



WEST AFRICAN GENETIC MEDICINE CENTRE (WAGMC)
College of Health Sciences
University of Ghana

Scholarship Policy and Procedures

University of Ghana
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Language of Instruction: English

Read this handbook in conjunction with the University's Graduate student handbook. The University Graduate student handbook has general information, rules and regulations pertaining to the Graduate School.

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1. Introduction

The West African Genetic Medicine Centre (WAGMC) was established in the University of Ghana (UG) to address the developmental challenge posed by human genetic disorders in Africa. In 2006, a World Health Assembly resolution WHA 59.20 urged African Member States to develop medical genetics capacity to control SCD and other genetic disorders on the continent. The recommendations of WHA59.20 offer a rigorous framework to develop a sustainable programme targeting inherited disorders as well as disorders acquired through somatic gene mutations on the continent. A core function of WAGMC is to develop the human capacity needed on the continent to improve the lives of people affected by genetic disorders. This function includes postgraduate training of genetic counsellors and human and medical genetics scientists. However, the cost of postgraduate education is generally high particularly involving genetics. Thus, WAGMC offers highly competitive scholarships to aid African nationals to become trained in genetics. Graduates of the Centre will constitute an emerging professional body dedicated to reducing the burden of genetic disorders in Africa.

The intent of the scholarship/fellowship is to sponsor students to pursue postgraduate training focused on the following themes: **a)** genetic counselling, **b)** medical genetics, **c)** biochemical and molecular genetics **d)** foetal medicine/perinatology, **e)** cyto-genetics, **f)** inherited blood disorders, **g)** cancer including hematologic malignancies, **h)** diabetes and **i)** kidney disease. Such students must have an undergraduate degree (for applicants of the MSc programs) or a second degree (for applicants to the PhD programs) in Psychology, Biomedical Sciences or a related field from a reputable university.

WAGMC subscribes to the believe that if offered equal opportunities irrespective of race, gender, and all other social attributes, all individuals can develop their potential and realize their dreams beyond their own imagination. Driven by this core belief of a universally inherent potential of human talent, the Center will offer special consideration to brilliant but financially challenged students from a poor socioeconomical background. Such persons will need to demonstrate their need for financial aid. WAGMC is also committed to gender parity with each cohort of admitted students, female students are therefore especially encouraged to apply. The scholarship/fellowship is open to Ghanaian students as well regional students from across African. We especially encourage students from other African countries to apply for our programs and scholarships in an effort to promote regional collaboration among students and faculty of WAGMC.

2. Scholarship Funding Categories

WAGMC offers Supplementary and Full scholarships. Supplementary scholarships may cover research costs, and tuition only. Individuals who are in full-time employment and obtain study-leave with pay from their employers to pursue postgraduate education in WAGMC will not be eligible to receive stipends; such students may qualify for a supplementary scholarship. Supplementary scholarships may also be awarded to students who already have existing funding to support postgraduate training. WAGMC will review the existing grant and determine which qualifying expenses to provide scholarship.

Full scholarships will include the following:

- Tuition
- Research costs

- Relocation travel cost to Ghana for regional students
- Accommodation
- Stipends

The total amounts awarded for the two categories of scholarships, and the individual components of the scholarship will depend on the availability of funds, and will be reviewed regularly by the Centre. Applicants who are awarded supplementary scholarships have the right to apply for additional scholarship/fellowship from other awarding bodies provided that the conditions of that award do not conflict with the conditions of the WAGMC scholarship/fellowship. The duration of scholarships will vary depending on the category of the award. A supplementary scholarship for research will begin in the research year for both Masters and Doctorate students. A full scholarship will begin in the first year of study. Awards for Ghanaian Masters students will begin in the second year of study.

3. Application Process

Advertisement announcing applications for enrollment and scholarships of WAGMC Postgraduate Fellowships will be published at the beginning of each year (typically January to March). The advert will be published in a major national newspaper, and posted on the websites of the University and the Centre, and shared with national, regional and international WAGMC academic partners, and sectoral partners. In addition, the advert will be shared for posting on the website of the African Association of Universities, and the African Academy of Sciences, and displayed at annual meetings, and workshops of national and regional professional societies involved with biomedical science and genetics, such as the Ghana Biomedical Convention, and the African Society of Human Genetics.

Persons interested in applying for WAGMC Postgraduate Fellowships may make enquiries by sending an email to info@wagmc.org. Applicants are encouraged to visit the Centre website to review the research programmes, and expertise of faculty, and to learn more about the research of potential faculty mentors. Applicants must fill a downloadable application form on the WAGMC website. The application form will contain a check-box of all other documents required for the application (see below). Application forms and all supporting documents must be emailed to scholarship@wagmc.org or submitted physically to the WAGMC Secretariat. Incomplete application forms will be administratively withdrawn and not processed further. Applications received after the stipulated deadline will not be considered. Each applicant must provide the documents listed below as supporting documents to their application form:

- Resume/CV
- Personal statement
- Research Proposal (MPhil, PhD; not more than 4 pages)
- Scanned copies of Bachelors' Degree Certificate (MSc and MPhil applicants)
- Scanned copies of Masters' Degree Certificate (PhD applicants)
- Copy of your official transcript
- 2 reference letters (details of referees must be provided online)
- TOEFL or IELTS score (non-native English speakers)

Applications will be reviewed by a Selection Committee. Shortlisted applicants will be informed by a letter transmitted via email, and invited for interview with panel. National

applicants will be interviewed in-person, while regional/non-resident applicants will be interviewed by video teleconference. Scholarship/fellowship award recipients will be informed in writing by the end of September. ***The scholarship application process therefore covers a period of at least four months***

The successful fellows will be enrolled at the University of Ghana, but with access to resources and facilities at all WAGMC partner institutions.

The successful PhD fellow will be expected to:

- Conduct high quality research leading to the publication of at least 2 papers in peer reviewed journals
- Contribute to the training of graduate students
- Graduate with a University of Ghana PhD degree

The successful fellows may be supported with the following:

- Tuition at the University of Ghana
- A monthly stipend (for candidates without employment)
- Research costs
- Accommodation

4. Eligibility

To be eligible for the Scholarship/fellowship one must be an African national who holds an undergraduate or master's degree in a related field and should be interested in conducting research in one of the three research thematic areas of the Centre: a) Sickle Cell Disease, b) Diabetes and Kidney Disease and, c) Cancer. The academic achievements and research background of the applicant will play a major role in the admission process as well as in the decision to award scholarships or fellowships.

5. Selection Committee

Members of the selection committee will include, the WAGMC Director and Deputy Director, WAGMC postgraduate programme directors, and faculty of the various degree programmes. Under no circumstance would members of WAGMC Management Committee attempt to control the outcome of decisions of the Selection Committee.

Every member of the Selection Committee must adhere to the relevant policies of WAGMC. Each member of the Selection Committee must disclose any personal knowledge of relationship with any potential applicant under consideration and refrain from participation in the award process in a circumstance where he or she would derive, directly or indirectly, a private benefit if any potential applicants are selected over others.

6. Selection Criteria

All applicants must meet all requirements in order to be selected for scholarship/fellowship. The Selection Committee will work to ensure that all shortlisted applicants have met the selection criteria and that the decision to award any particular candidate accomplishes the purpose for which the fellowship/scholarship is being awarded.

Criteria for awarding scholarship/fellowship are:

- Prior academic performance
- Performance of each applicant on written exams
- Recommendations from supervisors of such applicant and any others who have knowledge of the applicant's capabilities
- Additional information regarding an applicant's career, academic and other relevant experiences, financial need and
- The Selection Committee's conclusions as to the applicant's motivation, character, ability, or potential

WAGMC reserves the right to impose additional, minor reasonable restrictions and/or requirements upon the awarding of scholarship/fellowship grants and the administration of such grants. Any substantial or material changes will be made only with approval of the members of the WAGMC Centre Management Committee.

7. Award Letter

All successful applicants will receive letters informing them that they have been selected to receive a scholarship/fellowship award. Such applicants will be required to present a copy their letter to the WAGMC secretariat during registration. The successful applicant will be required to fill and submit an acceptance form by the date stipulated in the award letter.

8. Scholarship/Fellowship Supervision

Scholarship/fellowship funds may be applied to tuition, research and accommodation costs. Funds will be paid directly to facility providing services to the recipient of the award. Funds will however only be released after the recipient has filled and submitted the acceptance form. Funds must only be used to settle educational expenses described as qualified expenses. Under no circumstance should funds be diverted to other expenses unrelated to educational cost.

9. Terms and Conditions of Award

Upon being offered a fellowship/scholarship each student will fill a WAGMC Scholarship Acceptance form which will be processed to ensure that funds are released for payment of qualifying educational expenses. Successful students will not receive direct payments of any component of the award except for stipends. All disbursements will be made to third parties (e.g. hostel management) after students have satisfied the required activity for payment. Recipients of the award will be expected to submit a progress report to the Selection Committee at the end of every semester. In the instance that the selected recipient declines the award or fails to respond to the offer within one-month, an alternative applicant will be made the offer. The first recipient then forfeits the award, the award will not be reverted back to the first recipient once the offer has been made to the alternate and an acceptance form has been submitted by the alternate. Submission of the form implies that the applicant understands the terms and conditions of the scholarship/fellowship, the amount of the scholarship/fellowship, when the scholarship/fellowship will be distributed, and that the applicant's academic performance and full-time status at the university must be maintained.

WAGMC reserves the right to terminate the award of any student. The award of a student may be terminated if the student fails to meet the conditions of the award. Before an award is terminated an awardee will be sent a notice of termination and will be given the opportunity to appeal the decision.

Awards may be terminated based on any of the following reasons:

- Unsatisfactory academic performance for two semesters
- Failure to provide a progress report to awardee's supervisor as is required by the conditions of the scholarship/fellowship award
- Failure to conduct research within the research themes of WAGMC
- Failure to adhere to all rules and regulations of the University of Ghana

Students may relinquish scholarship award by writing to the Centre Director.

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director@wagmc.org

10. Record Keeping

WAGMC will retain all records and documentation provided by the applicants during the application process. Information pertaining to unsuccessful applicants will also be kept along with information on successful applicants.

11. Key Contacts

Direct all enquiries about this policy and procedure document, and the WAGMC scholarship to the Communications Officer

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scholarship@wagmc.org