

# **Master's International Coordinator's Handbook**



## **Your Guide to Designing and Maintaining a Successful Program on Your Campus!**



**Revised and Updated, August 2008  
Office of University Programs**

## INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 1961, the Peace Corps has enjoyed a productive and mutually beneficial relationship with the academic community. The Master's International (MI) program was established in 1987 to provide potential volunteers with academic preparation in scarce skill areas.

A partnership between selected universities and the Peace Corps, the MI program provides students with the opportunity to incorporate Peace Corps Volunteer service into a master's degree. It is designed to fulfill three basic needs:

- Provides faculty and campus administrators options for overseas experiential learning opportunities for their students
- Enables prospective Peace Corps applicants to “have it all” by combining Peace Corps service with graduate school and
- Meets increasing demand from the Peace Corps' host countries for Volunteers with higher levels of education and technical expertise

The MI program is flexible and can accommodate varying academic requirements at each university. Typically, students complete a minimum of one year of on-campus academic course work, followed by 27 months of Peace Corps service. After their Peace Corps service, students complete their degree requirements designated by the university. Upon graduation, these students enjoy the credibility of both a graduate-level education and two years of substantive, professional field experience in an international setting.

This guide has been designed as a resource to assist you in developing and maintaining a successful MI program at your university. We encourage you to contact other MI universities for information and insight, as well as the MI office at Peace Corps headquarters: 800.424.8580 ext: 1812 or via email at [mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov](mailto:mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov).

“We have found that it is critical to have the Master's International program coordinator work closely with the students and their faculty advisors to develop a program that optimizes the Peace Corps opportunity. Without this one-on-one relationship the students risk being treated as just the same as all other master's students, which does not work.”

Patrick Brown  
University of California, Davis

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Peace Corps Fact Sheet, 2008

**SECTION ONE—GENERAL INFORMATION**



## HISTORY, DESCRIPTION & GOALS

In the cold, early morning hours of October 14, 1960, presidential candidate John F. Kennedy stood before a group of University of Michigan students and issued a “call to service,” challenging them to devote themselves to the betterment of their local and global community. This event on the steps of the University of Michigan Student Union led to the establishment of the Peace Corps, which, since 1961, has provided U.S. citizens an unparalleled opportunity to serve their country overseas. Since its inception, the Peace Corps’ mission has remained unchanged:

- To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women
- To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served
- To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans

More than 190,000 Americans have joined the Peace Corps since the agency was established. The Peace Corps is currently active in more than 70 countries throughout Africa, Central and East Asia, Europe and the Mediterranean, Inter-America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific (please refer to the Peace Corps website at [www.peacecorps.gov/countries](http://www.peacecorps.gov/countries) for country- specific information). Peace Corps Volunteers work for 27 months, sharing their technical expertise, creativity, flexibility, and dedication with people all over the world. As the needs of its host countries evolve, the Peace Corps consistently strives to attract individuals with the appropriate level of education, experience and cross-cultural sensitivity to facilitate sustainable, community-centered development. There are thousands of Peace Corps Volunteer opportunities for those with a liberal arts degree. There is a special need for individuals with expertise in scarce skill areas such as agriculture, business administration, education, the environment, forestry, and public health, including HIV/AIDS education and prevention. Master’s International (MI) is designed to address the needs for more highly skilled Volunteers while providing graduate students with superior practical training and professional experience.

The first MI program was established at Rutgers University in 1987. Currently more than 60 universities partner with the Peace Corps and offer MI options on their campuses. Students have pursued graduate studies in countries as diverse as Bolivia, Cameroon, Ecuador, Mauritania, Kazakhstan, Paraguay, the Philippines, Mozambique, Thailand, and Ukraine.

MI students receive many benefits from participating in the program. International field experience, along with second language fluency often acquired during service, give students a competitive edge in the job market. All aspects of volunteer service are paid for by the Peace Corps, including transportation to and from country, medical care, housing and living expenses, annual leave, emergency medical and family leave, and a readjustment allowance upon return. Recognizing the value of Peace Corps service, the U.S. government provides for the deferment and/or cancellation of certain government-backed educational loans, and offers noncompetitive eligibility for federal government jobs for one year after the completion of Peace Corps service.

The institutions participating in the MI program benefit as well. The university can offer its students a low-cost, professionally relevant field experience in an international setting. Faculty advisors expand their own academic and experiential base through the students’ work in new overseas environments. The MI program is also a useful recruitment tool to boost admission efforts. MI schools will attest that the program attracts high-caliber students who are mature, motivated, and committed to their studies.

The Peace Corps’ continuing appeal reflects the dedication of Americans from all walks of life who serve their country overseas. By preparing service-minded candidates for technical projects in areas of the greatest need,

the MI program benefits the Peace Corps, its host countries, graduate students, and institutions of higher education seeking to link academic theory to experiential learning.

### **MI Program Degree Incentives**

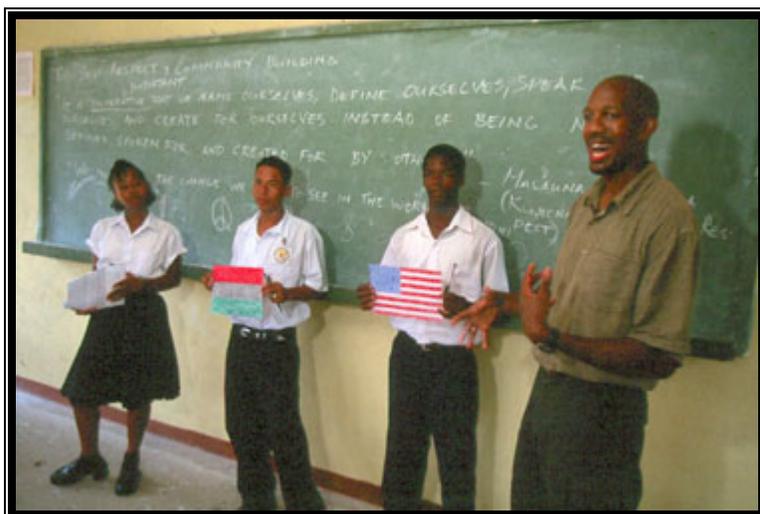
The Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) sets forth a formal record of understanding between the Peace Corps and the university, which includes incentives offered to MI students by the university. The Peace Corps requires that academic credit be awarded for time served as a Volunteer. In most cases, Peace Corps service contributes to existing academic requirements for a thesis, a professional paper, a practicum, student teaching, independent study, or foreign language proficiency.

Both the university and the Peace Corps take on specific responsibilities for the training and support of graduate students. The Peace Corps places students overseas in projects developed to meet the needs and requests of host countries that are also relevant to Volunteers' courses of study. Overseas assignments often influence students' subsequent choices of research topics, in which they can explore practical solutions to development problems from an experiential knowledge base.

In addition to the requirement that academic credit be awarded for Peace Corps service, the Peace Corps has identified a number of incentives it recommends that institutions offer Master's International students to help them complete their Volunteer assignments and earn their degrees. These incentives include:

- Unit credit for Peace Corps service
- Reduced or waived fees (including but not limited to waivers of out-of-state tuition) for credits earned during Peace Corps service
- Credit for language skills gained during Peace Corps service
- Eligibility for applicable funding sources
- Opportunities for work-study assistantships

## SECTION TWO—ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY COORDINATOR



## **What is the role/responsibility of the MI university coordinator in developing and maintaining a successful program?**

A Master's International University Coordinator (UC) serves as the university's primary liaison to the Peace Corps. The UC is responsible for the design and establishment of the MI program on campus, publicizing the program to faculty and students, and working with the graduate school admissions office to recruit students.

The university may wish to consider a course release or other incentives to support the UC role.

The UC can be a dean, associate dean, chair or professor of an academic department, admissions director, director of international programs, or other faculty/administrator. Some schools with large MI student enrollments also choose to employ a graduate student who provides administrative support for the program. If the UC serves in a non-academic administrative role at the college or university, the Peace Corps recommends that at least one faculty member be involved in the establishment and management of the program. Faculty support is essential to the success of the MI program. The UC should plan to dedicate sufficient time to ensure that the program is firmly established and running smoothly.

The UC should be well versed in the benefits and requirements of the MI program, as s/he will be the primary point of contact for MI inquiries and matriculating students. The UC is encouraged to call upon the many resources available on campus. Following is a list of campus resources on which university coordinators have relied to reach the maximum number of potential MI participants at minimal expense:

- Academic bulletins/catalogs
- Academic advisors
- Graduate admissions office
- International program office
- Career centers
- University websites/department web pages
- Internet/electronic bulletin boards
- Student associations
- University newspapers
- Chairpersons of departments offering courses within the curriculum
- Student union public announcement boards
- Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) groups on campus or in the community
- Marketing CD provided by Peace Corps

Other University Coordinator responsibilities include:

- Establish and maintain a viable MI campus program
- Develop promotional resources for MI, including maintaining MI campus website
- Publicizing and promoting the program both within and beyond the university
- Responding to all inquiries from prospective MI students
- Advising and supporting existing students both on campus and abroad

- Responding in a timely manner to Peace Corps MI staff requests for census data, annual progress reports, etc.
- Working with Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) on campus and the Regional Recruiting Office (RRO) to help recruit and inform students about the program
- Process MI applications in collaboration with the campus admissions office
- Promote MI program campus-wide with faculty and administrators
- Liaise and correspond on a regular basis with Peace Corps MI staff on behalf of the program and MI students
- Advocate on campus for resources to support MI
- Incorporate lessons learned from the returned Peace Corps Volunteers' experience into academic curricula and MI campus program, as appropriate

The MI staff works closely with the UC to meet the shared goals of Master's International. MI staff work together to create realistic expectations of Volunteer service among faculty and MI participants. The UC should maintain regular communication with students on campus, as well as when students are overseas with Peace Corps.

In addition, the UC is requested to complete and submit an annual student census report to MI staff. The purpose of the report is to confirm the individuals' admission as MI students and is of vital importance to the MI program.

## CHRONOLOGY

The initial establishment of a Master's International program can take approximately one to three years, largely depending on the reputation of the academic program and the amount of financial aid offered to attract MI students to the program. A typical chronology of program design and implementation is as follows:

### Setting up the Program

- The MI Manager and the UC review program details within 60 days of signing the Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) to address any problems/questions arising as the program takes shape.
- Prospective MI students apply to the university and to the Peace Corps simultaneously.
- Once nominated by a Peace Corps recruiter, students continue the Peace Corps application process (references, legal, and medical clearances).
- Students start their master's programs.

### Maintaining the Program

- The UC and the MI staff share updates regarding student participation and program development.
- When a match is made, students receive an invitation to a specific Peace Corps assignment.
- Students complete initial course work.
- Students complete three months of Peace Corps training and two years of Volunteer service, documenting their experience according to the academic requirements established by their university.
- Students return to the United States to complete any other required course work and to receive their degrees.

**“While our MI students are serving with the Peace Corps, we register them for the required classes through the university’s study abroad office. Registering them this way better reflects what they are doing, costs the department less in tuition waiver dollars, and helps the university better track its students abroad.”**

**Beverly Beyer  
Illinois State University**

**SECTION THREE—ROLES OF PEACE CORPS STAFF AND OFFICES**



## **Role of the Master's International Staff**

Located in the Office of University Programs, the MI manager and the MI staff are the Peace Corps employees responsible for the general oversight and advocacy of the Master's International program. The MI Manager and assistant manager serve as the primary liaisons between Peace Corps headquarters and participating MI schools; promote the program nationally; support new program development; help universities maintain and strengthen existing programs; and provide support to MI students completing the Peace Corps application process.

The MI staff also maintains an up-to-date list of MI schools with specific details on each program available to the Peace Corps regional offices, schools, and interested students. MI program staff ensures that links to each partner university's webpage are kept up-to-date. In addition, complete information about the MI program is available on the Peace Corps website [www.peacecorps.gov/masters](http://www.peacecorps.gov/masters). Direct links to the schools and university coordinators are available via the Peace Corps website.

The MI staff is in contact with the UC on a regular basis to discuss program progress and issues. This relationship is an opportunity for both parties to identify the strengths of the program and areas for improvement. The MI staff may assist students seeking clarification while going through the placement process. MI staff monitor the administration and management of the program; produce and disseminate national MI materials; maintain the Peace Corps MI website; educate Peace Corps staff; and promote the program within the agency. MI staff can be reached at:

### **Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters**

**1111 20<sup>th</sup> Street, NW**

**Washington, DC 20526**

**Local telephone: 202.692.1812**

**Toll-free telephone: 800.424.8580, ext.1812**

**MI web page: [www.peacecorps.gov/masters](http://www.peacecorps.gov/masters)**

## **Other Peace Corps Offices**

There are other offices and individuals at the Peace Corps that support MI students through the various stages of their Peace Corps service. The offices involved in the successful administration of the MI program are highlighted below.

### **Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS)**

VRS handles student applications to the Peace Corps. It is divided into two major operations: Recruitment and Placement. MI students will find themselves working with both Recruitment and Placement as they prepare for their assignment.

The **Recruitment** operation is made up of nine regional offices, located throughout the United States, which are responsible for receiving applications and initiating the application process. Students will submit their Peace Corps applications to the office responsible for recruitment activities in their region. The Peace Corps' regional offices schedule recruitment trips to most participating MI schools each academic year. MI staff will keep the recruitment staff updated about the MI programs offered nationwide.

The **Placement** unit, located in Washington, D.C., is responsible for screening Peace Corps applicants who have been nominated by recruiters in the regional offices and who have been medically and legally cleared. Placement staff screens applicants for suitability and matches them to country-specific assignments based on education, experience, medical accommodation issues (if any), and when possible, personal interests. It is important to understand that Placement decisions are driven by the requests the Peace Corps receives from its host countries. *While the Peace Corps will make every effort to place students in regions suited to their interests, it cannot place them in countries where projects in their discipline do not exist, or where their skills do not suit the demands of the country.*

#### **Office of Medical Services (OMS)**

Many of the overseas environments in which Peace Corps Volunteers serve can be challenging, both physically and emotionally. There is a medical officer posted in each Peace Corps host country whose responsibility is to train Volunteers to maximize their own health and safety in country, and to address their individual health needs as they arise. Before students are assigned to a Peace Corps project, OMS in Washington, D.C., will require applicants to submit a medical history, along with documentation of recent physical and dental exams. Each individual's records are reviewed to ensure they are medically qualified to serve as Peace Corps Volunteers. There are some medical conditions that cannot be cleared for service; there may be other conditions that need special accommodation.

#### **Office of Special Services (OSS)**

The Office of Special Services (OSS) is part of the Office of Volunteer Support. Their role is to support Volunteers when mental health issues arise in the field. They work closely with the Peace Corps Medical Officer (PCMO) to provide appropriate services for Volunteers. This includes: phone counseling; individual counseling in Washington, D.C.; consultation with PCMO and administration; as well as, training Volunteers in peer support. Additionally, OSS assists posts in the event of widespread emergencies such as evacuation.

#### **Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research (“The Center”)**

The Center assists Peace Corps country posts by providing the vital training, support, and resources posts need to improve the effectiveness of in-country Volunteer training and programming. The Center also operates as a clearinghouse for technical resources, which are made available to Peace Corps Volunteers free of charge.

#### **Peace Corps Country Directors (CDs) and Associate Peace Corps Directors (APCDs)**

Every Peace Corps post has a CD who supervises one or more APCDs and/or program managers. Depending on the country's projects, a post will have several APCDs managing projects in different sectors. A country may, for example, have an APCD for health projects, one for business projects, one for agriculture and environment projects, and one for education projects. APCDs provide supervision, guidance, and moral support to MI students and other Volunteers assigned to their posts.

## **Office of Safety and Security**

The safety and security of Peace Corps Volunteers is our highest priority. The Peace Corps devotes significant resources to providing Volunteers with the training, support, and information they need to stay healthy and safe.

Yet because Volunteers serve worldwide, sometimes in very remote areas, health and safety risks are an inherent part of Volunteer service. Volunteers can reduce these risks by following recommendations for locally appropriate behavior, exercising sound judgment, and abiding by Peace Corps policies and procedures. In the effort to ensure a productive, healthy, and safe experience for Volunteers, the Peace Corps reviews work and housing sites in advance, collaborates on project development with local communities, and develops and tests plans for responding to emergencies.

In addition, the Peace Corps continually updates materials for Volunteers with specific information about safety and security risks in the areas where they serve. This enables Peace Corps Volunteers to make informed decisions and have a safe, healthy Volunteer experience.

The Office of Safety and Security provides leadership and guidance to the Peace Corps in support of CDs, their staff, and Volunteers in all areas related to safety and overseas security. The services provided by the office of safety and security including the following:

- Conducting security assessments
- Reviewing and enhancing safety and security training
- Assisting posts in reviewing and testing their emergency action plans
- Developing security incident response procedures
- Coordinating with the U.S. embassy regional security officers
- Providing crisis management support
- Collecting the investigation of serious crimes committed against Volunteers

**SECTION FOUR—STANDARDS FOR LOGO USAGE**



## **Introduction**

This section provides Peace Corps university partners with guidelines for the correct use of the Peace Corps logo and name, and graphic and textual standards for the creation of promotional materials related to activities carried out by the Peace Corps and its university partners.

The Peace Corps' intention is to promote consistent usage of the Peace Corps name and logo by its university program partners. Partners, however, are advised to refer to their respective agreements with the Peace Corps regarding specific restrictions and authorization for use of the Peace Corps name and logo. Such provisions shall govern the limitations of such use. Publications need to follow these standards for use of the Peace Corps logo and taglines in specific ways. Maintaining continuity throughout these documents will help the Peace Corps and its partners ensure that promotional materials maintain a professional image.

## **History of the Logo**

The Peace Corps logo reflects the mission and goals of the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps mission is "to promote world peace and friendship." The goals are "to help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women;" "to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served;" and "to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans."

The logo is used in all of the agency's communications materials. Designed in the 1970s by a returned Peace Corps Volunteer, the logo is an illustration of stars turning into doves within an American flag. The use of the logo is regulated by Section 2518(b) of the Peace Corps Act, U.S. Code, Title 22, Chapter 34. Specifically, Section 2518(b) states:

- b) Exclusiveness of use; penalties for violations; injunctions
  - 1) The use of the official seal or emblem and the use of the name "Peace Corps" shall be restricted exclusively to designate programs authorized under this chapter.
  - 2) Whoever, whether an individual, partnership, corporation, or association, uses the seal for which provision is made in this section, or any sign, insignia, or symbol in colorable imitation thereof, or the words "Peace Corps" or any combination of these or other words or characters in colorable imitation thereof, other than to designate programs authorized under this chapter, shall be fined not more than \$500 or imprisoned not more than six months, or both. A violation of this subsection may be enjoined at the suit of the Attorney General, United States attorneys, or other persons duly authorized to represent the United States.

## **Logo Usage**

This is the official Peace Corps logo. To obtain an electronic version of the official Peace Corps logo, contact an MI staff member at 800.424.8580, ext. 1812, 202.692.1812, or [mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov](mailto:mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov).

## Approval

Partners must seek prior approval from the Peace Corps before using the logo and Peace Corps name. The Peace Corps has established a system of monitoring name and logo use because there are some instances when use of the Peace Corps name and logo may not be appropriate.

## Usage Prohibitions

The logo should not be used for fundraising purposes or to make the Peace Corps appear to support or endorse a particular institution, organization, entity, or its goods or services. In addition, it may not be printed on apparel or novelty items.

### Use of Color and Acceptable Variations

#### *In Print*

The logo is available — and may be printed — in four variations to accommodate most printing budgets. These variations are: black ink only, Reflex blue ink only, two “spot” colors (PMS 185 and PMS 286), and four-color process ink. See graphic below for file names. These variations are the only acceptable options.

- If the logo is to be printed using one color, request and use the black (preferable) or Reflex blue ink version.
- If the logo is to be printed using two colors, request and use the two-color (PMS 185 and PMS 286) version.
- If the logo is to be printed using four-color process inks, request and use the four-color version.

To be used in printed materials, the logo should be at an effective resolution of at least 300 dots per inch (dpi) to assure highest printed quality. Print-quality versions are available from the Peace Corps. Low-resolution .JPGs and .GIFs, the file types most commonly copied from websites, are not acceptable for printing.

#### *On the Web*

The official “red, white, and blue” version of the logo should be used online. Web-optimized versions are available from the Peace Corps. The patch logo should not be copied from the Peace Corps website; it is authorized for use only on Peace Corps-originated recruitment materials.

### Permissible Logo Variations



### **Modification**

Other than changing its size, the logo must be used without alteration. If resized, it must be resized proportionately: the correct shape is a perfect circle.

### **How to Resize Proportionately**

To resize a logo, first click on the image. Then, hold down the Shift key while clicking and holding onto one of the square handles that appears. Dragging from one of the handles will change the size of the logo. Unless the Shift key is held down during the process, the image will not be sized proportionally and the image will be distorted.

**Technical note:** The file format best suited for image manipulation is .EPS, as it will not lose image quality when resized. The Peace Corps will provide this format when a logo is requested. Other file formats can be made available on request, but the requester should provide a list of technical specifications including placed size.

### ***An Aesthetic Aside***

While the logo can be resized to meet design requirements, it should be noted that an enormous logo does not carry any more information about a program than a quarter-sized logo.

### ***Taglines and Slogans***

Please contact MI Peace Corps staff for approval of any taglines or slogans that you may wish to use on promotional material.

### ***Web Pages Within the Partner's University Website***

There is only one website that serves as the official source of information for the Peace Corps. Its address or URL is [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov). Partners can benefit from close association with the Peace Corps by creating web pages within their university website for their particular Peace Corps program. Use of the Peace Corps name or logo on the university web pages is subject to the Peace Corps' approval.

## **Responsibilities of Peace Corps Partners**

Partnership with the Peace Corps comes with certain positive associations. Therefore, each partner's promotional materials should accurately reflect its relationship with the Peace Corps. Advertisements, newsletters, brochures, etc., should include mention of the particular Peace Corps program name, like Master's International and/or Peace Corps Fellows/USA.

### ***Approval Process***

The Peace Corps is responsible for final review and approval of the design and text of all literature, in print or electronic form, produced by Peace Corps partners. Literature with any connection or reference to the Peace Corps that is subject to the Peace Corps' approval may include the following:

- University admissions publications used in recruiting and admitting students
- Program newsletters

- Publications and advertisements for Peace Corps related events
- External publications related to Peace Corps programs
- Publications related to Peace Corps programs that are produced in quantities of more than 100 copies
- Web pages related to Peace Corps programs
- Videos/audios for recruitment and marketing
- Display or radio advertisements

Peace Corps partners are advised to review these standards during the concept stage of a project to facilitate Peace Corps approval of the piece with minimal or no changes and to preclude requirements for changes at the design or print stages, which can be costly. For answers to questions not covered in these standards, please call the Peace Corps before proceeding.

For video and audio productions, the scripts should be approved by the Peace Corps before final production. Video scripts should also detail the graphic elements being considered for use.

***Requesting Approval***

To request the Peace Corps' approval on an item, fax a copy of the item to the attention of: Master's International at 202.692.1421. University partners may also email a PDF of the document to the Master's International staff at [mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov](mailto:mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov). Submissions should be followed up with a phone call to make sure the Peace Corps is aware of the request. Please allow ample time for review and determination of whether any changes are needed.

For more information regarding the Peace Corps' graphics and textual standards, contact the MI staff at:

Phone: 202.692.1812 or 800.424.8580, ext. 1812

Fax: 202.692.1421

Email: [mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov](mailto:mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov)

**SECTION FIVE—COUNTRY DIRECTOR’S LETTER**



**The following is sent to the country director for each MI student:**

Dear Country Director,

Current Memoranda of Cooperation (MOC) signed with national universities participating in the Peace Corps Master’s International (MI) program require that MI Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) receive approval from post staff to conduct an academic project while serving. Academic projects may range from studies directly related to the student’s primary Peace Corps assignment, to topics developed from secondary projects, or even research conducted during a student’s own personal time. MI PCVs understand that responsibilities of Peace Corps service come first and that they might have to adapt their overseas academic requirements to the specifics of their Peace Corps assignment.

We encourage you and your staff to become familiar with the MI PCV’s area of study by meeting with the Volunteer and discussing the nature and objectives of his or her graduate assignment. By opening the avenues of communication between the MI PCV and your staff, we hope to minimize any misunderstandings that may arise and encourage the mutual sharing of information that may be of benefit to the post, the host country, and the MI PCV.

Research projects that involve human subjects must be screened through a university’s Institutional Review Board and follow federal human subject research guidelines to ensure that the safety and privacy of host country nationals are protected. Universities also monitor the research project for academic quality and appropriateness.

The Peace Corps staff’s responsibility is to ensure that a MI PCV’s project **does not** interfere with his or her assignment responsibilities and that safety, medical, and security concerns are not compromised.

For our records, the MI program would appreciate your signature at the bottom of this letter, acknowledging your approval for the MI PCV to conduct his or her academic project. Please keep a copy of this letter for your records, make a copy for the MI program, and return the signed original letter and a copy to the MI PCV.

Should you have any questions regarding the Peace Corps MI program, please feel free to contact **mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov**. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Program manager  
Master’s International

By signing below, I give my permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to work on his/her MI academic project in the country of \_\_\_\_\_. This project must not interfere with his/her primary responsibilities as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Signature of Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please returned a signed copy to:** Office of Domestic Programs, Master’s International  
Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters,  
1111 20<sup>th</sup> Street N.W., Washington, DC 20526

## SECTION SIX—APPLICATION AND PLACEMENT PROCESS

*Note: This section may be copied and given to prospective MI students*



This section will familiarize you with the student application screening and placement process.

### **The Application Process**

There are six major steps in the Peace Corps application process. Each step is described in the following sections:

- Step One: Application
- Step Two: Interview
- Step Three: Nomination
- Step Four: Medical and Legal Review
- Step Five: Invitation
- Step Six: Preparation for Departure

Your application may be withdrawn from further consideration for any of the following reasons:

- You are not a U.S. citizen
- You are under 18 years old
- You are under supervised legal probation
- You are or have been involved in intelligence organizations
- You have outstanding legal, financial or family obligations that cannot be met during service
- Your particular skills do not match those requested by Peace Corps host countries

#### **Step One: Application**

The first step toward becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer is to complete an application. Students can apply online. They will be asked to submit all of the following items:

- A completed application form
- A completed health questionnaire
- A copy of their college transcripts (an unofficial copy is acceptable)
- A copy of their resume
- The names of three references

After an initial review of their application, the recruiter will provide them with forms for references to complete. In reviewing applicant materials, the recruiter will look for detailed information about their work experience, education, volunteer experience, life skills, knowledge of foreign languages, and hobbies.

Applicants will be able to monitor the status of their application online throughout the process. Updated daily, individual accounts will provide applicants with information on their progress toward becoming a Volunteer.

#### **Step Two: Interview**

The interview generally takes place after all application materials are returned to the recruiter. During the interview, applicants and the recruiter will discuss skills and interests, the job opportunities available, and issues such as flexibility, adaptability, social and cultural awareness, motivation, and commitment to Peace Corps service.

### **Step Three: Nomination**

MI applicants must submit a copy of the acceptance letter from the university to their recruiter before they are nominated.

Once the recruiter determines the MI applicant's suitability as a potential Volunteer, they will be nominated to the Peace Corps. At this point they will only know their approximate departure date. The nomination is a recommendation by the recruiter that the applicant be invited to serve as a Volunteer. A formal invitation to a country will not be made until the medical and legal review has been completed.

References: In order to fully assess qualifications for Peace Corps service, applicants will be required to submit three references, one each from the following categories:

- Current/most recent work supervisor/professor
- Community volunteer supervisor
- Personal acquaintance or co-worker

Mail or hand-deliver the reference forms as soon as possible. Applicants should stress to their references the importance of completing the forms thoroughly and returning them in an envelope that is sealed and signed across the back. Once all references are collected, they should be forward to the Peace Corps Placement Office. Applicants should contact the Placement Office if they are having difficulties collecting references.

**Background/Fingerprint Check:** All applicants will undergo background investigations as part of the application process. Fingerprints may be done at the local Peace Corps Recruitment Office at the time of the interview or after nomination. Many police stations and state Divisions of Motor Vehicles (DMV) will also fingerprint applicants, but may charge a small fee.

**Applicants Are Evaluated:** Once nominated, the recruiter will forward the application and a summary of the interview to the Placement Office. During the qualification phase, placement staff will review the application, references, and other supporting documents to verify that the applicant's technical skills and experience match those needed for a specific assignment. The placement staff will also assess suitability for Volunteer service based on motivation, commitment, emotional maturity, social sensitivity, and cultural awareness as assessment criteria.

### **Step Four: Medical and Legal Review**

**Medical History is Reviewed:** The recruiter will forward the applicant's sealed medical package to the Office of Medical Services (OMS) as soon as a nomination is made. A member of the OMS screening team will review the completed Medical History form as soon as it arrives in OMS. A medical examination packet will then be mailed to most applicants. A majority of applicants are deemed medically qualified for Peace Corps service. In some cases, however, an applicant may be disqualified, deferred, or limited to placement in certain countries. All applicants who receive the medical examination packet will need to undergo physical and dental examinations, using the forms in the packet. Applicants should review the Medical Information for Applicants sheet (Section 4) to assess their chances of being medically cleared.

The results of the medical and dental examinations need to be reviewed by OMS before an applicant can receive medical and dental clearance. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide any/all information required to determine medical suitability for Volunteer service. Submitting complete and thorough information as quickly as possible can shorten medical and dental processing time.

Medical and dental problems that could hinder performance as a Volunteer must be resolved before invitations to serve in a specific assignment and country can be issued. Peace Corps will reimburse the cost of medical and dental examinations up to prescribed limits based on age, gender, and other factors; however, Peace Corps cannot pay for corrective health procedures or for special evaluations.

**Legal Information is Reviewed:** After the medical review, applications will be reviewed for eligibility based on the Peace Corps' legal eligibility guidelines (such as documentation of marital status, if applicable). Applicants may be asked to provide additional information at this time, although most legal documentation will be collected before a nomination occurs.

Please note that the following circumstances do not necessarily disqualify applicants from Peace Corps service, but will require clarification and documentation before the legal liaison can make a determination of eligibility for Volunteer service:

- Common law marriage
- Married, seeking to serve without spouse
- Divorce
- Dependents
- Previous convictions
- Student loans
- Financial obligations (e.g., home mortgage payments, child support)
- Bankruptcy
- Association with certain intelligence activity
- Current obligations to the military

**Nominees are Qualified:** If they meet the skill requirements and suitability assessment criteria for Volunteer service, applicants will receive a letter from the placement staff notifying them of their qualification and letting them know they are ready to be matched to an appropriate assignment. The qualification process generally takes five to seven weeks from the date of nomination.

#### **Step Five: Invitation**

A member of the Peace Corps Placement Office will conduct a final review of the application, references, and feedback from the recruiter with regard to suitability for Peace Corps service.

When a final match is made between a country's request for assistance and the nominee's skills, they will receive an official invitation to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Once a nominee receives an invitation, they will have 10 days from the mailing date of the invitation letter to respond. The invitation kit includes a Volunteer Assignment Description (VAD) to help make the decision whether to accept the invitation. The kit also includes passport and visa applications, a pre-training questionnaire,

and a Volunteer Handbook to guide nominees in preparing for departure, as well as materials about other Peace Corps programs.

If a nominee accepts the invitation to serve as a Volunteer, the Peace Corps will send more information about the host country and a description of pre-service training. The packet will include a list of recommended items to pack, a bibliography of useful country-specific reading materials, and instructions with the date and location of pre-departure orientation (staging event) in the United States.

#### **Step Six: Preparation for Departure**

The Peace Corps travel office will issue an airline ticket for travel to the orientation site.

**“We have learned that it is better to offer a tuition benefit that applies to students only after they begin their Volunteer experience. There is too much risk to the institution to offer tuition benefits before the student has committed to the Peace Corps.”**

**Wendy Payton  
George Mason University**

#### **What are the MI student’s responsibilities as a participant in the program, on campus and overseas?**

- Complete the Peace Corps application and respond in a timely manner to requests for further information, if needed
- Inform UC of changes or delays that occur during the Peace Corps placement process
- Contact the Peace Corps Placement administrative assistant with any updated personal contact information
- Notify the Peace Corps Placement Office once medically cleared by the Office of Medical Services
- Schedule regular meetings with UC and faculty advisor as needed
- Comply with all Peace Corps rules and regulations while serving as a Volunteer
- Maintain a strong academic standing and fulfill academic requirements in a timely manner
- Serve as a positive role model for MI program and peers both on campus and overseas
- Take responsibility, once overseas, for communicating with academic advisor and Peace Corps staff on a regular basis
- Strive to fulfill the third goal of the Peace Corps upon completion of service: Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans

**SECTION SEVEN—FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**



## Frequently Asked Questions about Master's International

### What is Master's International?

The Master's International program is a partnership between the Peace Corps and selected institutions of higher education throughout the United States. This partnership enables students to integrate a Peace Corps Volunteer experience into a master's degree program. More than 60 institutions currently offer an opportunity to earn an advanced degree while gaining international experience. Master's International students earn master's degrees by completing approximately one year of on-campus study, then serving for 27 months in the Peace Corps in an assignment related to the course of study. Students then return to campus to finish the degree requirements laid out by the school.

Prior to the beginning of Peace Corps service, the Peace Corps provides three months of intensive technical, language, and cross-cultural training. This training, combined with two years of work in an assignment, provides an unparalleled practical experience. Upon completing the program, MI graduates possess both excellent academic credentials and international field experience—an attractive combination for prospective employers.

### What does a Peace Corps Volunteer do?

MI students are placed in projects relevant to their course of study. The many projects designed by MI students have included:

- A public health project in Madagascar that introduced improved nutrition and hygiene practices to schoolchildren and their mothers
- An agricultural project in Nepal that introduced more efficient crop production, pest management, seed production, and storage techniques to increasing both food production and income
- A forestry project in Paraguay that promoted the integration of forestry with current agricultural practices, working with farmers to help increase farm income and conserve local natural resources
- A business project in Kenya that helped entrepreneurs gain practical business skills, including inventory management, accounting practices, marketing, and accessing credit
- A project in Kyrgyzstan that taught English to secondary students and introduced new teaching methods to local English teachers—improving their English skills in the process

### What are the benefits of being a Master's International student?

The foremost benefit of Master's International is that you will gain both a master's degree and two years of international experience upon completing the program. All participating Master's International schools offer academic credit for Peace Corps service. In addition, several schools provide scholarships or tuition waivers for these credits. Master's International students at some universities can also compete for research or teaching assistantships. These benefits are unique to each school.

In addition to receiving excellent training and practical experience, Master's International students receive several benefits from the Peace Corps, including:

- Transportation to and from the country of service

- Living and housing expenses
- Language, cross-cultural, and technical training
- Full medical and dental coverage
- Vacation time and allowance
- Cancellation or deferment of certain government education loans
- A readjustment allowance of approximately \$6,000 given at completion of 27 months of service
- Career counseling and support
- Noncompetitive eligibility for federal government jobs for one year after completing a full term of overseas service

### **When will students receive their Peace Corps assignment?**

While you are completing your coursework, your Peace Corps application will be kept active with the Peace Corps Volunteer Recruitment and Selection Placement Unit in Washington, D.C., which is responsible for assessing and placing applicants in specific projects. Peace Corps host countries submit requests for Volunteers at least six months prior to the scheduled starting date of training. Placement staff will select an available project that most closely matches the students' technical and language skills. The Peace Corps will extend a service invitation when an appropriate match between nominee and country of service and project is made.

Note that placements can be made only where Volunteers with specific skills have been requested. The more flexible students are about their assignment, the more satisfied they will be with their overall experience as a Master's International student.

### **What determines the degree programs offered through Master's International?**

Degrees are offered in scarce skill areas of study as determined by the Peace Corps each time new schools are added to the program.

### **Where might students serve in the Peace Corps?**

The invitation will specify both a country of service and an assignment area. There are many factors involved in making a placement, including the selection criteria set by the countries, the student's language skills, and possible medical issues. While students are encouraged to express preferences regarding geographic region and the reasons for those preferences, it is not always possible for the Peace Corps to invite students to a specific country or project.

### **How long is Peace Corps service?**

Peace Corps Volunteers serve for 27 months. This includes three months of technical, cross-cultural, and language training that takes place in the country of service prior to beginning work on assigned projects. Volunteers typically say that it takes at least one year simply to get adjusted, learn the language, and establish the necessary credibility in the host community. We encourage patience with this process—the results are worth the wait.

### **Are Master's International students treated differently from other Peace Corps Volunteers?**

MI students have the same responsibilities as other Peace Corps Volunteers. They will need to explain their status as an MI student to the Peace Corps staff in the host country of service and discuss the appropriate ways of integrating their studies into their Volunteer work. The Peace Corps MI program staff can support participants in preparing for this aspect of their Peace Corps service. The letter of introduction provided during the staging event

prior to departure will facilitate the sharing of information about the graduate program and the student's academic preparation to the country director. It is important to emphasize that once overseas, the academic work cannot take precedence over Peace Corps Volunteer responsibilities.

**Can One get a Ph.D. through Master's International?**

Master's International does not currently provide an opportunity to earn a doctoral degree.

**How is this different from entering graduate school and Peace Corps separately?**

As an MI student, academic credit is earned for Peace Corps service. In some cases, the school will waive the cost of these credits. MI students will have the benefit of a faculty advisor's technical expertise and support as they identify and address areas of need overseas. In addition, they will return to the U.S. with two years of degree-related professional international experience with a highly regarded organization - The Peace Corps.

**Does the Peace Corps provide financial support to Master's International students?**

The Peace Corps does not provide scholarships to Master's International students. However, some student loans can be deferred or cancelled in connection with Peace Corps service. All costs associated with Peace Corps service are covered by the Peace Corps, including transportation, medical care, and living expenses. In addition, the Peace Corps provides a readjustment allowance of approximately \$6,000, which is paid at the end of service. Most schools provide students with an opportunity for research or teaching assistantships, scholarships, or tuition waivers to offset the cost of credits earned while in the Peace Corps.

**What happens if MI students don't complete Peace Corps service?**

They will need to contact the university and their MI coordinator to determine how the early termination of their Peace Corps service will affect the completion of their master's degree.

**What is the policy related to a Volunteer's official Home-of-Record?**

The following is an excerpt from Peace Corps Manual MS 219 regarding Volunteer and trainee Home-of-Record:

"Peace Corps staff shall not authorize return travel for a Volunteer/trainee to a city and state or country different from that originally listed as the Home-of-Record unless a change of the Home-of-Record has been authorized by the Office of Volunteer and Personal Service Contractors (VPS).

Each trainee is required to establish a Home-of-Record upon entry into Peace Corps service. The Home-of-Record is the city and state or country the trainee or Volunteer determines to be his or her place of permanent residence. Because the Home-of-Record is the place to which termination travel will be authorized, a trainee (or incoming Crisis Corps Volunteer) should consider this location carefully before recording it on Trainee Registration Form PC-1487. The Trainee Registration Form is filled out and returned to Peace Corps during the pre-departure orientation.

A Volunteer's request for a Home-of-Record change shall be submitted to the country director for approval. The request must be submitted no later than 75 days in advance of the Volunteer's scheduled departure date. Requests that lack detailed reasons or sufficient information for

verification will be denied but may be re-submitted after correction. Requests may be submitted by mail, fax, or email. If a request is approved, the request shall be forwarded to VPS for a final decision.

Upon receipt of a request approved by the country director, VPS will make a decision to authorize the change or not. If the change is authorized, VPS will update the Volunteer/trainee's records and notify the country director. The Post will also be notified if the change is denied. "

**What is the policy regarding Internet postings?**

Many Volunteers bring their own laptops. However, personal ownership of computers does not exempt Volunteers, who represent both the Peace Corps and the United States in their host communities, from conformance to agency policies governing computer use.

Following is an excerpt from the Peace Corps Manual, section 543: Use of IT Systems by Volunteers, Trainees, and returned Peace Corps Volunteers:

"Volunteers who create their own websites, or post information to websites that have been created and maintained by others, should be reminded that, unless password protected, any information posted on the Internet can be accessed by the general public, even if that is not intended. Volunteers are responsible for discussing the content in advance with the country director to ensure that the material is suitable and complies with this general guidance as well as any country-specific guidance."

Thoughtful and accurate insights that are conveyed in communications with others can contribute substantially to bringing to the U.S. a better understanding of other countries. However, given the broad access to Volunteer-posted material on the Internet, both in countries of service and elsewhere, Volunteers should remain culturally sensitive regarding material posted to any website. People in host countries and members of the U.S. public may make inferences about the Peace Corps or the Volunteer's country of service based on the material a Volunteer posts to a website. Volunteer-posted material on the Internet should not embarrass or reflect poorly on the Peace Corps or the countries where Volunteers serve.

Finally, as a safety precaution, Volunteers should not include information on any website about their precise living location or those of other Volunteers, or information about the location of events to be attended by a large number of Volunteers.

**SECTION EIGHT—MEDICAL INFORMATION**



The Peace Corps Office of Medical Services complies with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and will review all applicants on a case-by-case basis and try to reasonably accommodate them for known medical conditions.

Applicants to the Peace Corps must undergo a comprehensive medical and dental assessment based on their medical history and medical/dental examination. This will determine if and when they can safely serve in the Peace Corps. If their physician recommends yearly follow-ups for a specific condition, or their medical history reasonably suggests the need for certain medical resources, they will be restricted to those limited countries where the required level of medical support is available. If their condition is not appropriately stable to complete 27 months of Peace Corps Volunteer service or the quality of medical support they require is not available in the countries where Peace Corps serves, they may not be medically cleared for Peace Corps service. They should be aware of the following information, which may help them to determine in advance whether medical/dental assessment of their health will be relatively simple or complex.

Included in their Peace Corps application is a Health Status Review, which is a report of their medical history. Filling out this questionnaire accurately and completely speeds up the medical screening process. Students should take the time to check their health records so the health conditions, treatments and dates they report are correct. Their medical kit is produced individually for them as a follow-up to their unique medical history as reported on their Health Status Review. The more accurately they describe health conditions and treatment on the Health Status Review, the less likely it is that we will ask them for necessary follow-up information. Medical information is confidential and will be forwarded to the Office of Medical Services.

If students are medically cleared with any of the following conditions, they will be placed in a country with the necessary medical resources only if compatible program sites are available:

- Asthma, mild to moderate
- Diabetes
- Seizures

For further information, students may call the Office of Medical Services, at: 800.424.8580 ext. 1500, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Monday – Friday (EST). Failure to disclose complete information on their application may be grounds for administrative separation from the Peace Corps.

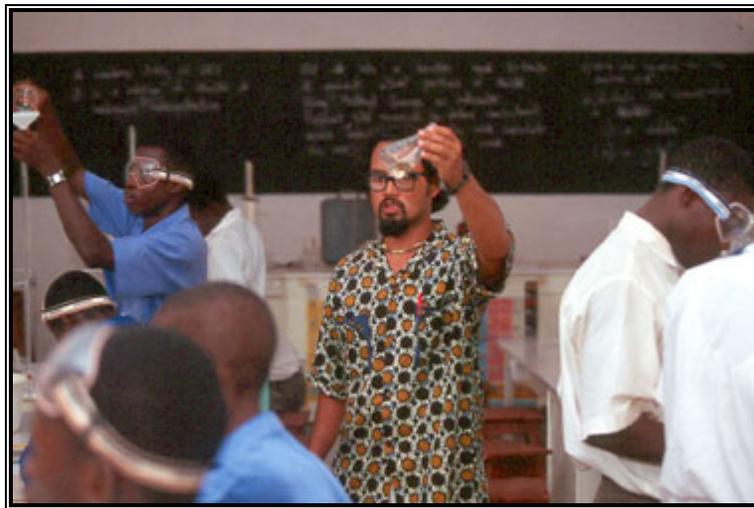
The Office of Medical Services will process a student's medical review as follows:

- Receive their Health Status Review (HSR).
- Review their HSR after they have been nominated by a recruiter.
- Mail them a medical clearance packet containing a physical, dental, and eye exam plus any specialist evaluations required in relation to their unique medical history—or if their medical history appears complex for the Peace Corps service environment, we will first ask for specialist evaluations before sending them the physical, dental, and eye exam forms.
- Review their exams and information and reply to them with a request for any missing information or additional information. This will continue until all necessary information has been received.

- Issue a medical clearance, a deferral, or a medically not qualified status, and inform the placement staff of their final medical review status.

Once a student receives a medical/dental clearance, it will have been based on his or her medical/dental status at that time. If, after a student is cleared, he or she becomes ill, undergoes surgery, adds to or changes medications, undergoes therapy or treatment, or develops any condition for which he or she seeks medical assistance, the student should notify us immediately. Any significant change in health status may have an impact on medical/dental clearance. Failure to disclose such information may seriously affect their health overseas, as well as their status as a Peace Corps trainee/Volunteer.

**SECTION NINE—PEACE CORPS CONTACT INFORMATION**



## Peace Corps Contact List

Call Peace Corps toll free at 800.424.8580

[www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov)

### Master's International

MI staff... ..ext. 1812 or 202.692.1812

### Placement Office

Administrative Assistant... ..ext. 1854 or 202.692.1854

Legal questions... ..ext. 1846 or 202.692.1846

### Medical and Dental Clearance

Office of Medical Services... ..ext. 1500 or 202.692.4049

### Loan Deferment Questions

Office of Financial Operations... ..ext. 1784 or 202.692.1784

### Passports/Visas/Travel Arrangements

Sato Travel Office... ..ext. 1170 or 202.692.1170

### Staging Questions

Staging Office... ..ext. 1865 or 202.692.1865

Regional Recruiting Offices... ..800.424.8580

Your call will be directed to your local recruiting office

Call direct using the phone numbers below:

Atlanta (AL, FL, GA, MS, SC, TN, PR, Virgin Islands) ... ..404.562.3456

Boston (MA, ME, NH, RI, VT) ... ..617.565.5555

Chicago (IL, IN, KY, MI, MO, OH, IA, MN, ND SD, WI) ... ..312.353.4990

Dallas (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX, CO, KS, NE, UT, WY) ... ..214.253.5400

Los Angeles (AZ, Southern CA) ... ..310.356.1100

New York (CT, NJ, NY, PA) ... ..212.352.5440

San Francisco (HI, Northern CA, NV) ... ..510.452.8444

Seattle (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA) ... ..206.553.5490

Mid-Atlantic/Rosslyn, VA (DC, DE, MD, NC, VA, WV) ... ..202.692.1040