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# Country Information Library: Ghana

**⚠ INTERNAL USE ONLY – ATIP EXEMPTIONS MAY APPLY**

**🚫 NOTE:** Please use the information below with discretion as it may be out of date.



**KEY INFORMATION:** There is a north-south divide in relation to income disparity and access to services and economic opportunities. Three of Ghana's four poorest regions are in the north. Youth unemployment is very high, owing partly to a high growth rate in the youth population. Polygamous marriage is permissible under the customary law of some groups, but not under civil law.

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- There is no fee for the card but it may take months to obtain.
- Valid for 10 years and is compulsory for citizens over age 16.
- Contains basic information including a photograph, name of the card holder, address, date of birth, and a randomly generated personal identification number (PIN) that is assigned to the holder. It is accepted as photo ID.
- Biometric information, including the holder's fingerprints and signature, is available via a 2-dimensional barcode on the back of the card. It would be difficult to have two duplicate NIA cards for the same person.
- National Identity Cards for foreigners are mandatory and are issued the same day. They are valid for only one year, are accepted as photo ID, and have the same security features as the Ghanacard for citizens.
- **Voter ID cards** are not generally considered reliable. They are available only to Ghanaian citizens of voting age (18 years and over) and are mandatory for voting. They can be used as photo identification, but lack security features making them easily obtainable with little or no background check.
- The **National Health Insurance Card** is issued by the Ministry of Health. It includes photo based and biometric information, and is considered reliable.
- **Drivers' Licences** are issued by the Drive Vehicle Licensing Authority under the Ministry of Transport. They contain biometric information, security features, and fingerprints, and are considered reliable.

## ▼ Civil documents / proof of relationship

- A significant level of corruption has been observed with the Registry of Births and Deaths Office. A 2017 joint report from USAID, the Ghana Integrity Initiative, and the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition indicated that 41% of Ghanaian respondents reported paying a bribe to the Registry of Births and Deaths.

### Birth documents / proof of parentage

**FLAG:** Ghanaian birth documents do not indicate the marital status of the parents, and the appearance of a man's name on a birth document should not be taken as *prima facie* evidence of legitimate birth or of subsequent legitimization.

- Majority of registrations are not made at the time of birth, but when an individual requires a birth certificate for immigration purposes. Registrations not made within one year of an individual's birth are not reliable, since registration may often be accomplished on demand, with little or no supporting documentation required.
- Birth certificates that are legitimately issued but contain fraudulent information are easily obtained. The Registry of Births and Deaths will often issue a birth certificate on the strength of a statutory declaration by a purported witness to the birth. This document can then be used to obtain a Ghanaian national passport.

- **Secondary Evidence:** Due to the prevalence of late registrations, secondary evidence of birth is often required. Common secondary evidence includes a midwife's certificates of birth, weight cards, welfare centre cards, and baptismal certificates. Recent affidavits by relatives or friends are not reliable.
- Birth certificates are issued by the central of local office of the Registrar of Births and Deaths.
- A certified copy of entry in the Register of Births can be issued on demand.

## Acquisition of citizenship

<b>Dual citizenship:</b>	Recognized (as of November 1, 2002).
<b>Basis of citizenship</b>	Citizenship law is based upon the <a href="#">Citizenship Act, 2000 (PDF (Portable Document Format), 30.3 KB (Kilobyte))</a> .
<b>By birth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either of the child's parents or one grandparent was or is a citizen of Ghana, regardless of country of birth.</li> <li>• A child of not more than seven years of age found in Ghana whose parents are not known shall be presumed to be a citizen of Ghana by birth.</li> </ul>
<b>By naturalization</b>	Must have resided in Ghana for five out of preceding 7 years, and 12 months immediately preceding application.

## Marriage certificates

- The minimum legal age for marriage is 18 for men and women.
- Polygamy is permissible under customary law for some groups, but is illegal under civil law.
- Available for civil marriages from the Principal Registrar of Marriages or the Registrar General in Accra.
- Most marriages are performed under customary law, and written records are only kept if the couple chooses to register the marriage with the local council. Persons married under customary law, who subsequently wish to marry under civil law, must obtain a civil marriage certificate which reflects the words "married under native customary law" in the space provided for "condition".

## Divorce certificates

**FLAG:** Affidavits or "statutory declarations" attesting to a divorce under customary law, even when duly sworn, do not constitute proper documentation of the dissolution of a Ghanaian customary marriage.

- Certificates for the dissolution of a civil marriage may be obtained from the court that granted the divorce. Proper documentation of the dissolution of a customary marriage is a decree, issued by a high court, circuit court, or district court stating that the marriage in question was dissolved in accordance with customary law.

### **Death certificates**

- Issued by the Registrar of Births and Deaths central or local office.
- A “Certified Copy of Entry into Register of Deaths” certificate is issued on demand.
- Records more than one year old are deposited with the Office of the Registrar of Births and Deaths for Ghana in Accra.

### **Military records and cards**

- For persons who have served in the Gold Coast (British Colonial name of Ghana) or Ghana Armed Forces (GAF), a military record may be obtained from the Director of Personnel Administration (Ministry of Defense, Burma Camp) in Accra.
- Within the GAF, military personnel do not receive a different identification card based on their rank. The Army identification card is the same for all military personnel. It contains information such as the name, service number, and rank, date of birth, religion, blood group, gender, height, and photo of the holder.

### **▼ Notarized documents**

- Information is unverified and documents are not considered reliable.
- Declarants often do not sign documents in front of the Notary Public or on the stated day.
- No security features.

### **▼ Police certificates**

- For Police Certificate information, please visit the [Police Certificate Image Library](#).

### **▼ Proof of education / enrollment**

- Issuing authority is the West African Examinations Council.
- Exam results for secondary school studies and technical school studies may be verified online through the West African Examinations Council ([WAEC](#)) website. Results may only be checked by a pre-authorized user.
- West African Senior Secondary School Examinations (WASSCE) and Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE) are written in electronic format and are reliable. However, date of birth often lacks online verification.