



MS 208: United Nations Volunteers

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(CC/UNV)

1.0	PURPOSE	3
2.0	POLICY	3
3.0	AUTHORITIES	3
4.0	QUALIFICATIONS	4
5.0	APPLICATION PROCEDURES	4
5.1	Standard Procedure.....	4
5.2	Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and Returned UNVs.....	4
6.0	SELECTION AND PLACEMENT	5
7.0	MEDICAL CLEARANCES	5
7.1	Medical Clearances for UNVs.....	5
7.2	Medical Clearances for Authorized Dependents.....	5
7.3	Completion of Service and Early Termination Medical Examinations.....	6
8.0	PRE-DEPARTURE SUPPORT	6
9.0	UNV AND DEPENDENT TRAVEL	6
9.1	Travel on No-fee Passport.....	7
9.2	UNV Travel from Home of Record to Duty Station.....	7
9.3	Emergency Leave Travel.....	7
9.4	Medical Evacuation Travel.....	7
9.5	Early Termination Travel.....	7
9.6	Travel to Home of Record Following Completion of Service.....	7
10.0	BAGGAGE ALLOWANCES FOR UNV AND DEPENDENTS	8
10.1	Baggage Allowance for UNVs.....	8
10.2	Special Baggage Allowance.....	8
10.3	Baggage Allowance for Authorized Dependents.....	8

11.0	IN-COUNTRY ADMINISTRATION OF UNVs	8
11.1	Responsibilities of the United Nations.....	8
11.2	Responsibilities of Peace Corps Posts.....	9
12.0	INCOME TAXES	9
13.0	EMERGENCY EVACUATION	9
14.0	EARLY TERMINATION	10
14.1	Resignation.....	10
14.2	Administrative Separation.....	10
14.3	Medical Separation.....	10
14.4	Documentation.....	10
15.0	UNV EXTENSIONS AND TRANSFERS	11
15.1	UNV Extension.....	11
15.2	UNV Transfer.....	11
16.0	UNV DEATHS	11
17.0	POST-SERVICE BENEFITS	11
17.1	Readjustment Allowance.....	12
17.2	Executive Order 11103 Benefits.....	12
17.3	Benefits Under the Federal Employees Compensation Act.....	12

REFERENCED MANUAL SECTIONS

MS 201	Eligibility and Standards for Peace Corps Volunteer Service
MS 213	Volunteer No-Fee Passports
MS 214	Volunteer/Trainee Baggage
MS 218	Applicant, Trainee, and Volunteer Travel and Use of Hostels
MS 220	Leave For Volunteers/Trainees
MS 223	Volunteer/Trainee Readjustment Allowance
MS 231	Volunteer Education Loans
MS 262	Health Services for Trainees, Volunteers and Dependents
MS 264	Medical Evacuation of Trainees, Volunteers, and Dependents
MS 265	Overseas Disappearance and Death
MS 266	Post-Service Medical Benefits For Volunteers, Trainees, and Dependents
MS 281	Completion of Service Date Advancement and Extension of Service
MS 282	Transfers/Reassignments, Reinstatements and Reenrollments of Trainees and Volunteers
MS 284	Early Termination of Service
MS 285	Volunteer Description of Service Statement and Certificate of Group Health Coverage

1.0 PURPOSE

The United Nations Volunteer Program (UNV Program) was created in 1970 to provide technical assistance to developing countries in the form of highly-trained individuals and to give volunteers from every UN-member nation the opportunity to contribute to worldwide development. The first Peace Corps-sponsored United Nations Volunteer was fielded in 1971. The Peace Corps United Nations Volunteer Office (CC/UNV) was created to coordinate Peace Corps' involvement with the UNV Program. In this Manual Section, the Peace Corps United Nations Volunteer Office is referred to as PC/UNV; and a Peace Corps-sponsored United Nations Volunteer is referred to as a UNV.

2.0 POLICY

UNVs are legally considered to be Peace Corps Volunteers assigned to the UNV Program. They are required to take the Peace Corps oath, which makes them eligible to receive the pre-service and post-service benefits associated with Peace Corps Volunteer service.

Peace Corps serves two functions in the UNV Program: it assists in the support of U.S. citizens who serve as UNVs and it is a financial contributor.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Resident Representative is the in-country representative of the UNV Program and assumes full responsibility for all United Nations Volunteers in-country. Peace Corps does not participate in the programming, placement, or policy decisions affecting the administration of the UNV Program. Peace Corps' role focuses on recruitment, screening, transportation, and post-service benefits.

3.0 AUTHORITIES

The UNV Program was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations under Resolution # 2659 (XXV) of December 1970.

Peace Corps authorization for participation in the UNV Program is found in Title III of the Peace Corps Act, as amended, which states that "The Congress declares that it is the policy of the United States and a further purpose of this [Peace Corps] Act ... to encourage the development of and participation in, international voluntary service programs and activities."

Assignment of Volunteers to the UNV Program is authorized by Section 5(g) and 10(a)(1) of the Peace Corps Act.

4.0 QUALIFICATIONS

U.S. citizens who wish to become UNVs must apply through the Peace Corps and must meet all eligibility requirements stated in MS 201. Applicants with dependents may be considered for UNV service in accordance with MS 201. For some duty stations, only those without dependents can be considered. UNVs are not required to be fluent in the language of the country of service.

In addition to these requirements, UNV applicants must also meet the application requirements established by the UNV headquarters in Bonn, Germany (UNV Bonn), such as several years of full-time experience in the candidate's field subsequent to university degree or technical diploma. Prospective UNVs must be at least 25 years of age. Peace Corps may recommend an applicant to UNV Bonn; however, determination of that applicant's eligibility for service is solely the responsibility of UNV Bonn.

5.0 APPLICATION PROCEDURES

5.1 Standard Procedure

The co-sponsorship nature of UNV service requires that applicants complete two separate applications: one for the Peace Corps and one for the United Nations. Applicants should contact PC/UNV for applications and instructions, including instructions on field enrollments.

5.2 Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and Returned UNVs

A streamlined application process may be used for candidates who have completed a tour of Peace Corps or UNV service within the two years preceding their application to the UNV Program, and for candidates who are currently serving as Peace Corps Volunteers or UNVs. These applicants must complete the UNV application and the Peace Corps reenrollment documents in accordance with MS 282, paragraph 6.0. Where the reenrollment documents ask for references from the Peace Corps Country Director and other staff members, Returned United Nations Volunteers (RUNVs) should provide references from the UNV Program Officer and the UNDP Resident Representative.

6.0 SELECTION AND PLACEMENT

Applicants go through the following selection and placement procedures:

1. Peace Corps Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS) qualifies the application and forwards it to PC/UNV (RPCVs and RUNVs may qualify for the streamlined application process in paragraph 5.2).
2. PC/UNV reviews and forwards the application to UNV Bonn for evaluation of technical expertise and probability of placement based on the demand for the applicant's skills. Final acceptance and placement is under the authority of UNV Bonn.
3. Accepted applicants are notified of selection and are given six weeks to report to duty station, subject to prior medical clearance.
4. The application is forwarded to Peace Corps, which medically and dentally screens the applicant (see paragraph 7.0) and forwards the information to the UN Medical Service in Geneva (UN/Geneva). Final placement, with no exceptions, is contingent on an applicant's medical clearance by Peace Corps and the United Nations.

7.0 MEDICAL CLEARANCES

7.1 Medical Clearances for UNVs

U.S. citizens who have been accepted for UNV service are subject to the Peace Corps medical screening process detailed in MS 262, paragraph 2.0. Once an applicant has been medically and dentally cleared by Peace Corps, a copy of the completed examination and evaluation are forwarded to UN/Geneva. Peace Corps Medical Services (VS/MS) retains the original of the completed examination.

The medical forms available from PC/UNV meet the requirements of both VS/MS and UN/Geneva. Peace Corps VS/MS is responsible for reimbursing UNV applicants' medical and dental examinations and inoculation expenses up to the prescribed amount allowed for all Peace Corps Volunteer applicants.

7.2 Medical Clearances for Authorized Dependents

Peace Corps authorizes a medical and dental examination for up to two children (under 18 years of age) who accompany a UNV to his/her duty station. If more than two children are to accompany the UNV to post, the UNV must designate which children are the authorized dependents for the purposes of UNV service. These dependents are subject to the Peace Corps medical screening process detailed in MS 262, paragraph 2.0. The form entitled "Medical History and Examination for Foreign Service, for Children Eleven Years and Under" must be completed for each authorized dependent child eleven years of age or younger. All authorized dependent children above the age of eleven must complete the same forms as the applicant. Peace Corps is responsible for reimbursing medical and dental examination expenses of authorized dependent children up to the prescribed amount allowed for all Peace Corps Volunteer applicants.

Non-UNV spouses and non-authorized children accompanying UNVs do not receive any medical benefits from the federal government, nor are they eligible for workers' compensation benefits under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) or for medical evacuation assistance. Peace Corps, therefore, does not require the non-volunteer spouse, nor non-authorized dependents, to provide any medical information. (If a UNV dies as a result of his/her service, the surviving spouse is eligible to apply for certain benefits through FECA.)

7.3 Completion of Service and Early Termination Medical Examinations

PC/UNV provides UNVs and their authorized dependent children with the standard Peace Corps exit medical forms three months prior to their expected completion of service date. UNVs and dependents may choose between having the examinations done in-country or upon return to their home of record. Failure to obtain a complete medical examination may jeopardize benefits provided under FECA as described in MS 266. Peace Corps is responsible for reimbursing UNVs and their authorized dependent children for their exit medical exams up to the amount prescribed for Peace Corps Volunteers.

8.0 PRE-DEPARTURE SUPPORT

PC/UNV is responsible for advising UNVs of all pre-departure details including, but not limited to, visa applications, issuance of Peace Corps no-fee passports, travel arrangements, country orientation material, allotments and withdrawals from readjustment allowance, purchasing of savings bonds, and student loan deferments. During service, UNVs may defer or in limited cases receive partial forgiveness of certain student loan payments including interest as stated in MS 231, paragraphs 3.0 and 4.0. PC/UNV staff will sign the necessary forms as "Authorized Certifying Official."

9.0 UNV AND DEPENDENT TRAVEL

UNVs and their authorized dependents travel at the expense of Peace Corps and must, therefore, abide by the travel regulations and restrictions contained in MS 218. Receipts from pre-authorized expenses incurred by a UNV en route to duty station or returning to his/her home of record may be sent to PC/UNV for reimbursement.

9.1 Travel on No-fee Passport

UNVs travel on no-fee passports in accordance with MS 213.

9.2 UNV Travel From Home of Record to Duty Station

UNVs and authorized dependents will receive transportation to their duty stations in accordance with MS 218, paragraph 4.9. Peace Corps pays for the travel to duty station and return to home of record for a maximum of two authorized dependent

children under eighteen years of age. Peace Corps will not pay for the travel to and from duty station of a non-volunteer spouse.

9.3 Emergency Leave Travel

UNVs and authorized dependent children may receive reimbursement for emergency leave travel in accordance with MS 220, paragraph 5.0. Authorization of emergency leave is the responsibility of the UNDP Resident Representative, UNV Bonn, and PC/UNV.

9.4 Medical Evacuation Travel

UNVs and authorized dependent children will be authorized medical evacuation travel in accordance with MS 264. Peace Corps covers only the transportation and per diem expenses of a UNV medevac. Other medical costs are the responsibility of the UNV's medical insurance. Non-volunteer spouses and children not authorized as dependents by Peace Corps are not eligible for medical evacuation travel at Peace Corps' expense.

9.5 Early Termination Travel

UNVs and authorized dependent children will be authorized early termination travel in accordance with MS 284, paragraph 8.0.

NOTE: UNVs are required by the UN program to give six weeks' written notice prior to resignation. Failure to give this notice does not relieve Peace Corps of the responsibility to provide the UNV with an airline ticket to his/her home of record as provided in MS 284, paragraph 8.0.

9.6 Travel to Home of Record Following Completion of Service

UNVs and authorized dependent children will be authorized repatriation travel in accordance with MS 218, paragraph 4.11.

It is the responsibility of PC/UNV to arrange all travel, reimbursement of travel expenses, or cash-in-lieu of Government Travel Request (GTR) for UNVs and authorized dependent children at the completion or early termination of service. In countries where there are established Peace Corps Posts, PC/UNV may request assistance by communicating fiscal data to the Peace Corps Country Director along with repatriation instructions.

10.0 BAGGAGE ALLOWANCES FOR UNV AND DEPENDENTS

Transportation of UNVs' baggage is generally handled in accordance with MS 214, subject to the following additional provisions.

10.1 Baggage Allowance for UNVs

Accompanying baggage for pre-service and post-service travel is limited to a total of 100 pounds (45 kilos). Government Excess Baggage Allowance Tickets (GEBATs) will be issued for segments of travel where the free baggage allowance is less than 100 pounds. Clearance through customs and in-country transportation are the responsibility of the UNV and the UNDP Resident Representative.

10.2 Special Baggage Allowance

An additional special baggage allowance of 25 pounds (11 kilos) for such items as job-related books, supplies, or equipment and additional clothing or personal items necessitated by climatic or other country conditions may be authorized by PC/UNV after consultation with UNV Bonn. Such special allowances are subject to the availability of program funds.

In the case of an evacuation or other extraordinary circumstance, UNVs are authorized 125 pounds (57 kilos) of unaccompanied air freight from duty station to home of record. Whether an extraordinary circumstance exists will be determined by PC/UNV.

10.3 Baggage Allowance for Authorized Dependents

Accompanying baggage to and from duty station for each authorized dependent child is limited to a total weight of 70 pounds (32 kilos). GEBATs will be issued for segments of travel where the free baggage allowance is less than 70 pounds. Dependent spouses and non-authorized children do not receive any baggage allowances from Peace Corps.

11.0 IN-COUNTRY ADMINISTRATION OF UNVs

11.1 Responsibilities of the United Nations

In-country administration of UNVs is primarily the responsibility of the UNDP Resident Representative including, but not limited to, issues such as UNV leave, monthly living allowance, settling-in grant, housing, local transportation, health insurance, life and disability insurance, and security.

11.2 Responsibilities of Peace Corps Posts

UNVs serving in countries where there are established Peace Corps programs receive limited backup support from Peace Corps in-country staff, specifically in cases of emergency leave, medical evacuation, early termination, or completion of service. In such instances, PC/UNV will advise the in-country Peace Corps staff of the procedures to be followed in issuing return tickets, per diem, travel allowance, etc. and in charging these expenses to the PC/UNV budget.

Routine medical assistance is not the responsibility of the in-country Peace Corps Post. All UNVs are covered under a private medical insurance company through UNV Bonn and should settle any medical problems/needs directly with the insurer. Reimbursements for costs of completion of service medical examinations are the financial responsibility of Peace Corps VS/MS.

Should it be determined that a UNV or authorized dependent child must be medically evacuated (based on consultation between the UNV's physician, the VS/MS nurse at Peace Corps headquarters, and UNV Bonn) PC/UNV may request assistance from the Peace Corps Post for the transportation of the UNV or authorized dependent child to a third country. Fiscal data will be communicated by VS/MS to the Peace Corps Post or to UNV Bonn in the absence of an in-country Peace Corps Post.

12.0 INCOME TAXES

The readjustment and leave allowance benefits for UNVs are subject to federal income tax. At the end of each year, PC/UNV will forward W-2 forms reflecting the readjustment allowance accrued during that tax year to the UNVs at their duty stations.

The UNV's readjustment allowance may be used to cover taxes that may be owed. PC/UNV will provide information to UNVs on the federal income tax treatment of other allowances. Depending on the state of residence, UNVs may also be required to pay state or local taxes. Information on the latter must be obtained directly by the UNV from the taxing authority.

13.0 EMERGENCY EVACUATION

UNVs are included in all UN host country emergency evacuation plans. Upon arrival at duty station, UNVs are instructed to register with the in-country Peace Corps Post if there is one, or at the U.S. Embassy in non-Peace Corps countries. In cases where the U.S. Embassy and/or Peace Corps evacuate their personnel and the UN does not, PC/UNV will consult with the Peace Corps Regional Director and UNV Bonn, to determine whether or not evacuation should be extended to UNVs in the country in question.

14.0 EARLY TERMINATION

14.1 Resignation

Should a UNV decide to resign, PC/UNV will arrange repatriation. With respect to travel, see MS 284, paragraph 8.0. UNV Bonn requires that UNVs give six weeks written notice before resignation.

14.2 Administrative Separation

Peace Corps may terminate a UNV's service before its expiration date. Ordinarily, six weeks' advance notice will be provided. But in emergency situations, when it is determined by PC/UNV to be in the best interest of the Peace Corps or the UNV program, no notice period -- or a lesser notice period -- may be authorized.

Guidelines for administrative separation are provided in MS 284, paragraph 4.0. The Deciding Official for administrative separation of a UNV is the PC/UNV Program Coordinator.

UNV Bonn may also terminate a UNV's service whether or not the grounds for removal would be grounds for termination of Peace Corps service. UNV Bonn will indicate the effective date for the UNV's removal from the UNV Program, and the UNV's status as a Peace Corps Volunteer shall also terminate on that date. The removed UNV shall not be entitled to be considered for a non-UNV Peace Corps assignment.

14.3 Medical Separation

Peace Corps VS/MS may terminate a UNV's status as a Peace Corps Volunteer before its expiration when a medical condition arises that precludes continued service. Guidelines are provided in MS 284, paragraph 3.0.

A decision by UNV Bonn to medically terminate shall also be grounds for termination of the UNV's status as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

14.4 Documentation

PC/UNV is responsible for coordinating early termination exit provisions with UNV Bonn, the Peace Corps Country Director in the host country (if applicable), and with the UNV. As Peace Corps' involvement is as a sponsoring agency only, and it is not actively involved in the in-country programming or administration of UNVs, UNVs will not be provided with the option of returning to Peace Corps/Washington for consultation or appeal unless the early termination is initiated by the Peace Corps for reasons giving rise to an appeal under MS 284. Any recommendation required for future volunteer service following an early termination must come from UNV Bonn.

15.0 UNV EXTENSIONS AND TRANSFERS

15.1 UNV Extension

At the request of UNV Bonn and the UNDP Resident Representative, PC/UNV may extend the service of a UNV, subject to availability of funds.

Medical clearance is required for all extending UNVs. PC/UNV will forward the necessary forms to the UNV. The UNV must obtain clearance from Peace Corps VS/MS before an extension can be granted.

For extensions of 12 months or longer, subject to any UNV Program requirements, UNVs are entitled to 30 days of special leave privileges as described in MS 281, paragraph 4.0.

15.2 UNV Transfer

At the request of UNV Bonn and the UNDP Resident Representative, UNVs may be transferred to a second country after securing medical clearance from VS/MS.

16.0 UNV DEATHS

Peace Corps Special Services (VS/SS), in conjunction with PC/UNV, is responsible for coordinating arrangements with UNV Bonn and with the UNV's next-of-kin for transportation of the remains and the personal belongings of a deceased UNV in accordance with MS 265.

17.0 POST-SERVICE BENEFITS

Upon satisfactory completion of UNV service, UNVs are eligible for a number of benefits to the same extent they are available to other former Peace Corps Volunteers including, but not limited to, the following: Readjustment Allowance, Executive Order 11103 benefits, Federal Employees Compensation Act benefits, credit for service in connection with future federal government employment, Returned Volunteer Services' publications (including the job bulletin *Hotline*) and programs, and Career Center privileges.

17.1 Readjustment Allowance

UNVs are entitled to the readjustment allowance benefits in accordance with MS 223, paragraph 9.0.

Establishment and routine maintenance of readjustment allowance accounts is the responsibility of both Peace Corps Volunteer and Staff Payroll Services (OPBF/F/VSPS) and PC/UNV.

17.2 Executive Order 11103 Benefits

UNVs who successfully complete their service (of one year or more) are awarded one year of eligibility for non-competitive appointment to federal employment. PC/UNV is responsible for providing the letter detailing the eligibility and entitlements of the UNV for E.O. 11103 benefits described in MS 285, paragraph 3.0.

The decision regarding eligibility for E.O. 11103 benefits for UNVs who did not complete a full term of service but did complete at least one year of service will be made by PC/UNV.

17.3 Benefits Under the Federal Employees Compensation Act

UNVs are eligible, upon their return from service and under certain circumstances, for worker's compensation benefits under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) for illness or injuries contracted or sustained during their volunteer service. Benefits are administered by the Department of Labor and are described in MS 266.

FECA documentation is the responsibility of the UNV and the UNV's attending physician. Peace Corps Medical Officers are not responsible for UNVs in their country of assignment.