CIVIL REGISTRATION

Marriages Registration System

LEGAL MARRIAGES IN UGANDA

This includes the different types of marriages:

- **Civil marriages -** These are monogamous in nature and celebrated in the office of the Registrar General for residents of Kampala and in the offices of Chief Administrative Officers for the other 146 districts inclusive of the 11 Cities.
- **Moslem marriages -** These are celebrated in accordance of the Islamic faith.
- **Church marriages –** They are monogamous in nature and celebrated in licensed churches in accordance with the customs and rites of the Christian faith.
- **Customary marriages –** They are potentially polygamous and are celebrated in accordance with the customs and rites of an African community.
- **Hindu marriages –** These are celebrated in accordance with of the observed customs and rites of the Hindu faith.

CIVIL MARRIAGES

The Marriage Act, Cap 146, governs celebration of Civil marriages. The Registrar General is gazetted as the Registrar of Marriages for Kampala whereas the Chief Administrative Officers are gazetted as the Registrars

of Marriages for districts outside Kampala. Civil Marriages take place at the offices of these Registrars.

Who is eligible to contract a Civil Marriage?

Every person who is single, widowed or divorced, aged 18 years and above and is not party to a subsisting marriage is eligible to contract a civil Marriage.

Contracting a Civil Marriage

The intending couple should have the following documents before applying online via https://marriages.nira.go.ug/

- Proof of citizenship for example a passport (Foreigners) or national identification card (Ugandans)or Refugee IDs
- An LC 1 letter clearly stating duration of residence in the district in which the marriage is intended to be solemnized (this should not be less than 15 days).
- One passport size photograph each for the groom and the bride.
- A Photocopy of a VALID ID for each of the two Adult witnesses
- Registered marriage affidavits that conform to Section 10 of the Marriage Act Cap 146 (Register on obrs.ursb.go.ug)
- In case of foreign citizens, a letter from the Civil Registration or Vital Statistics Office of their country confirming that the party is not married.
- For the case of Foreign Citizens, Copies of Valid Visas upon entry into Uganda shall be required on the Marriage Date

- For the case of Divorced/Widowed intendants to the marriage, certified copies of Divorce Decree Absolutes or death certificates shall be required
- For the case of Documents authored in any Language other-than English, Translations of the same shall be required
- For the case of refugees, a letter from the Office of the Prime Minister on the marital status of the intendant shall be required

- The Notice of Marriage is published on the Notice board of the District Registrar of Marriages for 21 calendar days.
- If there are no objections to the notice of marriage, the ceremony takes place after 21 calendar days but not before the lapse of 90 calendar days. Marriages are celebrated from Monday to Friday, between 10 am and 4 pm
- If there is an objection, a caveat is placed and the matter is referred to Court for settlement.
- On the day of the marriage solemnization, the parties appear with the two adult witnesses before the Registrar who performs the ceremony and thereafter issues a Marriage Certificate (Form E according to the marriage Act)
- Fees Payable: A total of UGX 260,000/- (Where one of the parties to the marriage is Ugandan or a Refugee) and USD210 (Where none of the parties to the marriage is Ugandan)

Please email marriages@nira.go.ug for further inquiries

Filing District (from the Chief Administrative Officer) Marriage Returns

Below are the requirements that must be uploaded on the system

https://marriages.nira.go.ug/

- Cover letter from Registrar who conducted the marriage (signed and stamped)
- Certified copy of marriage certificate with the pictures attached
- Certified copy of Notice of Marriage Form
- Certified copy of Form for certificate details
- Copies of registered affidavits for both Bride and Groom
- Certified Copy of the LC1 letters of both Bride and Groom
- Copies of national IDs of the couple and their witnesses or any other valid identification documents for non-Ugandans
- Copy of letter of consent from parents of either couple who is under 21 years of age
- Evidence of payments made into the consolidated fund account/URA portal
- Single status letter for non-Ugandans

Fees
UGX 260,000/= for Ugandans less 25,000/= for Certificate of payments if the certificates were bought from NIRA
USD 260$ for non-Ugandans and less the price of the certificate if that used was bought from NIRA

REGISTRATION OF CUSTOMARY MARRIAGES

Customary Marriages are registered with the Sub-County Chief / Town Clerk who issues a customary certificate. All other Marriages must be registered with the Registrar of Marriages in a book to be kept in his or her office for that purpose.

Process of registration

1) The couple must appear before the Sub County Chief or Town Clerk in the marriage district where the marriage took place with proof of the marriage with copies of their National IDs.
2) The couple should present at least two witnesses to the marriage ceremony with their National IDs
3) Provide details of the marriage to be entered into the customary marriage register book.
4) Ensure all parties (the couple and witnesses) sign the customary marriage register book.

Filing Customary Marriage Returns

The following are the requirements for submitting customary marriage returns;

- Cover letter from the sub -county chief of the sub county where the marriage took place acknowledging that the marriage took place and has been registered at the sub county/division.
- Obtain and fill a customary marriage certificate (Form B)in triplicate without carbonating them.
- Photocopy of Identification documents for the couple and 2 witnesses
- Attach passport photos of the couple on the 3 copies of the certificates
- For a foreign groom provides a Copy of entry visa page at the time of Registration

  Fees payable:

  UGX40,000/= If registration is made after 6months from date of customary marriage

  UGX20,000/= If registration is made within 6 months from date of customary marriage.

Checklist for Filing Customary Marriages for the Sub County Chief/ Town Clerk

1. Ensure the customary marriage is celebrated according to the rites of that community.
2. Confirm that one of the parties is a member of that community.
3. The couple must report to the sub county chief/ Town Clerk's office in the marriage district where the marriage took place with documentary proof of the marriage and copies of their National IDs
4. The couple should present at least two witnesses to the marriage ceremony. Attach copies of the witnesses' IDs
5. The sub county chief/ Town Clerk should enter details of the marriage into the customary marriage register book.
6. Ensure all parties (the couple and witnesses) sign the customary marriage register book.
7. The sub county chief/ Town Clerk should fill and issue a customary marriage certificate in triplicate together with a copy of the register page. Passport photos should be attached to the certificates without carbonating them.
8. The sub-county chief/town clerk should issue a signed and stamped cover letter to the couple.
9. For foreign groom, a copy of the entry visa page at the time of marriage should be provided.
10. Ensure the female party is at least 16 years old and the male party is at least 18 years old.
11. Confirm that neither party is of unsound mind.
12. Verify that the parties are not within the prohibited degrees of kinship.
13. Ensure neither party has a subsisting monogamous marriage.

Please note that sub county chief/ Town Clerk must forward a copy of all entries made to the Registrar General within ten days of the last day of each month. The Registrar General provides certified copies of any entry in the register or return.

Please take note that it is a criminal offence to utter false documents.

Converting a Customary Marriage into a Civil Marriage

Any persons married under customary law can convert that marriage into a civil marriage by ceremony before a Registrar of Marriages. Persons married under customary law should have registered their marriage with the Sub – County Chief or Town Clerk in their area within 6 months.

The Sub-County Chief or Town Clerk shall issue them with a Certificate or Registration of their customary marriage. A conversion would be null and void where either of the parties, at the time of the celebration of the marriage, is married by customary law to any other than the person with whom the marriage is held.

All the requirements for contracting a civil marriage have to be submitted to the presiding Registrar before a certificate is issued.

Section 11 (e) Customary Marriage (Registration) Act Cap 143 states that a customary marriage shall be **VOID** if one of the parties has previously contracted a monogamous (Church or Civil) marriage which is still subsisting.

Section 32 Marriage Act Cap 146 states that a Church or Civil marriage shall be **INVALID** if either of the parties to it at the time of the celebration of the marriage is married by customary law to any person other than the person with whom the Church or Civil marriage is had.

NB A customary marriage can only be converted into a Church or Civil marriage if the customary marriage is still monogamous and the parties are the same

Section 1 Marriage and Divorce of Mohammedans Act Cap 252 – **The Marriage Act SHALL NOT APPLY** to the celebration of marriages between persons both of whom profess the Mohammedan religion, and neither of whom is a party to an existing marriage, under or declared valid by those Acts, with any person other than a Mohammedan

NB Persons with subsisting Moslem marriages can contract neither valid Church nor Civil Marriages

CHURCH MARRIAGES

These are monogamous christian marriages celebrated in licensed places of worship. They are celebrated in accordance with the observed customs, rites and practices of the church, body or denomination to which the public place of worship or parties to the marriage belong.

Filing Marriage Returns from churches

Only Returns/Form F's from duly licensed and gazetted places of worship are registrable. It is a statutory requirement for every licensed and gazetted FBO conducting marriages to submit a monthly return of each marriage celebrated before the 10th Day of the next month by way of filing a Form F as indicated in the schedules.

These returns should be filed on the marriage registry system, which is https://marriages.nira.go.ug/

Below is a list of requirements to be uploaded;

- Cover letter from FBO where the marriage was conducted (signed and stamped)
- Valid National IDs (for Ugandans) or Passports (for Foreigners) plus entry visa
- Duly filled and signed Form F (should also be stamped)

- Evidence of payments

Fees payable

UGX35, 000/= for Nationals and refugees
USD35$ for Foreign Nationals

Guidelines

- The celebrant enters the details of each marriage celebrated into the Marriage Register Book
- The **Form F** should capture all the information as listed below:
  - Name of the church
  - Date of Marriage
  - Marriage Certificate Number
  - Name and age of Groom and Bride
  - The Condition of the Groom and Bride before the marriage (here state whether Spinster, Bachelor, Widow, Widower or Divorcee).
  - The Occupation of the Groom and Bride at the time of the Marriage
  - Place of residence of the couple at the time of marriage
  - The name and occupation of the fathers of the groom and the bride. If they are deceased this should be stated.
  - Date of entry of the marriage into the marriage register,
  - Name and Signature of the marriage Celebrant
  - Stamp or seal of the church
- Receive an acknowledgement of the returns filed within 2 hours of submission.

MUSLIM MARRIAGES AND DIVORCES

These are marriages between persons professing the Mohammedan religion, and all divorces from such marriages celebrated or given according to the rites and observances of the Mohammedan religion, customs, tribe or sect under which the marriage or divorce took place.

Filing Marriage/Divorce Returns by Muslims

The requirements include the below:

- Cover letter from umbrella body under which the mosque where the marriage was conducted subscribes e.g UMSC , Kibuli Mosque, Tablique, Ismalia etc. (signed and stamped)
- Duly filled and signed (should also be stamped) or certified copies of marriage/divorce certificate.
- Photocopy of identification document of the couple,

Fees payable

UGX 35, 000 per copy for Nationals refugees
USD 25 per copy for Foreign

HINDU MARRIAGES AND DIVORCES

Marriages and divorces between parties professing to the Hindu religion which includes Buddhists of Indian origin, Jain or Sikh, Virashaiva, Lingayat or Arya Samaj.

Filing Marriage Returns and Divorces by the Hindu faith

- Cover letter from the Temple where the marriage was conducted
- Duly certified copies of marriage/divorce certificate
- Photocopy of identification document of the couple,

Fees payable:

UGX 35, 000 per copy for Nationals refugees
USD 25 per copy for Foreign

SEARCH ON A MARRIAGE DOCUMENT

- Make the search request online via https://marriages.nira.go.ug/
- Where possible attach Photocopy of the document
- Attach Evidence of Payment or use the online payment system through mobile money

- Client will receive a response of a search report through email provided

Fees payable:

UGX 25, 000 where the applicant is a Ugandan or a Refugee USD 20$ where the applicant is a foreigner.

SPECIAL LICENSES FOR WAIVER OF 21 DAYS' NOTICE AND GAZETTED VENUE

Where an intending couple is unable to wait for the 21 statutory days, or where they desire to have their marriage celebrated outside a licensed place of worship or Registrar's Office, they should in addition to the requirements, prove to the Honorable Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (MOJCA) by the way of registered affidavits that there is no lawful impediment to the proposed marriage and that the necessary consent, if any, to the marriage has been obtained.

The affidavits must in addition state the reasons why they want an exemption from the waiting period or why they desire to get married at an unlicensed place of worship. The Honorable Minister shall, if he or she thinks fit, grant the license requested for.

Fees Payable:

Ushs 300,000/-

(Where one of the parties to the marriage is Ugandan or a Refugee)

US$ 200

(Where none of the parties to the marriage is Ugandan)

LICENSING A PUBLIC PLACE OF WORSHIP TO CELEBRATE MARRIAGES

To obtain a license to celebrate marriages under the Marriage Act, there must be:

- An Application letter addressed to the Honorable Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (MOIJA), through the Registrar General from the church clearly indicating the religious denomination, Location and whether the church is an affiliate of an already registered church and a recommendation letter from the mother church.
- Recognized marriage celebrants and their valid identifications (Religious leaders like Pastors, Reverends, Priest and any clergy recognized by that faith).
- The legal entity under which the church is operating (Certified copy of the certificate of Registration as a Company Limited by Guarantee or Trust).
- Proof of Ownership of Land or rights to the land.
- A place of public worship (a permanent structure)
- Physical photographs of the church i.e. interior and exterior
- Inspection Report from the Registrar of Marriages within the area.
- Upload the above stated letter, attachments and proof of payment on https://marriages.nira.go.ug/

Guidelines

- Collect the license from NIRA after 5 working days.
- Submit License to UPPC for a gazette.
- Submit copy of Gazette to NIRA (Civil Registry)
- Submit monthly returns to the Registrar of Marriages.

Fees Payable: Search fees – 200,000/= Ug shs

THE MARITAL STATUS LETTERS

This letter is issued to Ugandans seeking to have their marriages performed outside Uganda. The letter confirms that the applicant is single and has capacity to enter into a marriage. The applicant presents the following documents in support of his or her application;

- A recommendation letter from the LC1 chairperson of the locality where the applicant's parents reside
- A photocopy of the applicant's long birth certificate to prove parentage.
- Proof of nationality for example a passport or national Identity card.
- A registered statutory declaration from the applicants to prove that he/she is single.
- A registered statutory declaration from the parent to prove that their son/ daughter is single.
- Application or cover letter from the applicant requesting for a single status letter

Acts and regulations

The following constitutes the Marriage Acts and Regulations;

- The Customary Marriage (Registration) Act 143,
- The Hindu Marriage and Divorce Act, Cap 145,
- Marriage Act Cap 146,
- The Marriage and Divorce of Mohammedans Act Cap 147

Subsidiary Instruments

- No.81- The Hindu Marriage and Divorce (Marriage Registration) (Amendment) Rules 2024.
- No.82 -The Marriage (Districts and Registrars) (Amendment) Order, 2024.
- No.83- The Marriage and Divorce of Mohammedans (Appointment of Registrars) (amendment) Order, 2024.
- No.84- The Marriage (Appointment of Registrar General) Order, 2024.