

GHANA GOES ON-LINE

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Ghana has recently introduced an on-line verification system for their West African Exam Council Senior School Certificate Examinations, at <http://ghana.waecdirect.org>. It should also work if you type in just ghana.waecdirect.org but do not type www.ghana.waecdirect.org as this takes you to the Nigerian <http://www.waecdirect.org> website for some weird reason (www must be included in the Nigerian URL or you will end up somewhere else entirely).

The system seems to be similar to the Nigerian WAEC SSCE one that many of us have been using for a couple of years, but I have noticed a few differences:

1. You are given the confusing choices of Result Checker, Result Confirmation, or Result Verification. If you want quick on-line verification of results to print out, which I think is the quickest, cheapest and most reliable way, then you should NOT select either the Result Confirmation or Result Verification options. These appear to cost extra, and are sent by snailmail, which defeats the whole purpose of on-line verification. I consider SSCE results that our Admissions Office prints direct from the official WAEC website to be acceptable final, official documentation. Faxed or e-mailed results statements purporting to be direct from the WAEC are not as reliable for final documentation, as the recipient cannot be certain of their provenance, given current technology, although some institutions may be willing to use them for a provisional offer under certain circumstances.
2. Results appear to be available from 1993 to present, compared with Nigeria's 1991 to present. These were the first years that the exams were conducted in each of these countries, so every exam ever written should be on-line.
3. The website doesn't indicate what the Ghanaian WAEC Access Card (called Scratchcard in Nigeria) costs, but I've heard it costs 25,000 cedis, which is approximately equivalent to USD2.80. It allows for only 3 PINs, instead of Nigeria's 5, which allows access up to 3 different times to one individual's exam results for any given year. A new Access Card will be required for either a different individual's results, or for the same individual's results for a different year's exams (if s/he wrote them twice). Similar to Nigeria, Access Cards are

available only in Ghana, but I would expect any applicant, even one in North America, who had written these exams within the last 10 years or so to normally still have access to an extended family member or friend who could purchase an Access Card and forward the serial number and 3 PINs.

As with Nigeria, I recommend that Admissions Offices still obtain:

- a) at least a photocopy or fax of an applicant's results statement for the required numbers,
- b) the applicant's permission to access their results on-line, and
- c) the Access Card/Scratchcard serial number and PIN from the applicant. You shouldn't need the actual card. Get the applicant to send the last items to you by e-mail or fax along with a) and b).

Service interruptions may occur in African and other websites, due to severe rains, power outages, and uploading of results. WAEC does not appear to be aware of the importance of answering e-mail enquiries about the vulnerability of their computer system to attack and other matters, but I have heard anecdotally that it appears to be secure, and the one attempt at system compromise in the last 15 years was foiled by a back-up system that was in place to check for unauthorized changes. I know that WAEC is trying very hard to improve security, and my sense is that, on balance, the on-line verification systems provide us with much quicker and more reliable sources of results for the Ghanaian and Nigerian WAEC SSCE than the paper systems we had before.

This is a good first step, but it does require somewhat more work on our part than we would like. Currently, we consider the benefits in speed and reliability to be worth it for the small numbers of these applications we receive each year, but as more and more educational systems are posting their results on-line every year, our workload may soon become overwhelming at school year end. I hope WAEC is working toward a system whereby students request and pay for their results to be sent to us, and WAEC then sends us the results electronically (but not by unsecured e-mail or fax, as the present system allows). ETS has successfully sent us electronic results for years, and I see no reason why a similar system would not also work for WAEC.

I have seen no evidence that other WAEC countries' (Gambia, Liberia, Sierra Leone) SSCE results are going to appear on-line anytime soon.

This is not intended as an exhaustive list, but here are some other on-line results systems:

<http://www.neconigeria.org> - Nigerian National Examinations Council Senior School Certificate Examination results (results from 2000 to present; must buy

scratchcard and enter PIN to access, similar to WAEC Nigeria system, but I haven't used this website since we tend to prefer WAEC results instead)

<http://results.nic.in> - CBSE and some other Indian state boards' Class XII and X results (free, current year only and perhaps for a limited time, accessed by roll number)

<http://www.necta.go.tz> - National Examinations Council of Tanzania's Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education Examination and other exam results (free, current year only, complete listing of all examinees' results listed by school)

<http://www.chsi.com.cn> - Chinese post-secondary diploma and university degree verification (not transcripts, free, in Chinese only)

<http://www.cdgd.edu.cn> - Chinese post-secondary diploma and university degree, as well as transcript, verification upon request (\$75 the last I checked, and not really on-line, but I'm not sure because we do not use this service)

<https://ielts.ucles.org.uk> - IELTS score verification (free, but you must apply and agree to terms of use before access is allowed; image of actual report is shown, with colour photograph). IELTS is also planning to roll out electronic score reporting to institutions in 2005.

<http://www.ibo.org/ibo> then shortcut to Universities for login page – IB results displayed for those who have authorized release of results to your institution (free, contact Sandra Wade Pauly at sandraw@ibo.org with questions about this or electronic score reporting)

Website for **2004 Entrance Exam requirements by Province, Stream, University Tier** (in Chinese):
<http://zsb.firtvu.edu.cn/zsb1/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=311&LayoutID=3>

Translation of website info for First and Second Tier universities:

	First Tier Universities		Second Tier Universities	
	Arts	Science	Arts	Science
Beijing	474 (85 th %ile)	491 (71 st %ile)	435 (73 rd %ile)	433 (49 th %ile)
Shanghai(3+Comp+1)	463	451		
Shanghai (3+Comp)	505	506		
Guangdong	626 (90 th %ile)		548 (68 th %ile)	
Tianjin	520	495	472	434
Jilin	501	492	421	392
Liaoning	558		485	
Hebei	582	590		
Henan	599	589	564	533
Shandong	600	606		
Shanxi	574	571	539	531
Jiangsu	575		543	
Zhejiang	576	574		
Chongqing	537	518	472	450
Anhui	564	565	520	501
Hubei	536	561	510	530
Hunan	568	541	531	496
Hainan	626	588	564	514
Yunnan	515	465	470	400
Gansu	578	568	528	508
Ningxia	532	526	485	482
Inner Mongolia	535	564	477	493
Inner Mong – minority	525	554	467	483
Fujian	551	535	485	456
Qinghai	478	438	390	365
Sichuan	541	538	490	483
Shaanxi	576	562	510	508
Guizhou	531	484	463	408
Jiangxi	589	596	542	542
Heilongjiang	517	527	466	467
Xinjiang	538		484	
Averages	548	540	494	476
Averages by Tier	544 – 72.5%		485 – 65%	

2004 BEIJING UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAM - Percentile Distribution of Grades:

Scores	Arts		Science	
	# students	Min. percentile	# students	Min. percentile
>600	88	99.7	2108	96.1
>550	702	97.8	6574	87.7
>500	2586	91.7	13951	73.9
>450	6601	78.9	23753	55.5
>400	12751	59.3	33988	36.4
>350	19614	37.4	42583	20.3
>300	25296	19.2	48681	8.9
>250	28727	8.3	51896	2.8
>200	30413	2.9	52961	0.8
>100	31014	1.0	53205	0.4
Total	31314		53408	

Website for **2003 Entrance Exam requirements by Province, Stream, University Tier** (in Chinese):

<http://www.cer.net/article/20030624/3087488.shtml>

Translation of website info for First and Second Tier Universities:

	First Tier Universities		Second Tier Universities	
	Arts	Science	Arts	Science
Ningxia	491	426	431	381
Zhejiang	541	508	500	459
Shandong	552	524		
Beijing	470	455	434	408
Chongqing	510	463	449	391
Qinghai	426	338	355	276
Hebei	531	513	496	469
Sichuan	522	488	463	430
Anhui	507	482	462	431
Hainan	679	659	615	589
Gansu	504	458	456	402
Shanghai(3+Comp+1)	441	435	420	388
Shanghai (3+Comp)	479	436	450	368
Shaanxi	516	467	455	419
Jilin	474	462	402	380
Xinjiang – Han	493	456	450	390
Xinjiang – minority	333	307	290	270
Guizhou	505	436	422	354
Hunan	557	501	520	457

Jiangsu				
Guangxi				
Jiangxi	530	512	478	462
Guangdong				
Tianjin	477	452	441	403
Shanxi	518	487	478	450
Heilongjiang	503	476	450	418
Hubei	516	502	489	468
Fujian	534	494	463	430
Liaoning	523	523	453	453
Inner Mongolia - Han	487	455	445	400
Inner Mong – minority	477	445	435	390
Henan				
Tibet – Han	450	440	320	325
Tibet – minority	330	280	250	210
Yunnan	480	405	455	350
Averages	509	475	454	415
Averages by Tier	492 (65.6%)		435 (57.9%)	

Description of grading system in Guangdong Province (Nov 1999-now also used by some other provinces):

“The mark system for the higher education entrance exam in Guangzhou is a particular one compared with the common one administered in the other part of China and called ‘Standard mark’.

The basic formula of the mark system is $500+100*Z$, where Z is the Z score that a candidate received. You can locate a candidate’s location (percentage of candidates up/below) by viewing a normal distribution table. For instance, the proportion of area beyond $Z=0$ is 0.5. That is, there are 50 percent candidates beyond the score 500. The maximum and minimum possible score are respectively 900 and 100 (Z score from 4 to –4 corresponding)...

Hope this helps.

Best wishes,

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