



Master's International Coordinators' Guide

Your Handbook for Designing and Maintaining a Successful Program on Campus



Master's International
University and Domestic Partnerships
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Introducing Master's International



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 academic preparation in specialized skill areas.

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

1. Provide faculty and campus administrators options for overseas experiential learning for their students.
2. Enable prospective Peace Corps candidates to combine Peace Corps service with graduate school.
3. Meet the increasing demand from 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 Peace Corps service, students complete the 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 program staff at Peace Corps headquarters at 800.424.8580, Ext. 1812 or via email at: mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov.

“I was immediately attracted to MI for many reasons; most of all, I wanted to add more to the Peace Corps service experience. I also wanted theoretical training that I could apply effectively in the field.”
— Bina Contreras, MI student, SIT Graduate Institute



⌘ Section 1 ⌘

Getting Started: General Information



History and 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 communities. 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's three goals have remained unchanged:

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

More than 210,000 Americans have served in the Peace Corps since the agency was established. The Peace Corps is currently active in more than 70 countries throughout Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, South and Central America, and the Pacific. (Please refer to the Peace Corps website at <http://www.peacecorps.gov/learn/wherepc/> to see where Volunteers may serve. Peace Corps Volunteers serve for 27 months, sharing their technical expertise, creativity, flexibility, and dedication with people all over the world.

The Need for MI

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 college degree. In particular, the Peace Corps has a need for individuals with expertise in specialized skill areas such as agriculture, education, health and nutrition. MI is designed to address the need for more highly skilled Volunteers while providing graduate students with significant practical training and professional experience.

The first MI program was established at Rutgers University in 1987. Currently more than 80 universities partner with the Peace Corps and offer MI options on their campuses.



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.
- ⌘ 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 non-competitive eligibility for federal government jobs for one year after the completion of Peace Corps service or when full-time status as a student ends.

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 the areas of 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.

What's in it for Your Students?

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 that meet the needs and requests of host countries while also affording opportunities for work, typically in secondary projects, relevant to their academic studies. Overseas assignments often influence students' subsequent choices of research topics, through which they can explore practical solutions to development problems from an experiential knowledge base.

“It’s a strong advantage for our MI students compared to regular Peace Corps Volunteers that they have faculty back-up. In fact, we support them quite aggressively. We may correspond with them by email, and, in some cases, there may even be scope for a faculty visit.”

**— Blair Orr, MI
Coordinator, Michigan
Technological University**



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 MI students to help them complete their Volunteer assignments and earn their degrees. Examples of these incentives include:

- ⌘ Reduced or waived fees for credits earned during Peace Corps service.
- ⌘ Credit for language skills gained during Peace Corps service.
- ⌘ Eligibility for applicable funding sources.
- ⌘ Scholarships.
- ⌘ Research or teaching assistantships.
- ⌘ Out-of-state tuition waivers.



“From the beginning, I emphasize a philosophy of trade-offs. MI students are so fortunate to have Peace Corps as a part of their degree program. A result is that more is required of them during their time on campus, and there is less time for electives.”

— Beverly Beyer, MI Coordinator, Illinois State University





⌘ Section 2 ⌘

The MI Coordinator: Your Role as a Key Player

How Do I Launch a Successful MI Program on My Campus?



The MI Coordinator serves as the university's primary liaison to the Peace Corps. The MI Coordinator is responsible for the design and establishment of the MI program on campus, publicizing the program to faculty and students, working with the graduate school admissions office to recruit students, and acting as a point of contact with MI program staff at Peace Corps headquarters.

The MI Coordinator can be a dean, associate dean, chair or professor of an academic department, admissions director, director of international programs, or another faculty member or administrator. If the MI Coordinator 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 management of the program; faculty support is essential to the success of the MI program. The MI Coordinator should be allowed sufficient time by the university to ensure that the program is firmly established and running effectively.

MI Coordinator responsibilities include:

- ⌘ Using Peace Corps media resources to develop promotional materials for MI, including maintaining MI pages on the campus website.
- ⌘ Publicizing and promoting the MI program both within and beyond the university.
- ⌘ Advocating on campus for resources to support MI.
- ⌘ Responding to all inquiries from prospective MI students.
- ⌘ Processing MI applications in collaboration with the campus admissions office.
- ⌘ Working closely with MI students to encourage them to expedite their Peace Corps application and medical clearance.
- ⌘ Advising and supporting existing students both on campus and abroad.
- ⌘ Responding in a timely manner to MI program staff requests at Peace Corps headquarters for census data, annual progress reports, et cetera.
- ⌘ Liaising and corresponding on a regular basis with MI program staff at Peace Corps headquarters on behalf of the program and MI students.
- ⌘ Working with returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) on campus, strategic recruiters (STRATs), and the Regional Recruitment Office to help recruit and inform students about the program.



Incorporating lessons learned from the PCV experience into academic curricula and the MI campus program, as appropriate.

The MI Coordinator 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 MI Coordinator is encouraged to call upon the many resources available on campus. The following is a list of campus resources on which MI Coordinators have relied to reach the maximum number of potential MI participants at minimal expense:

- ⌘ Academic bulletins and catalogs.
- ⌘ Internet or electronic bulletin boards.
- ⌘ Student union public announcement boards.
- ⌘ Student associations.
- ⌘ Social networking sites.
- ⌘ University newspapers.
- ⌘ University websites and department web pages.
- ⌘ Academic advisors.
- ⌘ Graduate admissions offices.
- ⌘ International program offices.
- ⌘ Career centers.
- ⌘ Chairpersons of departments offering courses within the MI curriculum.
- ⌘ RPCV groups on campus and in the community.

The MI program staff at Peace Corps headquarters works closely with the MI Coordinator to meet the shared goals of MI and to create realistic expectations of Volunteer service among faculty and MI participants. The MI Coordinator should maintain regular communication with students on campus, as well as with students who are serving overseas.

In addition, the MI Coordinator is requested to complete and submit an annual student census and report to MI program staff at Peace Corps headquarters. The purpose of the report is to confirm individual admissions of MI students and to provide valuable statistical data as well as vital feedback on MI programs.

Chronology

The initial establishment of an MI program can take approximately one to three years, largely depending on the capacity 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:

- ⌘ The MI program staff at Peace Corps headquarters and the MI Coordinator review program details within 60 days of signing the MOC to address any problems or questions arising as the program takes shape.
- ⌘ With help from the MI program staff at Peace Corps headquarters, the university page on the Peace Corps website is set up with a link to the university's MI website.



- ⌘ Prospective MI students apply to the university first and then to the Peace Corps.
- ⌘ 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.

Once you have established your program, you and the MI staff at Peace Corps headquarters should share updates regarding student participation and program development. The typical student life-cycle is as follows:

- ⌘ Students complete initial course work.
- ⌘ After assessment of the students' skills and abilities through the Peace Corps application process, students receive an invitation to a specific Peace Corps assignment.
- ⌘ Students complete up to 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 required coursework to receive their degrees.





⌘ Section 3 ⌘

We're Here to Help: The Peace Corps' Role



Role of the MI Program Staff at Peace Corps Headquarters

Located in the University and Domestic Partnerships (UDP) branch of the Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP), the MI program staff—consisting of program specialists for each Peace Corps domestic region—are the Peace Corps staff members responsible for the general oversight and advocacy of the MI program. Your program specialist serves as the primary liaison between Peace Corps headquarters and your school. In addition, UDP staff promotes the MI program nationally, supports new program development, helps universities maintain and strengthen existing programs, and provides support to MI students completing the Peace Corps application process.

UDP also oversees the sister program to MI, the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program. Coverdell Fellows offers RPCVs a lifelong opportunity to receive financial aid and study at more than 80 graduate school programs across the country. For more information on Coverdell Fellows, you may write to fellows@peacecorps.gov.

The MI program staff also maintains an up-to-date list of MI schools with specific details on each program available to the Peace Corps Regional Recruitment Offices, schools, and interested students. MI program staff, with the assistance of the MI Coordinators, ensures that links to each partner's web page are kept up to date. In addition, complete information about the MI program is available on the Peace Corps website at www.peacecorps.gov/masters.

Direct links to MI schools and the contact information for MI Coordinators are also available via the Peace Corps website.

The MI program staff maintains contact with the MI Coordinator on a regular basis to discuss program status and issues. This relationship is an opportunity for both parties to identify the strengths of the program and areas for improvement. The MI program staff also assists students seeking clarification while going through the placement process. MI program staff monitors the administration and management of the program, produces and disseminates national MI materials, maintains the Peace Corps MI website, educates Peace Corps staff, and promotes the program within the agency.



Other Peace Corps Offices

There are a number of 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 three major operations: recruitment, placement, and staging. MI students will find themselves working with recruitment, placement, and staging as they prepare for their assignment.

Regional Recruitment Offices (RROs)

The recruitment operation is made up of eight regional offices located throughout the United States—in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, Seattle and Washington, D.C.—which are responsible for receiving applications and initiating the application process. The Peace Corps RROs 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. Students will submit their Peace Corps applications to the RRO responsible for the area of their home of record. Recruiters may seek your assistance in setting up class talks or general informational meetings for prospective undergraduate Peace Corps candidates.

“The staff at the Peace Corps has been very helpful. I also thought that the conference in September was informative and useful in understanding what other schools do in managing their programs.”

— Erin Ogilvie, MI Coordinator, George Mason University

Placement

The Placement Office, located at Peace Corps headquarters is responsible for screening and conducting suitability follow-ups for Peace Corps candidates who have been nominated by recruiters in the regional offices and who have been medically and legally cleared for service. The Placement Office screens candidate files for suitability and skills and matches them to country-specific assignments based on education, experience, medical support needs (if any), and when possible, personal interests. It is important to understand that Placement Office 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, nor 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 it 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 at Peace Corps headquarters will require candidates to submit a medical history, along with documentation of recent physical and dental exams. All individuals' records are reviewed to ensure they are medically qualified to serve as Peace Corps Volunteers. There are some medical conditions the Peace Corps cannot accommodate; there are other conditions that need special accommodation and/or support.

For more information about medical accommodations, see "Peace Corps Medical Information for Candidates" in the appendices or visit the Peace Corps website at: <http://multimedia.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/library/peacecorpsmedinfo.pdf>.

Office of Special Services (OSS)

OSS is part of the Office of Volunteer Support. Its role is to support Volunteers when mental health issues arise in the field. OSS works closely with OMS to provide appropriate services for Volunteers. These include: phone counseling, individual counseling in Washington, D.C., and consultation with medical professionals. Additionally, OSS assists posts in the event of widespread emergencies such as evacuation.

Peace Corps Country Staff

Every Peace Corps post has a country director (CD) and a director of programming and training (DPT), who supervise one or more associate Peace Corps directors (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 or program manager for health projects, one for community and economic development projects, one for agricultural and environmental projects, and one for educational 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 so that they have the information they need to make informed decisions. Please visit the following link for additional information about our safety efforts: <http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=learn.safety>.



The Office of Safety and Security provides leadership and guidance to the Peace Corps in support of country directors, their staff, and Volunteers in all areas related to safety and overseas security. The services provided by the Office of Safety and Security include 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 U.S. embassy regional security officers.
- ⌘ Providing crisis management support.
- ⌘ Attending to the investigation of serious crimes committed against Volunteers.





⌘ Section 4 ⌘

Standards for Logo Usage



As a Peace Corps university partner, you have the right to use the Peace Corps logo to recruit students to the MI program. 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 MI program staff is delighted that you will be helping to spread awareness of the Peace Corps and its programs through use of the logo. However, there are some legal guidelines of which you should be aware.

Legal Framework

The use of the Peace Corps name and 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.

Express Prohibitions

The logo may 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.

Prior Approval Required

There are some instances when the use of the Peace Corps logo is inappropriate so Peace Corps has established a system of monitoring logo use. Whenever an MI partner wishes to use the logo, they must obtain prior written approval from the Peace Corps.



Approval Process

In general, for your request to be approved, you must use the logo in conjunction with a description or discussion of your MI program.

Please email your draft materials to MastersInternational@peacecorps.gov and type “approve marketing materials for (school/program name)” in the subject line.

The MI program staff will make every attempt to review your materials within one week. For larger projects or during periods when many partners are submitting materials for review, more time may be necessary. Especially for video and audio productions, please be sure to submit your scripts well in advance of final production. Video scripts should also detail the graphic elements being considered for use.

Examples of Materials Requiring Review

Materials containing any reference to the Peace Corps are subject to Peace Corps approval including, but not limited to, the following:

- ⌘ Catalogs used to recruit and admit students.
- ⌘ Program newsletters.
- ⌘ Advertisements for Peace Corps-related events.
- ⌘ Articles in external publications referring to Peace Corps programs.
- ⌘ Web pages describing Peace Corps programs.
- ⌘ Videos/audios that market Peace Corps programs.
- ⌘ Display or radio advertisements for Peace Corps programs.

Appearance of the Logo

The colors, shape, orientation and design of the Peace Corps logo may not be changed in any way. The only changes that may be made to the logo are proportional changes in size. Artwork is available in the following formats:

Gray-scale vector logo



2- and 4-color vector logo (best format for large-scale printing)



4-color patch logo





Obtaining the Logo

The logo may not be cut and pasted from electronic materials. It must be provided to you directly by the MI program staff. Please submit your request by email to mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov
Subject line: "PC logo request for (school/name)"

Additional Peace Corps Marketing Materials

As an MI partner you are further permitted to use Peace Corps taglines, photos, and other media-related materials. Many of these additional resources can be browsed through online:

- ⌘ Media Resources <http://www.peacecorps.gov/resources/media/mediares/>
- ⌘ Public Service Announcements <http://www.peacecorps.gov/resources/media/psa/>
- ⌘ MI Video <http://www.peacecorps.gov/masters>

For use of these Peace Corps photos, web banners, PSAs, and the like, please abide by the terms and conditions presented on the website.





⌘ Section 5 ⌘

The Peace Corps Application and Placement Process



Note: This section may be copied and given to prospective MI students. This information is also included in the MI Student Handbook.

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

The Application Process

There are eight major steps in the Peace Corps application process. Each step is described below.

- Step 1: Application
- Step 2: Interview
- Step 3: Nomination
- Step 4: Legal Review
- Step 5: Placement Suitability and Skill Review
- Step 6: Invitation
- Step 7: Medical Review
- Step 8: Departure

Please note that a student's application may be withdrawn from further consideration for any of the following reasons:

- ⌘ S/he is not a U.S. citizen.
- ⌘ S/he is under 18 years old.
- ⌘ S/he is under supervised legal probation.
- ⌘ S/he is or has been involved in intelligence organizations.
- ⌘ S/he has outstanding legal, financial or family obligations that cannot be met during service.
- ⌘ His or her particular skills do not match those requested by Peace Corps host countries.



Step 1: Application

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

- ⌘ A completed application form.
- ⌘ A completed Health History Form (HHF).
- ⌘ A copy of their college transcripts (an unofficial copy is acceptable).
- ⌘ A copy of their resume.
- ⌘ A copy of their acceptance letter into the MI graduate program with the name of the program and the university logo/letterhead.
- ⌘ The names and contact information of three references.

After an initial review of the application, the recruiter will solicit the references and invite the MI candidate for an interview. In reviewing candidate materials, the recruiter will look for detailed information about each candidate's work experience, education, volunteer experience, life skills, knowledge of foreign languages, and hobbies.

Candidates are able to monitor the status of their applications online via the Medical Portal (MAP) for all medical information exchange and the application portal for updates regarding their Peace Corps application. Any update to the application or medical clearance will be made in real time in the MAP or application portal.

As noted, in order to fully assess qualifications for Peace Corps service, candidates 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.

References will be asked to fill out the reference form electronically once the application has been initially reviewed prior to an interview with a recruiter. Candidates can also mail or hand deliver the reference forms as soon as possible. Candidates should stress to their references the importance of completing the forms thoroughly and, if mailing, returning them in an envelope that is sealed and signed across the back. Candidates should contact their recruiter or the Placement Office if they are having difficulties collecting references.

Health History Form (HHF)

All candidates are required to fill out the electronic Health History Form (HHF) in order to submit their Peace Corps application. The information disclosed in the HHF will give the Office of Medical services an idea of where the candidate can serve and whether or not they would need any medical

“All along the various Peace Corps offices (the national MI office, the Chicago regional office and the UM Peace Corps office) have all been quite helpful in assisting us in answering questions as they arise.”

**— Srinika Jayaratna
and Katie Lopez, MI
Coordinators, University
of Michigan**



accommodations. Depending on what is disclosed on the HHF, candidates may be asked to provide additional information to the Office of Medical Services through the Medical Portal. It is necessary that the candidate submit this requested information electronically through the MAP within the time-frame that is given.

All candidates will be responsible for completing their final medical clearance after they are invited to serve. More detailed information will be provided at the time of invitation.

Step 2: Interview

The interview generally takes place after all application materials are returned to the recruiter through the application portal. During the interview, candidates and the recruiter will discuss skills and interests, the Volunteer opportunities available, and issues such as flexibility, adaptability, social and cultural awareness, motivation, and commitment to Peace Corps service. Coordinators should work in advance with MI students to help them describe to the recruiter the many ways in which their academic experience may enable them to serve in the Peace Corps.

Step 3: Nomination

Once the recruiter determines the MI candidate's suitability as a potential Volunteer, the candidate will be nominated to the Peace Corps. At this point, candidates will learn of their approximate departure timeframe and the skill sector in which they may be assigned to work. The nomination is a recommendation by the recruiter that the candidate be invited to serve as a Volunteer. A formal invitation to a country will not be made until the legal and placement reviews have been completed.

Step 4: Legal Review

Background/Fingerprint Check: All candidates will undergo background investigations as part of the application process. After a nomination, the recruiter will send the MI candidate the necessary fingerprint cards and forms which must be sent directly to the Placement Office in Washington, D.C. The fingerprint cards will come with specific instructions for how to carry out this process.

Legal Information Is Reviewed: Candidates will be reviewed for eligibility based on Peace Corps legal eligibility guidelines (such as documentation of marital status, if applicable). Candidates may be asked to provide additional information at this time, although most legal documentation will be collected before a nomination occurs. If there are any legal incidents that occur during the application process, the candidate is responsible for reporting these to the Placement Office as soon as possible.

“At USF, we always tell students that their service is their number one priority, but we make clear to them the need to integrate their research with their service requirements. We require a research thesis and instill in our students the importance of creating and disseminating knowledge they generate while in the Peace Corps.”
— James Mihelcic, MI Coordinator, University of South Florida



Please note that the following circumstances do not necessarily disqualify candidates 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 (including incidents expunged from one's record).
- ⌘ Student loans (both government and private).
- ⌘ Financial obligations (e.g., home mortgage payments, child support).
- ⌘ Bankruptcy.
- ⌘ Association with certain intelligence activities.
- ⌘ Current obligations to the military.

Step 5: Placement Suitability and Skill Review

During the qualification phase, the Placement Office will review the application, references, and other supporting documents to verify that the candidate's technical skills and experience match those needed for a specific assignment. The Placement Office will also assess suitability for Volunteer service based on motivation, commitment, emotional maturity, social sensitivity, and cultural awareness. The Placement Office may schedule a follow-up discussion via phone to discuss the application.

Step 6: Invitation

A member of the 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, the nominee will receive an official invitation to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Once nominees receive an invitation, they have seven days to respond electronically. The electronic invitation kit includes a "Volunteer Assignment Description" to help make the decision whether to accept the invitation, and a country-specific "Welcome Book". The kit also includes passport and visa applications, and a "Volunteer Handbook" to guide nominees in preparing for departure, as well as materials about other Peace Corps programs.

If an invitee accepts the invitation to serve as a Volunteer, s/he must let the Placement Office know via the application portal. The Peace Corps may 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 the pre-departure orientation (staging event) in the United States.



Step 7: Medical Review

As soon as an invitation is accepted, the Health History Form will be reviewed by a member of the Office of Medical Services (OMS) screening team. The candidate will be given explicit instructions on when to pursue a Medical Clearance and how to submit the necessary forms.

A majority of candidates are deemed medically qualified for Peace Corps service. In some cases, however, a candidate may be disqualified or deferred because of medical support needs. Medical and dental problems that could hinder performance as a Volunteer must be resolved before the deadline given by OMS.

All candidates who receive the medical examination packet will need to undergo physical and dental examinations, using the forms in the packet. This exchange will happen through the Medical Application Portal (MAP).

The results of the medical and dental examinations need to be reviewed by OMS before a candidate can receive medical and dental clearance. It is the candidate's responsibility to provide any and all information required to determine medical eligibility for Volunteer service. Submitting complete and thorough information as quickly as possible can shorten medical and dental processing time. The majority of candidates do not completely and correctly fill out the medical paperwork and this often causes delays in clearance.

The Peace Corps will reimburse the cost of medical and dental examinations up to prescribed limits based on age, gender, and other factors. The Peace Corps, however, cannot pay for corrective health procedures or for special evaluations.

To summarize, OMS will process a student's medical review as follows:

- ⌘ Receive the MI candidate's HHF.
- ⌘ MI candidate will be notified of their medical clearance status through the MAP.
- ⌘ If additional information is needed in order to proceed, the MI candidate will be instructed to provide additional information and will be given a timeline in order to do so.
- ⌘ Once the MI candidate is invited to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer, s/he will be given a timeline specific to his or her departure date outlining the necessary exams that must be completed prior to departure. All documentation must be submitted electronically through the MAP. A final medical clearance will be issued prior to the MI candidate's departure for Peace Corps service.

For further information, please refer to "Section 7: Keeping Well: Medical Information," below.

Step 8: Departure

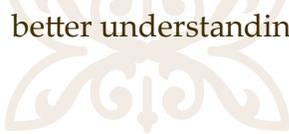
SATO Travel will issue an airline ticket, if needed, for travel to the staging event, as well as a ticket to the country of service.



MI Students' Responsibilities on Campus and Overseas

MI students must:

- ⌘ Complete the Peace Corps application and respond in a timely manner to requests for further information, if needed.
- ⌘ Inform the MI Coordinator of changes or delays that occur during the Peace Corps placement process.
- ⌘ Contact the Peace Corps Placement Office with any updated personal contact information.
- ⌘ Schedule regular meetings with the MI Coordinator and faculty advisor as needed.
- ⌘ Comply with all Peace Corps rules and regulations while serving as a Volunteer. See "Core Expectations of a Peace Corps Volunteer" on the Peace Corps website at: <http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=learn.howvol.expect>
- ⌘ Maintain a strong academic standing and fulfill academic requirements in a timely manner.
- ⌘ Serve as a positive representative for the MI program and for peers both on campus and overseas.
- ⌘ Take responsibility, once overseas, for communicating with the faculty advisor and Peace Corps staff on a regular basis.
- ⌘ Strive to fulfill the Third Goal of the Peace Corps upon completion of service: To promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.





⌘ Section 6 ⌘

Frequently Asked Questions



What is MI?

The Master's International (MI) 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 80 institutions currently offer an opportunity to earn an advanced degree while gaining international experience in the Peace Corps. MI students earn master's degrees by completing one-to-two years of on-

campus study, then serving for 27 months in the Peace Corps. Students then return to campus to finish their degree requirements.

Prior to the beginning of Peace Corps service, the Peace Corps provides up to 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?

The Peace Corps makes every effort to place Volunteers in projects relevant to their course of study. When a primary project directly related to the Volunteer's coursework is not possible, the Volunteer may design a secondary project that meets degree requirements. The many projects designed by MI students have included:

- ⌘ Introducing photography and other visual arts to local youth in Azerbaijan through educational programs.
- ⌘ Designing and building a schoolhouse made from recycled plastic bottles in Guatemala.
- ⌘ Interviewing providers and patients at health facilities throughout the island nation of Vanuatu in order to promote participatory hygiene and sanitation among the local populations.
- ⌘ Raising HIV/AIDS awareness by encouraging youth in Kazakhstan to submit untold secrets written on artistic post cards through a program called "Post Secret Kazakhstan."
- ⌘ Developing economic and community organization methods for the Association of Tourism Development in El Salvador.



What are the benefits of being an MI student?

The foremost benefit of MI is that students gain both a master's degree and two years of international experience upon completing the program. All participating MI schools offer academic credit for Peace Corps service. In addition, several schools provide scholarships or tuition waivers for these credits. MI 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, MI students receive various 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 during the 27 months of Peace Corps service.
- ⌘ Vacation time and allowance.
- ⌘ Cancellation or deferment of certain government education loans.
- ⌘ A readjustment allowance of \$7,425 given upon 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?

On average, the application process can take nine to 12 months to complete. Peace Corps host countries submit requests for Volunteers at least six months prior to the scheduled start date of training. The Placement Office works to ensure a successful fit for student skills and experience and the programming needs in the country. The Placement Office further selects available projects that most closely match students' technical and language skills and the graduate degree they are pursuing. The Peace Corps will extend a service invitation when an appropriate match between the nominee and country of service and project is made.

What determines the degree programs offered through MI?

Degrees are offered in areas of study sought by the Peace Corps at the time new schools are added to the program.

What is the role of the faculty advisor?

Faculty advisors are particularly crucial to an MI student's graduate experience. The faculty advisor will help identify an academic project that is suited to the student's Volunteer project. MI students and their faculty advisors should remain in communication throughout the duration of the students' service abroad. Some MI schools even arrange for site visits by the advisor to the country of service.



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 accommodations needed. 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. The MI program staff encourages patience with this process—the results are worth the wait.

Are MI 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 MI program staff at Peace Corps headquarters can support participants in preparing for this aspect of their Peace Corps service. The MI program staff provides a letter of introduction sharing information about the graduate program and the student's academic preparation to the country director. It is important to emphasize that once overseas, academic work cannot take precedence over Volunteer responsibilities.

“One of our practices is to send care packages once or twice a year to MI students in the field. These include cards and letters from students on campus and from faculty, as well as a variety of items (snacks, magazines, soaps, teaching materials, etc.) donated by current students and faculty and by local businesses.”

**— Mica Nicole Tucci,
MI Program Assistant,
Monterey Institute of
International Studies**

Can one get a Ph.D. through MI?

MI does not provide an opportunity to earn a doctoral degree, although our sister program for RPCVs, the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program, does.



How is MI 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 or reduce the cost of these credits. MI students have the benefit of a faculty advisor's technical expertise and support as they identify and address areas of need overseas.

Does the Peace Corps provide financial support to MI students?

The Peace Corps does not provide scholarships to MI students. However, some student loans can be deferred or partially canceled (depending on loan type) in connection with Peace Corps service. While serving as a Volunteer, all costs are covered by the Peace Corps, including transportation, medical care, and living expenses. In addition, the Peace Corps provides a readjustment allowance of \$7,425, 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?

MI students who do not complete their service will need to arrange with 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 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 conforming 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 coun-





tries. However, 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. 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 may 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.

“My passion for local service and for assisting socially disadvantaged farmers has only increased. And, I have found that skills I learned in the Peace Corps have improved my fundamental thinking, formulation analysis, and decision-making abilities in my current career.”
— Courtney Owens, MI student, North Carolina A&T University





⌘ Section 7 ⌘

Keeping Well: Medical Information



The Peace Corps' Office of Medical Services (OMS) complies with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and will review all candidates on a case-by-case basis and make an effort to reasonably accommodate them for known medical conditions. Candidates for Peace Corps service must undergo a comprehensive medical and dental assessment based on their medical history. 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 if 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.

Potential MI students should be aware of the information provided above under "The Application Process: Step 7: Medical Review."

For further information, students may call OMS at: 800.424.8580 Ext. 4049, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday (ES/DT). Students may communicate with an OMS nurse directly in the MAP. Failure to disclose complete information on an application may be grounds for administrative separation from the Peace Corps.

Once students disclose their medical history on the HHF they must inform OMS of any changes to their health via the MAP. If, after a student is granted a pre-clearance, s/he becomes ill, undergoes surgery, adds to or changes medications, undergoes therapy or treatment, or develops any condition for which s/he seeks medical assistance, the student should notify the Peace Corps immediately. Any significant change in health status may have an impact on medical/dental clearance. Failure to disclose such information may seriously affect a student's health overseas, as well as his or her status as a Peace Corps trainee/Volunteer.



⌘ Appendices ⌘



Appendix A: Common Peace Corps Terms

AF (Africa): One of the three geographic regions where the Peace Corps sends Volunteers, and also the name of the Peace Corps department responsible for overseeing programming in this region.

APCD (Associate Peace Corps Director): A Peace Corps professional posted overseas who assists the CD.

Assignment: This term can refer to the program area in which a Volunteer is working (such as environment) and it can also refer to the program area together with the location (as in, environment, Burkina Faso).

CD (Country Director): The Peace Corps employee responsible for managing operations in a particular host country.

COS (Close of Service): The date a Volunteer leaves Peace Corps. Also describes the process of separating from the agency, including the COS conference.

Counseling and Outreach Unit: The Peace Corps office that attends to Volunteers experiencing mental health problems.

Country of Service: Not to be confused with "COS," this is the country where the Volunteer lives and undertakes his or her Peace Corps service.

CWWS (Coverdell World Wise Schools): A Peace Corps program which helps America's schoolchildren learn about the world's diverse peoples, cultures, and geography through contact with Peace Corps Volunteers.

DOS (Description of Service): The record of a Volunteer's activities while in service, written by the Volunteer and counter-signed by the CD of the country of service.

DPT (Director of Programming and Training): A Peace Corps professional posted overseas who directs program and training efforts in that country.

EMA (Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia): One of the three geographic regions where the Peace Corps sends Volunteers, and also the name of the Peace Corps department responsible for overseeing programming in this region.



EOD (Enter on Duty): The act of formally beginning Peace Corps service.

HHF (Health History Form): A description of medical readiness for Peace Corps service.

IAP (Inter-America and the Pacific): One of the three geographic regions where the Peace Corps sends Volunteers, and also the name of the Peace Corps department responsible for overseeing programming in this region.

Invitation: The official offer from the Peace Corps to serve in a particular assignment and country. Invitations follow nominations.

MAP (Medical Application Portal): The Peace Corps' online system for candidates to manage their medical clearance process.

MedSep (Medical Separation): The classification of a Volunteer who was separated from the agency for medical reasons. Volunteers who medically separate are eligible for the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program.

MI (Master's International): A Peace Corps program that incorporates graduate level academic learning into the Peace Corps Volunteer experience.

MOC (Memorandum of Cooperation): The agreement signed between the Peace Corps and a university in order to establish an MI program.

NCE (Noncompetitive Eligibility Status): A special hiring status accorded RPCVs which simplifies the process for finding a federal job.

NOM (Nomination): An individual's formal nomination for Peace Corps service. A nomination, which means that a recruiter has found an individual to be a strong candidate for Peace Corps service, precedes a possible invitation and is not a guarantee of an invitation.

NPCA (National Peace Corps Association): A national alumni organization for RPCVs. The NPCA is a separate entity from Peace Corps.

OMS (Office of Medical Services): The Peace Corps office responsible for assuring medical viability of Volunteers.

OPATS (Office of Programming and Training Support): The Peace Corps office overseeing programming and development of training materials for all Volunteers.

OSP (Office of Strategic Partnerships): The Peace Corps office that coordinates and oversees the development and implementation of partnerships and donor engagement to support the agency's three goals and enhance programs through every stage of the Volunteer life cycle. Both the MI program and the Paul D. Coverdell program are managed from this office.

PAS (Public Affairs Specialist): The person at a Peace Corps RRO who is responsible for all public communications and press relations.



Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program: A graduate school program for RPCVs (formerly known as Fellows/USA).

PCT (Peace Corps Trainee): A person who is training in a Peace Corps country to become a Volunteer.

PCV (Peace Corps Volunteer): Refers to anyone who has completed Peace Corps training and been sworn in as a Volunteer.

Placement: The Peace Corps' process of determining both suitability to serve and, if a candidate is selected as a Volunteer, where and in what capacity s/he will serve.

Program Areas: (Sometimes referred to as "programs" or "project sectors.") These are the professional fields or sectors in which Peace Corps Volunteers conduct their work, namely: agriculture, community and economic development, education, environment, public health, and youth.

Project Sectors: Also known as "program areas." See above.

PST (Pre-Service Training): The first 10 to 12 weeks of service abroad when soon-to-be Volunteers are prepared for their assignments with language and cultural awareness training, health and safety training, and technical training in preparation for their jobs.

Recruiter: A Peace Corps employee, typically not based at headquarters, who oversees the initial steps in applying to the Peace Corps.

RPCV (Returned Peace Corps Volunteer): Refers to anyone who completed Peace Corps training, swore in as a Volunteer, and satisfactorily completed service.

RRO (Regional Recruitment Office): One of the various offices across the United States, through which the Peace Corps recruits new Volunteers.

RVS (Returned Volunteer Services): The department within the Peace Corps that provides career, education, readjustment, and other services to returned Volunteers.

UDP (University and Domestic Partnerships): One of the three sub-offices in OSP which is located in Peace Corps headquarters. UDP oversees the MI and Coverdell Fellows programs and supports collaboration with domestic partners.

VAD (Volunteer Assignment Description): A description of the country of service sent to an individual who has been invited to serve in the Peace Corps.

VRS (Volunteer Recruitment and Selection): The division of the Peace Corps that recruits and places Volunteers.



Appendix B: The Steps to an MI Degree

1) Student applies to MI graduate schools.

(Student tells each school that s/he plans to be an MI student.)

2) Once accepted to school, student submits application to the Peace Corps.

3a) Student starts graduate school.

and 3b)

Student connects with MI coordinator.

4) Student submits a copy of official graduate school acceptance letter stating that s/he is an MI student.



5a) Student follows-through with the entire Peace Corps application process.

and 5b)

Student fulfills pre-service graduate school requirements.

6) Student attends staging in the United States.



7) Student travels to host country.



8a) Student attends pre-service training (PST) in host country.

and 8b)

Student informs host country staff that s/he is an MI student.

9a) Students serves as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

and 9b)

Student works with graduate school to develop academic project.

10) Student returns to the United States after 27 months of service.



11) Student completes any remaining requirements for master's degree.



Peace Corps Contact Information



You can always call Peace Corps toll free at:

855.855.1961

www.peacecorps.gov

Master's International MI Program Staff

202.692.1812 or Ext. 1812

Fax 202.692.1490

MastersInternational@peacecorps.gov

Placement Office

202.692.1903 or Ext. 1840

Fax 202.692.1897

MIPlacement@peacecorps.gov

Legal Questions

202.692.1845 or Ext. 1845

Fax 202.692.1898

Medical and Dental Clearance Office of Medical Services

202.692.1500 or Ext. 1500

Fax 202.692.1501

Pre-ServiceUnit@peacecorps.gov

Loan Deferment Questions

202.692.1170 or Ext. 1784

Passports/Visas/Travel Arrangements (CWT Sato Travel)

202.692.1170 or Ext. 1170

Staging Office

202.692.1871 or Ext. 1871

Staging@peacecorps.gov



Regional Recruitment Offices

855.855.1961

(Your call will be directed to your regional recruitment office.)

You may also call direct using the phone numbers below:

Atlanta

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

404.562.3456

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

Northeast

(CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)

212.352.5440

San Francisco

(HI, Northern CA, NV)

510.452.8444

Seattle

(AK, ID, MT, OR, WA)

206.553.5490

Washington, D.C.

(DC, DE, MD, NC, VA, WV)

202.692.1040

