

THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES

Two PhD positions within the research project: Certifications of Citizenship in Africa (CERTIZENS)

Call for Applications

Deadline: 25 September 2020

Background

With funding from the Danish Development Research Council, the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana is inviting applications from well-qualified students for two interdisciplinary PhD positions as part of the Ghana country component of a cross-country collaborative research programme entitled *Certifications of Citizenship in Africa* (CERTIZENS). This is a collaboration between the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, the Department of Development Studies at Makerere University, and the Centre of African Studies at the University of Copenhagen.

CERTIZENS is an interdisciplinary, multi-layered research project, which explores the complexities of regimes of citizen certification and the forms of identification these generate, circulate, manage and attempt to control, in selected African settings. Formal identification of various kinds of citizen certification is a prerequisite for ensuring basic rights and accessing public and private services such as health, education, jobs, security and justice. Yet there is extensive under-documentation across the African continent, with debilitating consequences for millions, although in some cases people find or create informal or illicit ways around this. Uganda and Ghana have been selected as comparative cases, in which the significance of both formal and informal certification systems for both states and citizens will be examined. CERTIZENS investigates four inter-linked analytical arenas: national-level legislation, policy and implementation; an intermediate level of the bureaucracies and materialities of certification; an intimate level of differentiated citizens' positions, meanings, experiences and practices related to various IDs; and at global level, the mobility and adaptations of so-called universal policy models related to 'identification for development'.

Two specific PhD projects have been identified as part of the CERTIZENS programme in Ghana:

Topic 1: Bureaucracies and practices of certification

This PhD project focuses on the bureaucratic and material dimensions of Ghana's inter-connected systems of citizen classification, registration and certification, related, for example, to birth certificates, national IDs, voter identification cards and others. This study will entail investigating both the everyday work of, and citizens' encounters with, bureaucratic institutions and practices of classification, registration and certification, as well as the technologies, infrastructures and economies of producing, storing, circulating and accessing specific kinds of identification documents. Methodologically, this aspect of the project will entail a combination of ethnographic, institutional and political economy fieldwork within and around selected bureaucracies, citizen-clients, and ID production and distribution systems.

Topic 2: Intimacies of identification and lived citizenship

This PhD project focuses on the intimate dimension of differentiated citizens' access to, experiences with and uses of different kinds of formal identity documents (such as birth certificates, national IDs, passports, voter identification cards, and so on), as well as their engagements with informal or illicit systems of *self*-certification (such as faking or borrowing documents). It will investigate the respective implications of such experiences and practices for lived citizenship and personhood. Methodologically, it will entail detailed ethnographies of selected groups of citizens, including detailed life histories, go-along methods, and participant observation.

Applicants are asked to consider these PhD projects when making the application.

While registered at the University of Ghana and following the usual PhD education, the two successful PhD candidates will be part of a cohort of five PhDs internationally, as well as several senior scholars, who are all part of the larger CERTIZENS research programme.

How to apply

Applications are made online through the electronic application form found at the University of Ghana Website: www.ug.edu.gh

The completed application form and accompanying support documents must be submitted online by midnight, **Friday 25 September 2020**.

Specific requirements

Applications should include the following:

- A brief motivation letter, addressed to: Coordinator, Graduate Committee, Institute of African Studies
- A research proposal of maximum four pages, related to **only one** of the two PhD topics outlined. This ought to include a brief outline of the envisaged project, and how it might be approached theoretically and methodologically. See Guidelines for the proposal below.
- A recently updated CV

- Letters from two academic referees familiar with the applicant's work. (It is important that these referees are the same as those mentioned on the application form.)

General requirements

Applicants should be able to demonstrate Masters level education, independent research experience and strong analytical skills, within a relevant academic discipline such as African studies, anthropology, development studies, history, human geography, politics. The applicant should have excellent oral and written communication skills in English, strong interpersonal and problem-solving skills, as well as demonstrated evidence – via academic performance records – of potential for successful completion of a doctoral degree programme.

Eligibility

Applicants must fulfil the following criteria:

- Be a national of an African country (proven through the biodata page of a passport or national ID card)
- Hold a relevant Master's degree at a high level from a recognised university, completed not more than ten years prior to this application
- Show proof of fluency in English
- Proof of availability to undertake a full-time PhD for four years as from 1 January 2021
- Be under the age of 35 years by 31 December 2020.

For purposes of assessing an applicant's eligibility, he/she may be required to take an entrance examination and/or interview.

Timeline

The PhDs are fully funded for four years, starting in January 2021 and concluding in December 2024. The first year consists of cross-cutting courses and proposal development. Subsequent years include fieldwork and dissertation writing. In addition, the PhD students will participate in several CERTIZENS-specific PhD training courses, workshops and conferences, and spend 3-4 months as visiting PhD researchers at the Centre of African Studies, University of Copenhagen.

Funding

The programme is fully-funded by the Danish Development Research Council, and is tenable at the University of Ghana, Institute of African Studies. The scholarship will cover all costs of the PhD programme, including tuition and other university fees, living expenses, medical insurance, research and travel for fieldwork and conferences. The maximum value of the scholarship, commencing 1 January 2021 is approximately USA 12,000 per year (before tax). Each fellow will also receive a laptop computer.

GUIDELINES FOR CERTIZENS PHD RESEARCH PROPOSAL

When submitting your application for one of the specific PhD positions advertised under the CERTIZENS Research project, you are advised to consider/provide at least the following:

- **Introduction/Background**: Provide an overall reflection on the specific PhD topic. What kinds of empirical realities and/or scholarship, does it relate to and why is it significant. How might the PhD project engage with some of the broader concerns raised by the CERTIZENS project: such as questions of national registration, classification and certification, governance, citizenship, identity and identification, the Sustainable Development Goals, and so on. Reference relevant literature to ground your reflections, including any specific work on Ghana's registration/certification context where possible.
- **Project description and Problem statement**: How do you envisage the specific focus of the proposed PhD project. What is most important to address and why. How might you formulate this in terms of a particular problem statement, and then conceive this in terms of a working research question (possibly with a limited number of relevant sub-questions).
- **Conceptual/analytical approach**: What overall analytical approach will you take to address your research question or problem statement. What kinds of concepts and theories might you draw on and how might you use these. Reference relevant literature you might draw on.
- **Methodological approach**: What specific research methods would you propose using to collect data for specific aspects of the project, and why. In what sequence might you undertake different aspects of the research. What if any ethical considerations might your research entail and how would you address these.
- **Other relevant information**: Here you might provide ideas about how your project could link with other relevant research or networks; or how and where it might contribute to relevant policy or political debates; or you might mention experiences and contacts you can draw on to enhance your own project and the CERTIZENS project more broadly

For Further Information

In case of any questions regarding the CERTIZENS project, PhD programme or your application, kindly contact the following:

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