send luggage to an in-transit location.

The postal system in Ghana is typically slow and sometimes unreliable. Provide the following mailing address to friends and relatives who will send you packages in Ghana:

Postal Address for UCEAP

Your Name
UCEAP
P. O. Box LG 356
University of Ghana
Legon, Ghana

For Courier Services (Package delivery to the Centre)

Your Name
UCEAP Ghana Study Centre
P. O. Box LG 356
University of Ghana
Legon Campus, Ghana
International Programmes Building
First Floor, Right Wing
TEL: 0302-500147

Do not use the director's name in the address.

Packages are charged a tax and service fee, which differs depending on the size and contents of the package. Postal employees may tax packages without declared reasons. There is a higher tax if the package contains electronics or food such as cookies and candies.

Retrieving Packages at the Post Office

UCEAP returnees say that it can be costly to retrieve packages at the post office. Packages mailed from abroad via regular mail (i.e., not a private courier) are kept at the Ghana post office. Students are sent a package slip to pick up their packages personally. The Study Center advises that you go the post office with your student ID card, be courteous with the officers, and use the bargaining Twi you will learn during orientation and you will have your tax reduced. Ghanaians must also go through this process when receiving packages from abroad; it is a part of the bureaucracy that comes along with living and studying in Ghana.

Packages sent through a private courier service are delivered at the Study Center. Returnees recommend that students use UPS or FedEx, though it is more expensive

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

Aside from the frequent water and electricity shortages, the housing was great.

Personal space and private property are pretty nonexistent. Dormitories can be loud.

Be prepared to be shocked. Ghana is not for the weak. Expect to grow up a lot and learn about the world and other people.

People often enter your room without knocking. If you want to be alone, lock your door.

Even though we had no running water four to six days a week, electricity failed sometimes, and sanitation was poor, we lived lavishly in comparison to most of the country. But you get used to it and, after a while, you rarely notice how different it is. Going home will be shocking and feel very luxurious.

Power and water will be an issue, no matter which dorm you live in. But if you signed up to go to Africa, you should be aware that there are going to be major differences in lifestyle.

”

HOUSING & MEALS

Where Will I Live?

You will live on campus in a residence hall. You will be asked to choose one before departure. UCEAP students choose from Volta Hall (an all-women's dorm), Legon Hall (male students only) and the International Student Hostel (ISH). If you need to change the hall to which you have been assigned, contact Study Center staff after arrival. Off-campus housing is not permitted.

Rooms are doubles and shared with a UCEAP, international, or local Ghanaian student. The dorm will provide you with a bed, chair, writing table, and armoire. Bring your own twin-size bed sheets, towels, and pillows. You can buy sheets in Ghana, but the Study Center recommends bringing them from home because you will need them immediately. Basic communal kitchens are on each floor. The majority of rooms have a thick wooden door with a Chubb Lock. Rooms also have bars and mosquito nets over the windows.

The dorm cost is included in the UCEAP fees. You are responsible for the cost of meals. Past students have complained that housing and tuition costs for Ghanaian students are less than those charged to international students. The Ghanaian government subsidizes the housing and tuition costs for the Ghanaian students. This is similar to the UC policy of charging different fees for in-state and out-of-state students. Your payment to UCEAP does not cover the housing costs for the time between terms in Ghana (for year students). The cost is reasonable if you plan ahead for this expense.

Be prepared for the challenges of life in a developing country and be flexible, culturally open, and ready for the conditions of a less affluent environment. UCEAP students report that you get used to these conditions with time. For instance, some shower stalls have no curtains, and running water and electricity are sporadic. This includes the sanitation system (e.g., toilets). Be prepared for bucket showers and times when the water or electricity are not available. All residence halls are equipped with poly tanks to store water. If there is a shortage of water, students can go down to the poly tank with a bucket and get some water. Inexpensive laundry facilities are available, but most students hand wash their clothes.

Dorm Safety

The University of Ghana and UC have regulations to help ensure your safety. You may find them more restrictive than regulations at UC. This is in no way an attempt to inhibit your social life. Show respect for the university and those who are looking out for you by adhering to the regulations.

There is a midnight curfew for visitors and the halls are locked at that time. You are not permitted to have overnight guests of the opposite sex.

Keep your doors and windows locked at all times even if you step out for just a short time; for example, to use the washroom. Theft has occurred in UCEAP student's rooms when doors and windows were unlocked, even if just for a minute.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“ Be open to other things besides your own way of living and interacting. Be culturally sensitive. You are the foreigner, and some things are done differently in Ghana.

Don't feel that you have to be different because you're foreign. Try your best to blend in, learning customs and appropriate behavior, and you'll learn much more about Ghanaian life.

Remember that you chose to go to Ghana. Never expect things to change for you, just accept situations as they are and learn from them.

”

Dorm Life

Residence hall life is very important to the Ghanaian students. UC students often arrive in Ghana with little notion of the history of residential college life and are slow to integrate into related activities. You may have lived mostly off campus, and may not be used to dorm life. It is important for you to adapt to residence hall culture if you are to make the most of your Ghana experience.

You may be housed in a residence hall that is based on the British model. This means that the residence hall is not only a place to sleep but a place to live. Volta and Legon Halls very much follow this tradition. In addition to formal dining halls, there are smaller eateries, the equivalent of pubs, small shops, Internet cafés, senior (students) commons rooms, and staff (faculty) commons rooms. The halls have their own athletic teams that regularly compete against other halls, and generally see themselves as important units of campus life. The campus is buzzing with activity every evening and on weekends that is, in part, driven by residence hall relationships.

The differences in dorm life between UC and universities in Ghana will take adjustment. Particularly unusual is the different schedules Ghanaian students keep, going to sleep early and rising early. UC students initially complain about the early morning “noise” of megaphone or microphone amplified preaching coming from their main quads/yards. Ghana is a very devout nation, with all manner of fundamentalist churches and a very high percentage of demonstrative Christian students. The interface between Americans and locals can lead to misunderstanding and even hostility. You must understand the importance of tolerance and realize that you are in another country. Rather than expect local people to change their behavior, you need to make the adaptations. Remember that you are studying abroad to experience another culture—not to impart your values and culture.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

Prepared meals are expensive and market food gets boring. Bring some favorite stovetop recipes (simple ingredients only!) and plan to do your own cooking.

”

Food & Meals

Ghanaian textures and tastes are quite different from what you may be used to in the US. Be prepared for what will seem like sparse conditions for obtaining, preserving, and cooking food. Take some of your favorite spices from home.

Typical meals consist of red meat, chicken, rice, plantains, and cassava, a starchy root that is usually mashed. Many of the green vegetable dishes are mixed with small pieces of meat, and special vegetarian options of this kind are rarely possible. Leafy vegetables are not readily available and usually are not washed in purified water.

You can eat in the dorm commons or at restaurants or the Bush Canteen on campus. A short walking distance from the International Students Hostel is the Manciples campus grocery store. There are foreign restaurants and import supermarkets in Osu near Danquah Circle and Cantonments Road in east Legon, at “37”, and at several nearby shopping malls. These stores and restaurants have foods that may be more familiar to foreign students, but they will also be more expensive.

Meals on campus cost about \$2–\$5, depending on your taste. A reasonably good meal in a Western-style restaurant starts at about \$12. Popular kebabs are about 50 cents each.

Food sharing is quite common. People may invite you to eat their food right from their plates (with your hands). Never refuse food, even if it looks unappetizing. Visitors are always offered a glass of water and sometimes some cream crackers. Offer the same when people visit you.

Bottled water is inexpensive and plentiful. Purified (filtered) water is called “pure water” and is available everywhere in sachets. This water is cheaper than that which comes in bottles and it is of the same or comparable quality. When you are off campus or traveling without bottled water, take the necessary precautions and prepare your water by boiling or using iodine tablets.

Vegetarian Options

Maintaining a healthy diet while in Ghana is a challenge, and if you are a vegetarian you will find it particularly difficult. Nearly every Ghanaian dish is served with meat or fish. When ordering food, specifically ask that your meal be prepared without meat. In Ghana, “fish” is not considered a meat, so when inquiring about a vegetarian dish, you will need to ask specifically if it contains meat or fish. However, vendors may not know if a dish is vegetarian.

In recent years, many new vegetarian restaurants, markets, and eateries have opened, giving vegetarians more choices. In particular, the Shoprite Supermarket in the Accra Mall (Tettey Quarshi Roundabout) has an international selection. The vegetable market at the “37” bus station is also a regular shopping point for vegetarians.

Common Dishes in Ghana

Banku: Side dish of fermented corn dough

Cassava: Brown root, smaller than a yam (its thick skin must be removed)

Cocoyam: Small round and brown root the size of a potato

Corn dough: Used in the preparation of *banku* and *kenkey*

Fufu: Made with mashed cassava and plantain or mashed yam, pounded with a *fufu* stick until it becomes a rather large glutinous mass (like mashed potatoes) usually served with groundnut, palm nut, or garden egg soup

Garden eggs: Vegetable like an eggplant, but about the size of a lemon and yellow or white when ripe

Gari: Shredded dry cassava (eaten like cereal with sugar and milk, or soaked and then eaten with sauce)

Ground-nut soup: Mixture of peanut butter and tomato soup, contains chicken or meat and served with yam, rice, plantain, *fufu*, *kenkey*, or bread rolls

Kelewele: Fried plantain chips seasoned with ginger and hot pepper (eaten as a snack, like peanuts)

Kenkey: Boiled fermented corn dough wrapped in dried corn leaves and served with sauce or fried fish and pepper sauce

Kontomire: Spinach cooked in sauce with palm oil (served with *banku*, *kenkey*, *gari*, yam, plantain, or rice)

Palm-nut soup: Small red fruits from a type of palm tree are boiled, pounded and strained, and cooked into a thick soup

Paw paw: Papaya

Plantain: Looks like a large banana, but is starchier and requires cooking (good when extremely ripe, sliced thin, and fried in oil—often sold grilled on the streets)

Red red: deep-fried beans (can be accompanied by onions, oil, *gari*, plantains and spices)

Toogbei: Fried doughnut holes

Yam: Two kinds are available—the *pona* yam, very large, light brown root, usually smooth outside, is best for boiling; and the *butter* yam, which is slightly darker than the *pona* variety and rough on the outside

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

Be prepared to be a spectacle and deal with harassment because of your skin color or ethnicity. Remember when it gets really hard that it will get better, and take a deep breath.

Get involved in your hall activities!

You can start your own club or organization.

”

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Get Involved

When you decide to participate in UCEAP Ghana, you expect it to be challenging. That is why you participate; to challenge yourself, to learn, and to grow.

Participating in extracurricular cultural and social activities while on UCEAP is an excellent way to meet people, improve your language skills, and integrate more fully into the community.

Opportunities are not limited to those mentioned in this guide. This section discusses just a few of the many activities past students have enjoyed.

Join sports, musical, theater, or arts groups; volunteer at local organizations, attend lectures and receptions held in academic and community circles, and get the most out of your time abroad! Sports such as soccer, basketball, boxing, and cricket are popular with Ghanaian students. One UCEAP student joined the track and field team at UG and was able to travel around Ghana and compete.

Various institutions sponsor Ghanaian, North American, or European cultural activities. The Arts Center on High Street presents displays of African dancing and art. The British Council shows British films. The Goethe Institute shows German films, most of which are subtitled in English. It also presents concerts, art exhibitions, and lectures. The Alliance Française has a library and theater club, and sponsors exhibitions, film shows, and concerts. Outside Accra there are often *durbars*, which are local festivities with colorful parades, dancing, and drumming. There is also the Du Bois Memorial Centre for Pan-African Culture, which has a gallery and research library. The American Embassy also sponsors activities for some special holidays or celebrations (e.g., Black History Month).

Working Abroad

Contact the Ghanaian embassy or consulate for information about working abroad. Notify the UCEAP Study Center of any work or volunteer arrangements and the details.

Peer Guides and Local Friends

The Study Center will direct you to information on cultural and social events, and will arrange a few activities and excursions during the year.

Local Ghanaian students (peer guides) will also be available through the Study Center to provide you with advice, especially during the orientation. Once the semester begins, the peer guides will be occupied with their own academic life and will not be “on call”. Be aware that peer guides may decline your offers to socialize during the semester because they are not only busy with their studies, but they often cannot afford to socialize at bars and restaurants.

UCEAP students often become fond of the peer guides, but it is important to keep in mind proper etiquette to maintain positive relationships with new local friends. For example, UC students have a reputation for being somewhat demanding of the peer guides. The peer guides will provide helpful advice and guidance, but they also expect you to listen and treat them with respect. Treating peer guides to a meal or giving gifts is appreciated and appropriate.

HEALTH

You must accept responsibility for your own health. Many students get sick because of dehydration; stay well-hydrated and drink only bottled water. Proper precautions will significantly reduce your risk of serious illness or injury.

In addition to the following sections, read the [Health](#) and [Safety](#) chapters of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*.

Physical Health

Visit the [CDC Travelers' Health](#) website for health information. Learn about the health risks related to your trip by going to the Destination page and choosing the country or countries you will be visiting. Even if you are healthy, you need to be prepared.

If there are changes in your health history after you submit your health clearance to UCEAP, you must immediately notify the Program Specialist. Failure to disclose new illnesses, injuries, allergies, or pregnancy can endanger your health and may risk your participation in the program.

In addition to a required online UCEAP Travel Health Education Certification course, you will receive extensive health-related orientation materials which you are responsible for reading before departure. Share all information with your parents.

Tips:

- Know beforehand the signs and symptoms of illness, especially if you are susceptible to bacterial, fungal, or viral infections that healthy immune systems usually conquer.
- Healthy behaviors, such as being careful about food and water, protecting against insect and mosquito bites, and washing hands frequently with soap and water are important ways of preventing many common travel illnesses. Do not eat undercooked food and/or food from street vendors. Do not drink unpasteurized dairy products.
- To prevent serious parasitic infections, avoid swimming, wading, or rafting in bodies of fresh water, such as lakes, ponds, canals, streams, or rivers.
- Avoid handling all animals. The rabies virus is prevalent throughout Africa, and your chances of being exposed to the virus through an animal bite are not remote. If you are bitten or scratched, immediately wash the affected area with soap and water and seek medical attention.
- Stay hydrated! Ghana is humid. Many students get sick because of dehydration.
- Running water may not always be available so take some alcohol-based sanitizer that does not require rinsing. For greatest germicidal efficacy, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends a concentration range of 60–95 percent ethanol or isopropanol in sanitizers.
- Plan to take care of your health by taking a small personal medical kit containing cold remedies, cough drops, cough medicine, throat lozenges, antibacterial gel, and medications for diarrhea, nausea, and upset stomach. Take enough to get you through the first few weeks until you can find what you need in Accra.

Food and Water Safety

Diarrhea is the most common illness in travelers. Contaminated food and water pose the greatest risk.

- Be very careful about the kind of water you consume. Drink only known brands of bottled water and sachet water. Rural water supplies are limited and may not be safe. Even brushing your teeth or rinsing your contact lenses with tap water can be a source of contamination. Beverages containing ice can be another source. Take precautions and ask questions.
- Avoid unpasteurized dairy products, including cream, ice cream, yogurt, or whipped cream. Cheese, unless cured, is best avoided.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked foods served hot. Avoid pork and salads. Vegetables should be well cooked and served hot. Peel fruits with intact skins before consumption. Avoid raw and undercooked eggs, and dishes prepared with raw eggs (steak tartar, mayonnaise, and dressings). Avoid cold buffets, custards, and any frozen desserts.
- Avoid buying food from street vendors. Be careful about places where food may have been sitting out for a long period, such as buffets.

Medical Facilities

Medical facilities are adequate in Accra and limited elsewhere. Most doctors and hospitals will expect payment in cash, regardless of UCEAP insurance.

If you feel sick or have a medical emergency, seek medical attention and contact the Study Center immediately. The Study Center will direct you to the appropriate clinic, provide information about the UCEAP insurance claim process, and help if arrangements need to be made with professors due to extended absence from class. The Study Center recommends the Nyaho Clinic, the Ghana-Canada Medical Center, and Del International Hospital; these are modern private facilities used by foreign officials, residents and international agencies.

You may also use the University Hospital (Korle-Bu). Korle-Bu has a convenient on-campus pharmacy near the Guest Center that is open 24 hours. Pharmacy staff members are helpful for consulting about basic needs. The Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital is the primary health care facility in Ghana. It is the only tertiary hospital in the southern part of Ghana and it is also a teaching hospital affiliated with the medical school of the University of Ghana. The hospital is large and extremely busy and chaotic compared to Western hospitals.

Ambulance service is limited in Ghana. Several hospitals in Accra operate ambulance services, but these services provide transportation and only the most basic medical care. In an emergency, call either the Study Center staff or hire a taxi.

Local medical care is adequate for routine illnesses such as dehydration or malaria. Local physicians and medical professionals are knowledgeable and equipped to diagnose and treat conditions that are common in Ghana.

Americans are accustomed to telling their doctors what they think and what remedy they would like. This is not the case in Ghana. You should approach the local medical authorities with respect and not with a patronizing or demanding attitude, and carefully follow their instructions.

24/7 Medical Assistance Services

Your UCEAP Insurance Plan benefits include travel and medical assistance services through Europ Assistance (EA), with a dedicated University of California phone line and professional and experienced staff. They are available 24/7 and can monitor your medical condition to make sure you receive proper care and can help you find an appropriate medical facility anywhere in the world with no out-of-pocket expense. Call collect: (202) 828-5896 or e-mail ops@europassistance-usa.com. You may need your UCEAP insurance policy number (Master Policy #ADD N04834823). You can find more information in your online [UCEAP Insurance Plan](#) brochure.

The U.S. Embassy in Accra also provides a list of local medical resources on their [website](#).

Prescription Medication

Take a supply of any required medications to last the duration of your stay. Pack prescription medications in your carry-on luggage and store them in the original, labeled containers. Upon arrival, customs officials may ask for a copy of the prescription or letter from a physician on letterhead with a detailed explanation including the purpose, generic name of the medication, and prescribed dosage.

Anti-Malarial Medication

The UCEAP insurance policy will cover prescribed anti-malarial medication. Order and pay for the anti-malaria prophylaxis within 14 days before the official start date of the program and complete a claim form. Submit the claim form and a receipt for reimbursement. Make copies of all documentation.

Refer to the Medication and Supplies section of the [UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad](#) for more information.

UCEAP Insurance Plan and Claims

The [UCEAP Insurance Plan](#) premium is paid by the University of California. It includes medical and security evacuation, repatriation, and other non-medical benefits.

You must pay for medical services at the time they are rendered and later submit the proper [claim form](#) and documentation to the address indicated on the form. You can also submit your claims online. Attach all original receipts to the insurance claim form. If the Study Center pays a medical bill on your behalf, you will be expected to fill out a promissory note.

► The Government of Ghana requires proof of a yellow fever vaccination to enter Ghana.

Health Risks

The required online UCEAP Travel Health Certification course provides predeparture health-related advice about specific precautions and recommended vaccinations. You are responsible for reading all UCEAP health-related materials.

Malaria

Malaria is endemic in Ghana with perennial transmission afflicting people of all ages throughout the country. Malaria is a common, serious, and sometimes fatal tropical disease (non-UC study abroad students have died in Ghana from malaria in the past). The highest rates of transmission occur in low-lying rural areas during, and just after, the rainy season. Despite rumors to the contrary, people do not become immune to malaria after having had the disease. There is no vaccination for malaria, but there is effective treatment once diagnosed.

You are **required** to take a malaria prophylaxis for the duration of your participation on UCEAP. Infection is spread by the night-time—dusk to dawn—biting female Anopheles mosquito. There is a high risk for malaria infection year-round.

The prescribed antimalarial prophylactic regimen does not provide 100 percent protection. You can get malaria even while taking medication, but the symptoms will be milder.

To significantly reduce the risk of getting malaria, use personal preventive strategies in addition to taking the prescribed medication:

- Stay indoors, limit outdoor activities, close all doors and windows.
- Protect against bites between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, especially during the wet season.
- Sleep under an insecticide (permethrin) impregnated bed net, if possible, even when indoors.
- Wear clothing that covers arms and legs, and use an insect repellent containing DEET (at least 30 percent concentration) on exposed skin when outdoors, especially between dusk and dawn.

Take anti-malaria drugs on schedule—for the entire recommended dosing period—whether or not you think you received a mosquito bite. Symptoms of malaria include fever and flu-like illness, including shaking chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may also occur. Malaria may cause anemia and jaundice (yellow coloring of the skin and eyes) because of the loss of red blood cells. 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 must see a doctor right away if you develop a fever at any time during your trip.

Discuss antimalarial medication details with a health professional when you get your UCEAP Health Clearance and after the online UCEAP travel health course for Ghana. For more information on malaria, refer to the, [U.S. CDC, Travel Medicine](#) and [MD Travel Health](#) websites.

Note about Antimalarial Drugs

Purchase your antimalarial drugs before travel. Drugs purchased abroad may not be manufactured according to United States standards and may not be effective. They also may be dangerous, containing counterfeit medications or contaminants, or be combinations of drugs that are unsafe to use.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), chloroquine is not an effective antimalarial drug in Ghana and should not be taken to prevent malaria in this region. Halofantrine (marketed as Halfan) is also widely used overseas to treat malaria. The CDC recommends that you do not use halofantrine because of serious heart-related side effects, including death.

Avoid using antimalarial drugs that are not recommended unless you have been diagnosed with life-threatening malaria and no other options are immediately available.

Clothing

Clothing provides a physical barrier to biting insects, provided it is sufficiently thick or tightly woven. Clothing protection is dramatically increased when the fabric is sprayed with permethrin. Far more than a repellent, permethrin is an insecticide (chemically related to the naturally occurring insecticide pyrethrum) that can be applied to clothing (as well as mosquito nets, tents, and gear). Insects are killed on contact with the treated fabric. Permethrin bonds tightly to the fabric and is effective for two weeks after spraying the fabric, and up to four months on stored clothes.

Skin Repellents

The most effective skin repellents contain DEET (at least 30 percent) and are essential to insect bite prevention. They should be applied every four to twelve hours, depending on the formulation, insect activity, and environmental conditions. Do not spray DEET directly on your face. DEET can be applied to either exposed skin or clothing. Do not apply DEET to skin that is covered by clothes or to synthetic fabrics (such as rayon) or plastics, because it can damage these products.

Repellents containing lemon eucalyptus (Repel Lemon Eucalyptus, Mosi-Guard) are an alternative to DEET, but as natural repellents, they are usually not as effective as DEET in repelling mosquitoes. Using both permethrin-treated clothing and a topical DEET repellent to exposed skin is known as the DoD (Department of Defense) system, and gives nearly 100 percent protection if the skin repellent contains at least 30 percent DEET.

Mosquito Nets

If you are not staying in a well-screened or air-conditioned room, spray your living and sleeping quarters in the evening with a pyrethroid-containing insecticide for flying insects. This will eliminate any insects that have entered the room during the day. You may also want to take the additional precaution of sleeping under a mosquito net. The net should extend to the floor or be tucked under the mattress to better prevent access by insects. Nets treated with permethrin are significantly more effective in preventing mosquito bites than untreated nets.

- ▶ Do not swim or wade in fresh water (except in well chlorinated swimming pools) to avoid infection with schistosomiasis.

Gastro-Intestinal Infections

Gastro-intestinal infections are the most common illnesses affecting travelers and can occur in any country you are visiting. Proper food handling, drinking purified water, and maintaining good personal hygiene are key to prevention.

The source of illness is the ingestion of contaminated food or water, person-to-person transmission, or recreational exposure to bodies of water. The infective agents can be bacteria, viruses, protozoa or toxins found in food.

Good personal hygiene practices (including frequent and thorough hand washing), proper food handling, and water purification are the most effective methods to prevent infection.

Parasites

Schistosomiasis (transmitted by snails living in fresh water such as lakes, rivers, streams and ponds) risk is present in the whole country, including urban areas.

Food-transmitted intestinal parasitic infections can be prevented by washing salads and vegetables or thoroughly cooking food to destroy infective eggs. Avoid raw or undercooked food that may be contaminated.

Prevent soil-transmitted infections by avoiding skin contact with the soil (e.g., do not walk barefoot or touch soil with bare hands).

Giardiasis

Giardiasis is a worldwide intestinal parasitic infection. Symptoms include chronic diarrhea, bloating, low-grade fever, nausea, and headaches. It is caused through the ingestion of contaminated food and water.

Immunocompromised Students

Students with immune suppression due to any medical condition, drug, or treatment have an increased risk of illness, especially malaria. For such students, prevention of malaria by avoiding mosquito bites and using chemoprophylaxis is particularly important. Discuss with your doctor whether your condition, medications, and treatments constitute contraindications to or decrease the effectiveness of any of the disease-prevention measures recommended for your stay in Ghana.

- ▶ It is important to speak with returnees and gather as much information as possible before you leave for Ghana.
- ▶ If you are currently seeing a specialist for a psychological health condition, meet with the specialist to make sure that you have a plan in place if you need local resources.

Emotional/Psychological Health

Mental health facilities are virtually nonexistent or quite limited throughout Africa, and Ghana is no exception. Patients are treated in medical wards or transferred to the Accra Psychiatric Hospital. Wards are crowded and often lack basic resources.

Many students in Ghana experience significant culture shock as they have not traveled to a culture so different from their own. Do not be surprised to think “this is harder than I expected.” In general, Americans are largely uninformed about the conditions of daily life in Africa so expect the unexpected and be sensitive to preconceptions or unrealistic expectations. Ask for insight from locals and acknowledge that this is a valuable learning experience. Take advantage of the Support Group meetings offered by the Study Center. The Center also has a list of professionals who can help address mental health needs.

Culture Shock

Travel often leads to encounters with new cultures, necessitating adjustment to different customs, lifestyle and languages. Culture shock is a normal developmental phase of adjustment to a new cultural environment. It is not a psychological disorder. Culture shock occurs when one’s values and typical ways of viewing the world clash with the values and viewpoints of the new cultural environment. Reactions to culture shock can mimic more severe psychological problems such as clinical depression and anxiety. Typical reactions to culture shock include feeling helpless, out of control, vulnerable, fearful, anxious, and confused. Sadness may set in with periods of crying or sleeplessness.

Most students who experience culture shock function reasonably well under the stress and are able to keep up with the responsibilities of school and everyday life. However, any situation entailing a high level of stress can cause unusually strong emotional reactions and can interfere with effective functioning either at that time or later. Such reactions are normal responses to abnormal situations and are to be expected under the circumstances. They are usually transitory—lasting a couple of weeks—and do not imply mental illness or an inability to cope with new cultures and unfamiliar experiences.

Ghana is different from the U.S., and culture shock will hit you one way or another. It can be stressful to realize that what you expected is not the same as the reality that greets you when you arrive. Perhaps, for the first time in your life, everything around you is completely new, strange, and unfamiliar—and you are not going back to California in a week. The difference between what you expect and what you actually experience may determine the level of distress that you feel.

It is easy to become worn down from physical and mental stress due to the vastly different environment. Whenever your usual coping mechanisms are not working for you or you find yourself making coping choices that are not in your best interest, realize that you may need more support, and seek help.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

Never invite a stranger to your room or give your room number to a stranger. Don't visit a man's room by yourself unless you know him very well.

”

SAFETY

Adopt a Lifestyle that Reduces Risk

The University of California Education Abroad Program has established policies and procedures to help you minimize your risk exposure and enhance your safety. However, your own conduct is the central factor in promoting your individual safety and well-being. Staying safe and secure on UCEAP is a partnership between you and UCEAP and it requires you to take personal responsibility for maintaining culturally appropriate behavior, exercising sound judgment and abiding by UCEAP policies and procedures. You need to recognize that you are responsible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for exercising good judgment to protect your health, safety and well-being. Essential behaviors include being aware of your surroundings, understanding how your conduct and actions may be perceived, and being sensitive to the impact that your behavior could have on your personal safety.

You are safest when your fellow students, friends and UCEAP staff look out for you. At the same time, you are expected to take responsibility for your safety and well-being. Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment, with a limited understanding of the local language and culture, and the Ghanaian perception that you are wealthy because you are from the United States, are some of the factors that can put your safety at risk.

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security rates Ghana as a high crime threat post. Street crime is a serious problem and more acute in Accra and other larger cities. Most reported incidents are crimes of opportunity for immediate gain, such as pick-pocketing and petty theft. Armed banditry is a concern in rural areas.

Unfortunately, violent crime is reported to be on the rise. Several Americans have been the victims of theft at gunpoint. Incidents of armed robbery have even been reported on campus, though muggings, purse and mobile phone snatching, various types of scams, and pick-pocketing are the most common forms of crime confronting students in Ghana. To reduce vulnerability, limit your display of jewelry and handle your cash discreetly. Do not take valuable items to Ghana. Given the risk of petty theft or armed robbery, a money belt that is worn under clothing is a good investment.

American travelers have reported theft in crowded market areas, beaches and parks, and at tourist attractions. There have also been instances in the past of armed robberies in some of the University of Ghana dormitories. Although armed robberies have taken place, no UCEAP student has been physically harmed in these events. UCEAP and the University of Ghana have taken decisive measures to improve student safety in the residence halls. Know how to get help in an emergency. Compliance is the best way to mitigate the threat of violence; individuals resisting armed robbers face a high risk of injury.

Crime Prevention

While significantly improved over previous years, security is still an issue on campus and in the city. The best deterrents against crime are personal situational awareness and common sense. Take prudent measures to protect your own well-being, just as you would on a UC campus.

Be practical and follow basic precautions:

- Keep your dorm door and windows locked at all times, whether you are in your room or not. Almost all incidents of theft on campus appear to have been opportunistic in nature, and locked doors and windows would have prevented loss. Criminal persons of concern on-site appear to be aware of the rooms that international students are staying in, and will target these rooms specifically.
- Never allow strangers to enter your room. Do not invite strangers or questionable acquaintances to your dorm, and do not automatically open your door to unexpected (unscheduled) visits by service people (laundry, maintenance, etc.) who may claim to be affiliated with the university.
- It is important for you to stay in close touch with the Study Center and attend all meetings organized by Study Center staff.
- Avoid walking alone in unlit or isolated areas at night, or even during the day. Stay in well-lit areas. Walk in pairs or in groups.
- Be careful and selective regarding whom you associate with.
- Meet friends in public places or dorm common rooms.
- Always travel in pairs or groups, especially when going out at night. During orientation, you will learn how to travel around the city, and where not to travel, especially at night.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Do not develop a false sense of security after being in Ghana for a while.
- Jog or run in pairs during the day, and only in well-populated areas.
- Do not count money in public; use a money belt under your garments.
- Never board an occupied taxi. Do not allow a second driver or passenger to enter. If this occurs, exit the taxi immediately. Passengers can be used as decoys to rob you.
- Change your lock if you are robbed.
- Avoid the services of errand boys, who can scout information and provide it to accomplices.
- Do not allow hawkers (people coming to your dorm room to sell items) into your room.
- The U.S. Department of State pamphlets *A Safe Trip Abroad* and *Tips for Travelers to Sub-Saharan Africa* provide useful information on protecting personal security while traveling abroad and on travel in the region in general. Both are available on the [Students Abroad](#) website.

If you are a victim of any type of robbery, alert the Study Center immediately. Your safety is of primary concern to UCEAP, and direct communication will help staff respond quickly.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“Women must be careful about friendliness with African men. Even a smile can be misconstrued. Don't be paranoid, just be careful.”

Security Measures

Campus Security initially handles all incidents on-site, but will pass incidents to the police when necessary. All students experience varying degrees of unwanted attention and harassment. Although most students complete their program without personal safety problems, petty thefts and burglaries are not uncommon. UCEAP has established procedures and policies designed to help you reduce risks and enhance your safety and security.

As you are a foreigner and considered “rich”, your dorm room may be more prone to break-ins than those of your neighbors. Normal precautions such as keeping your belongings out of plain sight may reduce this risk. Crime at the village or town level is much less frequent, but risks increase in proportion to population size. In urban areas, you must be especially security-conscious.

During the on-site orientation, a University of Ghana security representative gives hard facts and advice on keeping safe. You are advised as to where it is most safe to walk on campus and where it is not, and where and when you should move around with a group. They discuss areas best not traversed alone at night, and how to respond if you are mugged (e.g., not to resist and avoid looking attackers in the eyes). Procedures for being safe in the residence halls and tips on traveling at night in Accra are reviewed. Emergency phone numbers are distributed on a printed sheet and you are encouraged to enter them in your cell phone.

Security measures at the University of Ghana campus and dorms include the following:

- Undercover guard protection and security
- Monitoring of vehicular traffic in and around the university
- A night shuttle bus available from 7 p.m. to midnight for intracampus travel
- Security walls surrounding the dorm
- Hall exterior doors are locked at midnight and opened only at 1 a.m., 2 a.m., and 4:30 a.m. to accommodate late-returning residents
- Issuing keys to student rooms—DO NOT allow anyone to borrow your key

UCEAP expects that these actions will decrease the number of robberies on the Legon campus. Unfortunately, it is impossible to guarantee complete safety anywhere in the world, so being informed and vigilant should always remain important to you wherever you are.

University of Ghana Access Control & Perimeter Security

There are six official entry and exit points to the campus. However, there is limited control of entry to the campus, mainly due to insufficient security staff. Vehicles that are allowed onto the site are issued a vehicle pass (student, staff, vendor, taxi, tro-tro, and bus). Vehicles not displaying a sticker are supposed to be issued a 15-minute permit. At 10 p.m. each day, campus security closes all but one gate access point to the campus. Security officers man the open access point. There is a limited perimeter fence around the campus and there are many open areas along the perimeter where the local population can easily enter. There are many dark spots—including between dormitories—around the campus with limited or no security lighting. If you must go out at night, do not go out alone.

Theft & Fraud

Credit Card Fraud

While major U.S. and international credit cards are accepted across the country, credit card fraud is prevalent throughout most of Africa, especially in Ghana. If you must use a credit card, use it in reputable restaurants. Be present during the transaction process, and retain and destroy all receipts and carbons. The best practice to mitigate the risk of credit card fraud is to make all purchases in cash.

Stolen Passport

Report the loss or theft abroad of your U.S. passport immediately to local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Provide the embassy with a photocopy of your passport to expedite the replacement process.

Sexual Violence

There is a threat of sexual violence on the campus, primarily against female students. The majority of non-U.S. students will be interested in friendship alone, but criminal elements may use the friendship pretense to gain greater access to the student. Local students may also perceive genuine attempts at friendship to be a “come-on”. Be aware of the differences in the dynamics of male-female friendship in Ghanaian culture.

Traffic & Road Safety

Cycling is discouraged. Motorists, especially taxi drivers, generally have hostile attitudes toward cyclists. Pedestrians and street vendors may act aggressively toward cyclists. Pedestrians may step in front of cyclists.

Primary roads are generally paved and well-maintained. Roads outside major cities generally are in poor condition. Almost all secondary roads are unpaved.

Road crashes occur frequently on the road from Accra to the Cape Coast tourist area.

Travel in darkness, particularly outside the major cities, is extremely hazardous due to poor street lighting and the unpredictable behavior of pedestrians, bicyclists, and farm animals, particularly goats and sheep. Aggressive drivers, poorly maintained vehicles, and overloaded vehicles pose serious threats to road safety.

The safety standards of the small, private buses called “tro tros” that transit roads and highways are uncertain. Travelers are encouraged to consider this when making travel arrangements.

Travelers are routinely stopped at police checkpoints throughout Ghana. Foreign nationals are expected to carry documentation of their status, such as a passport and visa.

► Taxi and tro-tro (minibus) drivers tend to drive aggressively. They sometimes block roads, creating traffic jams.

Pedestrian Travel

Be cautious when crossing or walking along streets. Local conditions presenting particular hazards to pedestrians include:

- Lack of sidewalks, increasing pedestrian risks.
- Pedestrians are likely to cross the road anywhere and at any time.
- Drivers seldom slow down for pedestrians; they simply honk their horn, assuming people will get out of their way.
- Cars, trucks, motorcyclists, and bicyclists often drive very close to pedestrians on the street.
- Vehicles tend to travel at high speeds, making it difficult to brake safely.
- Many Ghanaian streets have open and deep drainage canals running alongside them.

Be aware of these critical differences between pedestrian travel in the U.S. and Ghana, as unfamiliarity could result in serious injuries.

Driver Behaviors

California students are initially unaccustomed to the aggressive driving style of Ghanaians. Driver behaviors that could threaten your personal safety include:

- Illegal U-turns
- Driving under the influence of alcohol
- Reckless passing
- Speeding (speeding is a factor in 50 percent of all road crashes in Ghana)
- New drivers not trained adequately before they are allowed to drive private and commercial vehicles
- Physical impairment (a recent survey carried out in Tamale revealed that 25 percent of commercial drivers were blind in one eye)

These factors contribute to many road crashes. Exercise good judgment and extreme caution in any activity that involves the use or near proximity of motor vehicles in Ghana.

Fire Safety

Incidents of electrical fire are frequent due to the poor quality of electric wiring, lack of adequate fire prevention practices, and lack of general maintenance. Fire hazards and building designs inadequate for evacuation planning are also a potential problem in student accommodation blocks. Many fire departments lack the proper equipment, particularly personal protective equipment, to manage fires. The Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) urges the public to observe fire safety precautions to minimize fires. When visiting markets be aware of exit routes in case of a fire. Residence halls are NOT equipped with fire detection devices or manual pull stations. Purchase a travel smoke alarm, test it, and use it. Because they are fire hazards, candles, lanterns, and open flame devices should not be used in any residential area. Flashlights and extra batteries are encouraged for power outages.

Alcohol & Drugs

- ▶ **Drugs, including marijuana, are illegal and socially unacceptable in Ghana. You are subject to local laws and UCEAP policy on substance abuse.**

Never become involved with drugs of any kind. Marijuana use amongst UC students is a problem in Ghana that neither UCEAP nor the University of Ghana will tolerate. Ghana has severe laws regarding possession, use, and trafficking of illegal drugs. Punishment can include long jail sentences and heavy fines. For example, possession of small amounts of marijuana can lead to a prison sentence in excess of five years and heavy fines, usually after a lengthy and expensive legal process. Anyone found in possession of illegal drugs on university property will be severely dealt with and suspended from the host university and UCEAP.

At UC you may socialize in a way that is very different from how Ghanaians socialize. Getting drunk, smoking, and being loud in public are not common social behaviors at the University of Ghana. The legal drinking age in Ghana is 18. Alcohol is served in most restaurants on campus, but is not allowed in dorm rooms. Religion also influences Ghanaian attitudes towards drinking, even socially. Many Ghanaian women do not drink alcohol.

Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating Ghana's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Neither UC nor the U.S. embassy can mediate.

Ghanaian Law Enforcement

There is a level of corruption in the Ghanaian police force. Remain calm if stopped. Interactions with local police can lead to cultural misunderstandings. Do not argue with security forces. **Whenever possible, contact the Study Center to report crimes or other kinds of contact with law enforcement personnel.**

Emergency Contacts

What Is an Emergency?

An emergency is a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action. The following are considered emergencies:

- Any life/death situation
- A traumatic event requiring immediate assistance
- An arrest
- Civil unrest or natural disaster in the host country

In an Emergency

Contact local emergency services first and then contact the following:

If you are in the U.S.

- During office hours (8 a.m.–5 p.m. Pacific Time): Contact your Operations Specialist at the UCEAP Systemwide Office
- After office hours: Call the 24-hour emergency phone number at (805) 893-4762

If you are abroad

Carry the local emergency contact information at all times:

Ambulance..... 193

Fire..... 192

Police..... 191

U.S. Embassy in Accra

U.S. Citizen Services

No. 19 Fifth Link Road, Cantonments, Accra

Phone: (233) 30-2741-000

Fax: (233) 30-2741-389

After-Hours Emergency: (233) 30-2741-775

E-mail: acsaccra@state.gov

Web: ghana.usembassy.gov

American Citizen Services is open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday.

If you have a health, travel, or safety emergency and do not have access to local or UCEAP representative emergency information, contact the UCEAP travel assistance provider, Europ Assistance, available 24/7:

- Call international collect at 1+202-828-5896 or within the U.S. at 1+866-451-7606
- E-mail: ops@europassistance-usa.com