

# **MASTER'S INTERNATIONAL**

## ***A GUIDE TO DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING A PROGRAM ON YOUR CAMPUS***



**Peace Corps**

Volunteer Recruitment & Selection  
Office of Domestic Programs

Revised September 2003

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## *Introduction*

Since its inception in 1961, the Peace Corps has enjoyed a productive and mutually beneficial relationship with academe. The Master's International (MI) program was established in 1987 as a natural outgrowth of this relationship to address some of the challenges inherent in higher education and international development.

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:

- Providing faculty and campus administrators options for overseas experiential learning opportunities for their students;
- Enabling prospective Peace Corps applicants to “have it all” by combining Peace Corps service with a graduate school experience; and
- Meeting 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 two semesters of on-campus academic course work, followed by an overseas Peace Corps assignment relevant to their field of study. After their Peace Corps service, students complete theses, professional papers, practicum requirements, progress reports, and/or other 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 to assist you in developing and maintaining an MI program at your university. It will provide a history and description of the program and its goals. In addition, there are a number of appendices, which provide background information on the Peace Corps and participating MI schools. Feel free to contact other MI universities for information and insight. Information on these schools can be found in **Appendix D**.

## *History, Description, & Goals of Master's International*

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 170,000 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 and the Caribbean, and the Pacific (please refer to the Peace Corps website for country specific information). Peace Corps Volunteers work for two years, 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 people with a liberal arts degree, a strong back, and a good head on their shoulders, but there are also assignments for individuals with specialized expertise in agribusiness, agriculture, business administration, English teaching, environmental education, forestry, nonprofit organizational development, and public health.

“My experience as a Peace Corps Volunteer really altered my life. It’s interesting to think about countries and cultures in theory. But when you’re experiencing [it] ... it’s alive all around you. It’s a completely different feeling.”

Kristi Sarosik  
Peace Corps  
Volunteer, Nepal,  
1992-1994

The MI program is designed to address some of these needs for highly skilled Volunteers while providing graduate students with superior practical training and professional experience. The advanced degree also affords students an added level of credibility among their host country counterparts.

Since the first MI program was established at Rutgers University in 1987, more than 40 universities now offer MI programs on their campuses. Students have pursued graduate studies as MI “Student-Volunteers” in countries as diverse as Bolivia, Cameroon, Ecuador, Gabon, Kazakhstan, Paraguay, the Philippines, Thailand, and the Ukraine.

MI students receive several benefits from participating in the program. International field experience, along with second language fluency often acquired during service, gives students a competitive edge in the international job market. All aspects of the Peace Corps field experience 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 experience, 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. (For further information regarding student loans, see **Appendix H**; for information regarding non-competitive eligibility, please see **Appendix I**.)

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. Furthermore, while students enjoy technical support from their faculty advisors, the advisors, in turn, expand their own academic and experiential base through the students' work in new overseas environments. The MI program is also a useful recruitment tool for universities seeking creative ways to boost admission efforts. Most MI schools will attest that the program attracts high-caliber students who are intelligent, 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.



South Africa, 1998

## ***Roles & Responsibilities of the University & The Peace Corps***

### **The University Coordinator**

A 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 recruiting students.

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, it is recommended that at least one faculty member also 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. Other responsibilities include

- Responding to inquiries from prospective MI students;
- Advising existing students; and
- Corresponding with the Peace Corps MI program coordinator on a quarterly basis.

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

### **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 the 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 fulfills existing academic requirements for a thesis, a professional paper, a practicum, student teaching, independent study, or foreign language proficiency.

“I was drawn to the Master’s International program because it was the perfect way to bring in all of the elements that I wanted in my future career as a teacher. I was able to relate to students from around the world and test intercultural communication activities with people from other cultures.”

Sharon Dirlam  
School for  
International  
Training,  
MA/TESOL,  
Peace Corps  
Volunteer, Russia,  
1996-1998

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.

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

- Reduced or waived fees (including but not limited to waivers of out-of-state tuition);
- Credit for language skills gained during Peace Corps service; and
- Eligibility for applicable funding sources.

### **The Peace Corps MI Program Coordinator**

The Peace Corps MI program coordinator (MIPC) is the Peace Corps employee responsible for the general oversight and advocacy of the Master's International program. The Peace Corps MIPC serves as the primary liaison between Peace Corps operations and participating MI schools; supports new program development; helps universities maintain and strengthen existing programs; provides support to MI students completing the Peace Corps application process; and seeks out opportunities to promote the program to internal and external audiences.

### **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.

The office that handles student applications to the Peace Corps is called the **Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS)**. VRS is divided into two major operations: **Recruitment** and **Placement**. MI students will find themselves dealing with both Recruitment and Placement as they prepare for their assignment.

The **Recruitment** operation is made up of 11 regional offices, located throughout the United States, which are responsible for receiving applications and initiating the rest of the application process. Students will submit their Peace Corps applications to the regional office responsible for recruitment activities in their state. (A list of regional offices can be found in **Appendix B**; further information on the Peace Corps application process can be found on pages 9 and 10, and in **Appendix G**.)

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. 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 countries suited to their personal 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.*

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, the **Office of Medical Services (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 that 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. Information on medical conditions that may impact Peace Corps service can be found in **Appendix J**.

**The Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research** (“The Center”) houses Peace Corps’ sector specialists. The Center supports the Peace Corps’ overseas staff in the development of new projects and training models. The Center also operates as a clearinghouse for technical resources, which are made available to Peace Corps Volunteers free of charge.

Every Peace Corps post has a **Peace Corps Country Director (CD)** who supervises one or more **Associate Peace Corps Directors (APCDs)**. 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.

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 Coordinator for Volunteer Safety and Overseas Security, the Safety and Security Specialist, and three Regional Safety and Security Officers, one posted in each region, make up this unit. The Office of Safety and Security has as its objectives:

- To plan, coordinate and facilitate activities of the Volunteer Safety Council according to its Operational Plan;
- To consult with and build consensus among Peace Corps leadership and other Peace Corps offices on a broad range of Volunteer safety and overseas security issues;
- To represent the Peace Corps' safety and security interests and positions at inter-agency forums;
- To oversee implementation of safety and security improvement strategies developed by posts.

The policy on Peace Corps Volunteer safety and security and additional information regarding guidelines for Volunteer conduct are listed in **Appendix K**.



## *Applying to Master's International*

Applying to the MI program requires that prospective students apply and be accepted to both the university and the Peace Corps. Students are encouraged to apply to both simultaneously, using the university's admission deadline(s) as their guide. Applications for Peace Corps service are accepted throughout the year.

The Peace Corps application process includes medical, legal, and suitability screening. It is useful for the UC to understand the Peace Corps' application process and the roles of the Peace Corps recruiter and the Peace Corps Placement staff.

Interested students should contact the UC and a Peace Corps recruiter to discuss admission to the university and to initiate the Peace Corps application process. Applicants must be prepared to tell the Peace Corps recruiter:

- The MI school(s) to which they are applying;
- The degree they wish to pursue; and
- An estimated date of availability for Peace Corps service, based on their academic program of study.

Once a letter of acceptance is received from the MI school that the student plans to attend, the student must then provide a copy of the acceptance letter to the regional Peace Corps recruiter. After the recruiter has conducted the initial interview and received the applicant's letter of acceptance, he/she will nominate the applicant to the Placement Office. This nomination of the applicant for Peace Corps service is the first step in the processing of the application, and allows for the initiation of medical, legal, and suitability screening. Ideally, these processes are completed in sufficient time so that the applicant is cleared for Peace Corps service before on-campus studies begin.

"My Master of Public Health was in health communication and education. I ended up doing exactly that type of work in Cape Verde. I served at the National Center for Health Development where we designed health education media campaigns. The experience I had in Cape Verde is something I never would have gotten as a person fresh out of graduate school in the United States."

Sapna Padte, School of Public Health, Tulane University  
Peace Corps Volunteer, Cape Verde, 1995-1997

MI students are encouraged to turn in their medical kits nine to 12 months before they plan to depart. Once the medical kit has been completed and sent in, the Placement process begins. Students will be tentatively assigned to an appropriate program, and linked with a Placement staff member at the Peace Corps Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Students become eligible for placement approximately four to six months prior to their expressed availability date. The Placement staff will hold applications until assignments that suit the applicant's time frame and areas of specialty become open. The Placement officer then issues the MI student an invitation that provides specific information on the country of assignment, project background, and date of departure. Depending on the length of the graduate program, Peace Corps applications can remain pending in the Placement Office for up to 12 months prior to invitation to a specific project.

Beginning with the application and throughout the nomination and invitation stages, all applicants must meet the following requirements:

- **Application:** The application is reviewed to ensure that the applicant has requisite skills, motivation, and personal qualities to succeed as a Peace Corps Volunteer.
- **References:** Once the applicant has been nominated, references are requested from individuals who can attest to the productive competence, emotional maturity, social sensitivity, and motivation of the applicant.
- **Legal Clearance:** All applicants must complete a National Agency Clearance form and fingerprint form. Depending on the applicant's situation, a divorce decree, financial statements, proof of U.S. citizenship, etc., may also be required. Both the reference review and legal clearance begins upon nomination.
- **Medical Clearance:** All applicants must complete a full physical and dental examination and be cleared for service by the Peace Corps Office of Medical Services. Further information on specific medical, dental, or psychological conditions may also be required. As with the reference review and legal clearance, medical clearance begins upon nomination.

Students will be nominated for Peace Corps service on the assumption that they will satisfactorily complete the academic portion of the Master's International program. If a student does not attend graduate school or complete the agreed curriculum as required by the university program, the nomination will be withdrawn. In some cases, individuals may have their applications re-evaluated for nomination based on other qualifications they may have outside of their participation in the MI program. If an individual's status should change following nomination, he or she may be subject to reconsideration or disqualification. For example, if an MI participant decides to get married prior to Peace Corps service, the application must be re-evaluated prior to placement overseas.

The Peace Corps recruiter and Placement staff can assist students in tracking the progress of their applications and provide information to help complete the process. While the application process can take some time, this process is essential in providing our host countries with highly qualified, physically, emotionally, and financially prepared Volunteers. Peace Corps applications are available online at [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov) and through the regional recruiting offices. A listing of these offices can be found in **Appendix B**.



Asia, 1998

## ***Recruiting Participants***

Effective recruitment of interested students into the MI program is key to the success of the program. The task of program promotion is shared between the UC, the Peace Corps regional offices, and the Peace Corps Master's International Program Coordinator. Historically, the program has attracted two types of students: 1) individuals interested in graduate school who learn about the Peace Corps as an added benefit; and 2) individuals interested in the Peace Corps who seek graduate study to qualify in their field of interest. The combined efforts of the Peace Corps and the university attract a pool of high-caliber students to the program.

### **Responsibilities of the University Coordinator**

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. The following is a listing 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
- Career centers
- University websites
- 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 groups on campus or in the community

“The MI program students have excelled in the Master's in Public Health program in International Health. They bring the spark of enthusiasm for service and cross-cultural work. We provide them with the theoretical and practical foundations in development work. It's an unbeatable combination.”

Dr. Barbara Anderson, Professor of International Health, Loma Linda University, School of Public Health, Peace Corps Volunteer, Ethiopia, 1971-1972

### **Responsibilities of the Peace Corps Recruitment Staff**

The Peace Corps' regional offices schedule recruitment trips at participating MI schools each academic year. The Peace Corps MIPC will keep the recruitment staff updated about the MI programs offered nationwide. Recruiters provide this information to interested individuals in the form of promotional brochures and flyers during campaign activities.

The Peace Corps MIPC is responsible for producing informational materials on the MI program, including flyers, program catalogs, and this guide. The Peace Corps MIPC also makes 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. In addition, complete information about the MI program is available on the Peace Corps website [www.peacecorps.gov/gradschool/masters](http://www.peacecorps.gov/gradschool/masters). Direct links to the schools and University Coordinators are available via the Peace Corps website.



Mongolia, 1998

## *Master's International Coordination*

### **Role of the University Coordinator**

The UC is generally an academic dean, department chair, or professor. The UC is responsible for handling inquiries, processing applications in collaboration with the admissions department, and advising the students on academic questions. The Peace Corps MIPC works closely with the UC to meet the shared goals of the Master's International program.

The Peace Corps receives requests from host countries for Volunteers in a variety of skill areas. As mentioned previously, the Peace Corps responds to these requests by recruiting applicants that match the level of skills and experience requested by each country. Once the Volunteers are overseas, they are responsible for fulfilling the goals of their assigned projects as designed by the Peace Corps staff, host country officials, and other Peace Corps Volunteers. Many Peace Corps Volunteers take on individual secondary projects in addition to their assigned projects. To ensure the success and satisfaction of the MI program participants, it is essential that the UC and the Peace Corps MIPC work together to create realistic expectations of Volunteer service among faculty and MI participants.

The UC should maintain regular communication with students on campus, and during their Peace Corps service. During the academic year, the UC works to clarify the students' academic and communication requirements, which include:

- Informing the UC of changes or delays that occur during the Peace Corps placement process
- Scheduling regular meetings with the UC prior to departure
- Updating address and phone number contact information
- Confirming communication expectations of the UC and the faculty advisor
- Submitting quarterly or biannual reports during service
- Determining how students will share their work with counterparts and staff in their host countries
- Meeting deadlines for the submission of master's projects
- Meeting degree requirements by the completion of the master's project

In addition to academic duties, the UC is requested to complete and submit a quarterly student report to the Peace Corps MIPC, the format of which will be generated by the Peace Corps MIPC. The purpose of the report will be to confirm the individuals' matriculating as MI students.

### **Role of the Peace Corps Master’s International Program Coordinator**

The Peace Corps MIPC will be in contact with the UC on a regular basis to discuss program progress. The updates will be an opportunity for both parties to identify the strengths of the program and areas for improvement. The Peace Corps MIPC also serves as a point of contact for students working their way through the Peace Corps application process and can step in to resolve confusion or information gaps as they may occur.

### **Loan Deferment and Forgiveness**

MI students with government guaranteed educational loans may qualify for loan deferment (and, in the case of Perkins loans, partial forgiveness) during their Peace Corps service. Detailed information on loan deferment and forgiveness can be found in **Appendix H**.



Uzbekistan, 1998

## *Appendices*

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## Appendix A

### *Peace Corps Headquarters and Acronyms*

#### **Peace Corps**

Master's International Program  
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, option "2" ext.1812  
Peace Corps website: [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov)  
MI web page: [www.peacecorps.gov/gradschool/masters](http://www.peacecorps.gov/gradschool/masters)

#### **Peace Corps Acronyms**

Associate Peace Corps Director	APCD
Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research	The Center
Country Director	CD
Domestic Programs	DP
General Counsel	GC
Master's International Program	MI Program/MIP
Memorandum of Cooperation	MOC
University Coordinator	UC
Peace Corps Volunteer	PCV
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer	RPCV
Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of	VRS
Peace Corps Master's International Program Coordinator	Peace Corps MIPC

## Appendix B

### *Peace Corps Regional Offices*

**Atlanta Region** (AL, FL, GA, MS, PR, SC, TN, USVI)  
Peace Corps Recruitment Office  
100 Alabama Street  
Building 1924, Suite 2R70  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
404.562.3456  
Fax: 404.562.3455  
E-mail: [Atlanta@peacecorps.gov](mailto:Atlanta@peacecorps.gov)

**Boston Region** (MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)  
Peace Corps Recruitment Office  
Tip O'Neill Federal Building  
10 Causeway Street, Suite 450  
Boston, MA 02222-1099  
617.565.5555  
Fax: 617.565.5339  
E-mail: [boston@peacecorps.gov](mailto:boston@peacecorps.gov)

**Chicago Region** (IL, IN, KY, MI, MO, OH)  
Peace Corps Recruitment Office  
55 West Monroe Street, Suite 450  
Chicago, IL 60603  
312.353.4990 ext.7716  
Fax: 312.353.4192  
E-mail: [Chicago@peacecorps.gov](mailto:Chicago@peacecorps.gov)

**Dallas Region** (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX)  
Peace Corps Recruitment Office  
207 South Houston Street, Room 527  
Dallas, TX 75202  
214.253.5400  
Fax: 214.767.5483  
E-mail: [dallas@peacecorps.gov](mailto:dallas@peacecorps.gov)

**Denver Region** (CO, KS, NE, UT, WY)  
Peace Corps Recruitment Office  
1999 Broadway, Suite 2205  
Denver, CO 80202-3050  
303.844.7020  
Fax: 303.844.7010  
E-mail: [denver@peacecorps.gov](mailto:denver@peacecorps.gov)

**Los Angeles Region** (AZ, Southern CA)  
Peace Corps Recruitment Office  
2361 Rosecrans Avenue., Suite 155  
El Segunda, CA 90245-0916  
310.235.7444  
Fax: 310.235.7442  
E-mail: [lainfo@peacecorps.gov](mailto:lainfo@peacecorps.gov)

**Minneapolis Region** (IA, MN, ND, SD, WI)  
Peace Corps Recruitment Office  
330 Second Avenue, South, Suite 420  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
612.348.1480  
Fax: 612.348.1474  
E-mail: [minneapolis@peacecorps.gov](mailto:minneapolis@peacecorps.gov)

**New York Region** (CT, NY, NJ, CT, PA)  
Peace Corps Recruitment Office  
201 Varick Street, Suite 1025  
New York, NY 10014  
212.352.5440  
Fax: 212.352.5442  
E-mail: [nyinfo@peacecorps.gov](mailto:nyinfo@peacecorps.gov)

**San Francisco Region** (Northern CA, HI, NV)  
Peace Corps Recruitment Office  
333 Market Street, Suite 600  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
415.977.8800  
Fax: 415.977.8803  
E-mail: [sfinfo@peacecorps.gov](mailto:sfinfo@peacecorps.gov)

**Seattle Region** (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA)  
Peace Corps Recruitment Office  
2001 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1776  
Seattle, WA 98121  
206.553.5490  
Fax: 206.553.2343  
E-mail: [seattle@peacecorps.gov](mailto:seattle@peacecorps.gov)

**Washington, D.C. Region**  
(DC, DE, MD, NC, VA, WV)  
Peace Corps Recruitment Office  
1525 Wilson Boulevard., Suite 250  
Arlington, VA 22209  
703.235.9191  
Fax: 703.235.9189  
E-mail: [dcinfo@peacecorps.gov](mailto:dcinfo@peacecorps.gov)

## Appendix C

### *Master's International: Questions and Answers for Prospective Students*



#### **What Is the Master's International Program?**

Many U.S. colleges and universities have graduate programs that are particularly relevant to the challenges that Peace Corps Volunteers face overseas. In cooperation with the Peace Corps, more than 40 institutions now offer an opportunity to simultaneously earn an advanced degree and gain international experience. As a Master's International student, you can earn your master's degree by completing approximately one year of intensive on-campus study, then serve for two years in the Peace Corps in an assignment related to your course of study. These programs are designed to help you develop skills that are in high demand among countries requesting Peace Corps Volunteers.

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

#### **What Will I Do as a Peace Corps Volunteer?**

MI students are placed in projects relevant to their course of study. Below are some of the many projects in which MI students have worked:

- A public health project in Madagascar to introduce improved nutrition and hygiene practices to school children and their mothers;
- An agricultural project in Nepal introducing more efficient crop production, pest management, seed production, and storage techniques to increase both food production and income;
- A forestry project in Paraguay to promote 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 to assist entrepreneurs in gaining practical business skills, including inventory management, accounting, marketing, and accessing credit; and
- A project in Kyrgyzstan to teach English to secondary students and to introduce 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?**

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

- Transportation to and from the country of service;
- Living and housing expenses;
- Full medical and dental care;
- Vacation time and allowance;
- Cancellation or deferment of certain government-backed educational loans;
- Just over \$6,000 readjustment allowance earned upon completion of 27 months of service (can be used to defray tuition costs);
- Career counseling and support; and
- Non-competitive eligibility for federal government jobs upon completion of a full term of service.

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. Depending on availability at specific universities, Master's International students may also compete for research or teaching assistantships. These benefits are unique to each school.

## **How Do I Apply to the Master's International Program?**

Master's International students must apply and be accepted to both the Peace Corps and at least one of the participating Master's International schools. The Peace Corps application will be evaluated based on the agency's selection criteria for Volunteers, including medical and legal clearances. The application to the school will be evaluated on the school's own admission requirements.

To be eligible for Peace Corps service, you must be a U.S. citizen, in good general health, and at least 18 years of age. There is no upper age limit. Married couples without dependent children may be accepted, but both spouses must qualify for a Volunteer assignment at the same overseas post.

We recommend that your Peace Corps application and the application for admission to the MI school be submitted simultaneously, using the admission deadline of the school as your guide. This allows enough time for the necessary medical, legal, and other clearances from the Peace Corps to be completed before committing yourself to the academic portion of the program. Once these processes have been completed, you will receive preliminary clearance for Peace Corps service contingent on the successful completion of your academic course requirements.

We ask that you submit a brief letter of intent to the Peace Corps recruiter that states the following:

- The MI school(s) to which you are applying (if you are applying to more than one school, please indicate which school is your first choice);
- The degree program you will pursue;
- When you expect to begin classes;
- When you expect to be ready to start the Peace Corps portion of your program; and
- Once you receive a letter of acceptance from the MI university of your choice, please provide the Recruitment Office a copy of the letter, so that you may be nominated to Placement.

### **When Will I Receive My Peace Corps Assignment?**

While you are completing your academic course work, your Peace Corps application will be kept active with the Peace Corps' Placement Unit in Washington, D.C., which is responsible for assessing and placing applicants in specific projects. The Peace Corps' host countries submit requests for Volunteers at least six months prior to the scheduled starting date of training. At this time, Placement staff will select a project that most closely matches your technical and language skills.

As you begin your academic studies, you are encouraged to contact the Placement staff to advise them of your academic progress and to verify the completion of your Peace Corps application. The Placement staff will note any interests you may have or project focus. It is important to understand, however, *that placements can be made only where a Volunteer with your skills has been requested*. The more flexible you are about your assignment, the more satisfied you will be with your overall experience as a Master's International student and a Peace Corps Volunteer.

### **How Does Peace Corps Determine the Degree Programs Offered Through the MI Program?**

Degrees are offered in areas of study where the Peace Corps has sufficient need for Volunteers and has received host country requests.

## **May I Apply to More Than One MI School?**

Yes. We encourage you to apply to as many MI schools as you wish. Upon receipt of acceptance from an MI institution you must provide your Peace Corps recruiter with a copy of this letter, which then allows the recruiter to nominate you to Placement.

## **Where Might I Serve in the Peace Corps?**

The Peace Corps will extend an invitation to you to serve in a specific country and project approximately four to six months before the date you indicate you are available to start your Peace Corps training. There are many factors involved in making a placement, including the selection criteria set by the countries, your language skills, and possible medical accommodation issues. You are encouraged to express preferences you may have regarding your job assignment and the reasons for the preferences on your application, but *please keep in mind that it is not always possible to place you in a specific country or project preference.*

## **How Long Do I Serve in the Peace Corps?**

Peace Corps Volunteers serve for two years. There is an additional three months of technical, cross-cultural, and language training, which takes place in your country of service prior to your beginning work on your project. Two years may seem like a long time, but MI graduates will tell you that it takes at least one year simply to get adjusted, learn the language, and establish the necessary credibility in your community. We encourage you to be patient with this process and yourself—the results are worth the wait.

## **As a Master's International Student, Will I Be Treated Differently From Other Peace Corps Volunteers?**

You will have the same responsibilities that are required of other Peace Corps Volunteers. You will want to explain your status as an MI student to the Peace Corps staff in your country and discuss with them ways in which you can approach a study project in a sensitive and culturally appropriate manner. The Peace Corps MI program coordinator can also support you in preparing for this aspect of your Peace Corps service.

## **I Already Have a Master's Degree. Can I Get a Ph.D. Through the Master's International Program?**

The MI program 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, you earn academic credit for your Peace Corps service. In some cases, the school will waive the cost of these credits. You will have the benefit of your faculty advisor's technical expertise and support as you identify and address areas of need overseas. In addition, you will return to the United States with two years of professional, international experience incorporated into your graduate degree.

## **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 cancelled, and all costs associated with your Peace Corps experience are covered by the Peace Corps, including transportation, medical care, and living expenses. In addition, the Peace Corps provides just over \$6,000 readjustment allowance, which is paid to you at the end of your two year assignment. Most schools provide students with an opportunity for research or teaching assistantships, scholarships, or tuition waivers for the cost of credits earned while in the Peace Corps.

## **What Happens If I Don't Complete My Peace Corps Service?**

You will need to contact the university at which you are enrolled and your MI Coordinator to determine how the early termination of your Peace Corps service will affect the completion of your master's degree.

## **How Do I Start the Application Process?**

You will first want to identify which MI school(s) and program(s) interest you the most. We encourage you to make a preliminary call to the school(s) to discuss your interest and qualifications. The next step is to obtain a Peace Corps application and an application to the MI school(s). You can fill out a Peace Corps application on line at [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov).

## Appendix D

### *Discipline Areas For Participating Master's International Graduate Schools*

#### *Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine, and Animal Science*

**Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University — Tallahassee, FL**

Master of Science with an option in International Programs with an emphasis in Agribusiness, Animal Science, or Plant Science

[International Agriculture](#)

**Purdue University — West Lafayette, IN**

Master of Science in Entomology with special emphasis in Crop Extension, Crop Protection, and Integrated Pest Management

[Entomology](#)

**University of California — Davis, CA**

Master of Horticulture and Agronomy; Master of Science in Plant Biology; Master of Science in International Agricultural Development; Master of Preventative Veterinary Medicine

[College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences](#)

**University of Georgia — Athens, GA**

Master of Agricultural Economics

[Agriculture/Environmental Science](#)

**University of Nebraska — Lincoln, NE**

Master of Business Administration with a specialization in Agribusiness

[College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources/College of Business Administration](#)

**University of Wisconsin — Madison, WI**

Master of Arts in Agriculture and Applied Economics; Master of Science in Life Sciences Communication; Master of Science in Animal Science; Master of Science in Horticulture

[College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#)

**Washington State University — Pullman, WA**

Master of Science in Agricultural Economics, Entomology, Soil Science, and Horticulture

[International Agriculture/Natural Resources](#)

***Business, Economic/Community Development,  
and Urban Planning***

**Arizona State University East — Mesa, AZ**

Master of Science in Agribusiness

[Agribusiness and Resource Management](#)

**Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University — Tallahassee, FL**

Master of Science with an option in International Programs with an emphasis in Agribusiness

[International Agriculture](#)

**Florida State University — Tallahassee, FL**

Master of Science in Urban Planning

[Urban and Regional Planning](#)

**Georgia State University — Atlanta, GA**

Master of Arts in Economics, or Economics - Policy Track; Master of Science in Urban Studies

[Economics, Public Administration, and Urban Studies](#)

**Illinois State University — Normal, IL**

Master of Political Science with a concentration in Non Profit Management and Community Development

[Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development](#)

**Monterey Institute of International Studies — Monterey, CA**

Master of Business Administration

[Fisher Graduate School of International Business](#)

**School For International Training — Brattleboro, VT**

Master of Arts in Sustainable Development

[Intercultural Management](#)

**University of Cincinnati — OH**

Master of Community Planning

[School of Planning](#)

**University of Georgia — Athens, GA**

Master of Agricultural Economics

[Agriculture/Environmental Science](#)

**University of Nebraska — Lincoln, NE**

Master of Business Administration with a specialization in Agribusiness

[College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources/College of Business Administration](#)

**University of the Pacific — Stockton, CA**

Master of Business Administration

[Business](#)

***Business, Economic/Community Development,  
and Urban Planning*** -continued

**University of South Florida — Tampa, FL**

Master of Business Administration

[Business Administration](#)

**University of Wisconsin — Madison, WI**

Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning

[Urban and Regional Planning](#)

**Virginia Polytechnic Institute and University — Blacksburg, VA**

Master of Urban and Regional Planning

[Architecture and Urban Studies](#)

**Western Michigan University — Kalamazoo, MI**

Master of Development Administration

[Political Science](#)

## *Education and Teaching English*

**American University — Washington, D.C.**

Master of Arts in TESOL

[TESOL Program](#)

**California State University — Sacramento, CA**

Master of Arts in TESOL

[English](#)

**Colorado State University — Ft. Collins, CO**

Master of Arts in Literature, Teaching, Rhetoric and Composition, and Teaching of English as a Foreign or Second Language; Master of Fine Arts in TESL or Creative Writing

[English](#)

**Georgia State University — Atlanta, GA**

Master of Arts in TESOL

[Linguistics/English as a Second Language](#)

**Humboldt State University — Arcata, CA**

Master of Arts in English with an emphasis on TESL

[English](#)

**Monterey Institute of International Studies — Monterey, CA**

Master of Arts in TESOL

[Graduate School of Language and Educational Linguistics](#)

**Saint Michael's College — Colchester, VT**

Master of Arts in TESL

[TESL](#)

**School For International Training — Brattleboro, VT**

Master of Art in Teaching or International Education

[Language Teacher Training](#)

**University of Nevada — Las Vegas, NV**

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

[English](#)

**University of South Florida — Tampa, FL**

Master of Arts in Special Education

[Special Education](#)

## ***Environmental Studies, Forestry, and Natural Resources***

### **Bard College — Annandale-on-Hudson, NY**

Master of Science in Environmental Policy; Professional Certificate in Environmental Policy  
[Environmental Policy](#)

### **Colorado State University — Fort Collins, CO**

Master of Science in Forestry; Master of Science through the following departments: Earth Resources, Fishery and Wildlife Biology, Forest Sciences; Natural Resources Recreation and Tourism, and Rangeland Ecosystem Science  
[Forestry and Natural Resources](#)

### **Florida International University — Miami, FL**

Master of Science in Environmental Studies with a concentration in Biological Management  
[Environmental Studies](#)

### **Michigan Technological University — Houghton, MI**

Master of Science in Civil Environmental Engineering; Master of Science in Forestry  
[Civil and Environmental Engineering](#)

### **University of Idaho — Moscow, ID**

Master of Natural Resources  
[Forestry/International Programs](#)

### **University of Minnesota — Saint Paul, MN**

Master of Science with an option in one of eight tracks within the Department of Forest Resources and in the Department of Wood and Paper Science  
[Natural Resource Science and Management](#)

### **University of Montana — Missoula, MT**

Master of Science in International Resource Management  
[Forestry](#)

### **University of Washington — Seattle, WA**

Master of Science in Forestry  
[Forest Resources](#)

### **University of Wisconsin — Madison, WI**

Master of Science in Forest Ecology and Management; Master of Science in Life Sciences Communications  
[Life Sciences Communication](#)

***Environmental Studies, Forestry, and Natural Resources***-continued

**University of Wisconsin — Stevens Point, WI**

Master of Science in Natural Resources

[Natural Resources](#)

**Washington State University — Pullman, WA**

Master of Science in Natural Resources, Master of Arts in Environmental Anthropology

[Natural Resources](#)

[Anthropology](#)

## ***Public Health***

**Boston University — Boston, MA**

Master of Public Health

[International Health](#)

**Emory University — Atlanta, GA**

Master of Public Health

[Public Health](#)

**The George Washington University — Washington, D.C.**

Master of Public Health

[School of Public Health and Health Services](#)

**The Johns Hopkins University — Baltimore, MD**

Master of Health Science in International Health

[Public Health](#)

**Loma Linda University — Loma Linda, CA**

Master of Public Health in International Health or Environmental Health

[International Health](#)

**Oklahoma State University — Stillwater, OK**

Master of Science in International Nutrition

[Nutritional Sciences](#)

**Tulane University — New Orleans, LA**

Master of Science in Public Health; Master of Public Health

[Public Health & Tropical Medicine](#)

**University of Alabama — Birmingham, AL**

Master of Public Health Degree in Environmental Health, Epidemiology, Health Behavior, Maternal and Child Health, and International Health and Global Studies Track

[School of Public Health](#)

**University of California — Berkeley, CA**

Master of Public Health

[School of Public Health](#)

**University of South Florida — Tampa, FL**

Master of Public Health

[College of Public Health](#)

***Political Science, Public Policy, Administration, and  
International Studies***

**Georgia State University— Atlanta, GA**

Master of Public Administration

[International Studies](#)

**Illinois State University — Normal, IL**

Master of Political Science with a concentration in Non Profit Management and  
Community Development

[Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development](#)

**Rutgers University— Camden, NJ**

Master of Public Administration with a concentration in International  
Development Administration or Public Service and Development Administration

[Public Policy and Administration](#)

**School for International Training — Brattleboro, VT**

Master of Arts in Service Leadership and Management, Social Justice and  
International Relations, Conflict Transformation; Master of Science in  
Organizational Management

[Intercultural Management](#)

**University of Denver — CO**

Master of Arts in International Administration

[International Studies](#)

**University of Washington — Seattle, WA**

Master of Public Administration

[Public Affairs](#)

**Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University — Blacksburg, VA**

Master of Public and International Affairs

[Urban Affairs and Planning](#)



## Appendix E

### *Peace Corps Fact Sheet*

**The Program:** Since its inception in 1961, the Peace Corps has continued to rely on the dedication and commitment of Americans of all ages who volunteer to spend two years helping the people of developing countries to meet their basic needs for health care, food, shelter, education and commerce. The goals of the Peace Corps as originally set by Congress remain unchanged: to help promote world peace and friendship by making available to interested countries men and women to help the peoples of such countries in meeting their needs for trained people; to help promote a better understanding of the American people on behalf of the people served; and to promote a better understanding of other peoples on behalf of the American people.

**The Volunteers:** There are nearly 7,000 Peace Corps Volunteers and trainees working on grassroots, self-help development projects in over 70 nations in Africa, Central and East Asia, Europe and the Mediterranean, Inter-America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific. They offer skills in a wide variety of programs: education, business, environment, agriculture, health, and community development.

**Eligibility:** An applicant must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old, and in good general health. There is no upper age limit, and the Peace Corps is committed to making the benefits of service available to all traditionally underrepresented groups. A bachelor's degree, an associate's degree with extensive experience in a requested area, or extensive work experience is generally required. Volunteers are matched with host country skill requests.

**Training:** All Volunteers receive language, technical and cross-cultural training, usually in the country where they will be serving. Strong emphasis is placed on learning the host country language. Cultural studies include the history, customs, and the social and political systems of the host country. Technical training encourages skills transfer within the host country culture and environment.

**Service:** The standard length of service is 27 months, which includes three months of intensive training prior to the start of one's Volunteer service.

**Benefits:** Transportation is provided to and from the overseas assignment as well as for home leave in the event of family emergencies. While in training and during service, Volunteers receive a monthly living allowance meant to cover housing and other basic needs. Comprehensive medical and dental coverage is provided, including annual exams and coverage for both service and non-service-related illnesses or injuries. Volunteers receive 24 vacation days for each year of service. A readjustment allowance of just over \$6,000 is set-aside for each Peace Corps Volunteer, payable upon successful completion of service. Volunteers and Trainees may be covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act in case of disabilities incurred while in training or during service.

## Appendix F

### *Master's International Design and Implementation: Chronology*

The initial establishment of a Master's International program takes approximately six to 12 months, largely depending on the size and administrative complexity of the school. A typical chronology of program design and implementation is as follows:

#### **Setting up the Program**

- The University Coordinator (UC) drafts a proposal for a program, complete with recommended curriculum, to be reviewed by Peace Corps Headquarters.
- The proposal is received by the Peace Corps Master's International Program Coordinator (Peace Corps MIPC), who facilitates its review by appropriate Peace Corps staff.
- If necessary, the Peace Corps MIPC contacts the university for clarification of the information.
- Based upon the final proposal, the Peace Corps MIPC prepares a draft Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) for review by the university. Schools with existing programs will have an addendum attached to an existing MOC for any new, approved university programs.
- The UC reviews and circulates the MOC for appropriate approval, then returns the MOC to the Peace Corps MIPC.
- The Peace Corps MIPC finalizes the MOC, seeks the Peace Corps General Counsel approval, and arranges for the final signing of the agreement by the Director.
- Two final copies of the MOC are signed by the Peace Corps Director, and are sent to the university for signatures. The university will maintain one of these copies, while the other will be returned to the Peace Corps MIPC.

## **Maintaining the Program**

- The Peace Corps MIPC and the UC review program details within 60 days 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.
- The UC and the Peace Corps MIPC share updates on a quarterly basis regarding student participation and program development.
- Students receive invitation to a specific Peace Corps assignment approximately four to six months before their scheduled departure date.
- Students complete initial course work.
- Students complete three months of Peace Corps training and two years of Volunteer service, documenting the experience according to the academic requirements established by their university.
- Students return to United States to complete required course work and to receive their degrees.

## **Appendix G**

### ***The Peace Corps Application Process: Information for Prospective Volunteers***

Applying to the Peace Corps can be an exciting period in your life. This guide will familiarize you with the application screening and placement process. Please keep it with your Peace Corps application materials to help track your progress through the application 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; and
- 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. You can download a copy by contacting the recruitment office in your region.

You will be asked to submit all of the following items:

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

After an initial review of your application, the recruiter will provide you with forms for your references to complete. In reviewing your materials, the recruiter will look

for detailed information about your work experience, education, volunteer experience, life skills, knowledge of foreign languages, and hobbies. You will be able to monitor the status of your application online throughout the process. Updated daily, your individual account will provide you with information on your progress toward becoming a Volunteer.

## **Step Two: Interview**

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

## **Step Three: Nomination**

As an MI applicant, you must submit a copy of your acceptance letter from the university of your choice to your recruiter before you are nominated.

Once the recruiter matches your skills with a program that needs those skills, you will be nominated to a program. At this point you will know the general program you will work in, the geographic region, and your approximate departure date. The nomination is a recommendation by your recruiter that you be invited to serve as a Volunteer in a particular program and region. A formal invitation to a country in that region will not be made until the medical and legal review has been completed.

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

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

Mail or hand-deliver the reference forms to your references as soon as possible. Please stress to your references the importance of completing the forms thoroughly and returning them to you in an envelope that is sealed and signed across the back. Once you have collected all required references, you will forward them to the Peace Corps Placement Office. Please contact the Placement Office if you are having difficulties collecting your 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 your interview or after you have been nominated. Many police stations and state Divisions of Motor Vehicles (DMV) will also fingerprint applicants, but may charge a small fee.

**Applicants Are Evaluated:** Once you are nominated, the recruiter will forward your application and a summary of your interview to the Placement Office. During the qualification phase, Placement staff will review your application, references, and other supporting documents to verify that your technical skills and experience match those needed for a specific assignment. The Placement staff will also assess

your 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 your sealed medical package to the Office of Medical Services (OMS) as soon as you are nominated. A member of the OMS screening team will review your 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. Please review the *Medical Information for Applicants* sheet (**Appendix J**) to assess your 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 your responsibility to provide any/all information required to determine your 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 your performance as a Volunteer must be resolved before you can be invited to serve in a specific assignment and country. Peace Corps will reimburse the cost of medical and dental examinations up to prescribed limits based on age, gender, and other factors; however, we cannot pay for corrective health procedures or for special evaluations.

**Legal Information is Reviewed:** After the medical review, your application will also be reviewed for eligibility based on the Peace Corps' legal eligibility guidelines (such as documentation of marital status, if applicable). You might 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 you from Peace Corps service, but will require clarification and documentation before the legal liaison can make a determination of your 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 you meet the skill requirements and suitability assessment criteria for Volunteer service, you will receive a letter from the Placement staff notifying you of your qualification and letting you know that you 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 your application, references, and feedback from your recruiter with regard to your suitability for Peace Corps service.

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

Once you receive an invitation, you will have ten days from the mailing date of the invitation letter to respond. The invitation packet includes a Volunteer Assignment Description (VAD) to help you make the decision whether to accept the invitation. The packet also includes passport and visa applications, a pre-training questionnaire, and an invitation booklet to guide you in preparing for departure.

If you accept the invitation to serve as a Volunteer, the Peace Corps will send you more information about your host country and a description of your 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 your pre-departure orientation in the United States.

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

The Peace Corps travel office will send you an airline ticket for travel to your orientation site. Soon you, along with the rest of the Volunteers in your training group, will be on your way to your country of service.

## Appendix H

### *What About My Student Loans?*

Volunteers who have outstanding debts under one of the federally administered or guaranteed student loans programs qualify for certain relief during their Peace Corps service. The regulations that authorize this relief are complicated, and different rules apply to each type of loan. **Contact your lender(s) to determine exactly what type of deferment and cancellation you will be eligible for during your Peace Corps service.**

**Remember that it is your responsibility to apply for student loan deferment. YOU must contact your lending institution(s) and request appropriate forms.**

Peace Corps Volunteers whose first loans were made on or after July 1, 1993 are entitled to a deferral of up to three years, less any previous period of economic hardship deferral. Volunteers whose first loans were made before July 1, 1993, are entitled to a “categorical” deferment based on their status as a Peace Corps Volunteer for up to three years of service. Your lender may grant you a deferment for the full period of your Volunteer service up to 27 months, or require you to reapply for a deferment every six to 12 months. You must formally request a deferment through the procedures established by the holder of your loan(s), and you must continue making payments until you are notified that the deferment has been granted. **YOU must contact your lender to determine the length of your deferment.**

If you extend your service, deferral of up to three years is available, but you must apply for this separately. Your Country Director will certify deferment forms for the second, and possibly third years of service. Please take extra deferment forms with you if your deferment must be certified annually or bi-annually.

The Department of Education pays the interest on “subsidized” loans during the deferment period, but not on “unsubsidized” loans. Volunteers may authorize payments of up to 75 percent of the monthly readjustment allowance to cover interest due on their student loans.

**We strongly recommend giving Power of Attorney to a family member or friend to handle your loan deferments while you are in the Peace Corps.** If questions arise about the account, it is advantageous to have a local contact.

Please note that the role of the Peace Corps in the loan deferment process is limited to certification of your dates and country of service and authorization of deductions from your monthly readjustment allowance. **The Peace Corps does not grant or deny deferments of loans.**

If you have any further questions concerning your loan deferments, please feel free to contact the Certifying Officer in the Office of Volunteer Financial Operations at: 800.424.8580, press 2, then ext. 1784, or 202.692.1784.

## Appendix I

### *Non-Competitive Eligibility for Returned Volunteers*

#### **What Is Non-competitive Eligibility?**

Non-competitive eligibility is a special mechanism through which returned Peace Corps Volunteers may be appointed to federal government positions without competing with the general public in order to be hired. An agency, in its discretion, may hire a returned Volunteer by simply establishing that he/she meets the minimum qualifications for a position. Without non-competitive eligibility, the returned Volunteer would have his/her qualifications examined in comparison with the other candidates.

Federal agencies often, especially in the case of temporary positions, seek out non-competitive returned Volunteers for employment. The primary advantage to the agency is the speed with which the candidate may be hired. However, non-competitive eligibility does not guarantee a job, an agency is not required to hire a non-competitively eligible candidate, and the agency may require a full and open competition despite non-competitive status. The candidate must meet the minimum qualifications for a position, regardless of his/her non-competitive status.

#### **Who Gets Non-competitive Eligibility and For How Long?**

Non-competitive eligibility is granted to returned Volunteers for one year following the successful completion of their tour of duty. ***Volunteers completing less than one year of service (including training time) may not receive non-competitive eligibility.*** For those Volunteers who serve over one year (including training) but less than their full tour, the granting of non-competitive eligibility is at the discretion of the Country Director and is based upon the reason for the early termination.

#### **How Do You Prove Non-competitive Eligibility?**

Non-competitive eligibility status can be verified by attaching a copy of your Description of Service (DOS) when you apply for a federal job. The DOS will reference "Executive Order 11103," the Presidential directive that established non-competitive eligibility. As many federal personnel staff and other employees are not familiar with non-competitive eligibility, you should refer them to the old Federal Personnel Manual (a guide that most personnel offices rely on), Chapter 315, Section 6-7.

An area that sometimes causes confusion is the distinction between Peace Corps Volunteers and Peace Corps staff. Peace Corps staff are also awarded non-competitive eligibility, but after 36 months of service. Federal personnel officers will often mistakenly turn to the manual section (Section 6-11) that explains staff non-competitive eligibility instead of the section on Volunteer non-competitive eligibility (Section 6-7).

## **Does Non-competitive Eligibility Apply to All Federal Positions?**

No, it only applies to those positions that fall under the aegis of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Most of these are “General Schedule” positions. Not all federal jobs are controlled through OPM. Some of these excepted agencies are the U.S. Postal Service, Foreign Service of the Department of State, Tennessee Valley Authority, FBI, USAID, and the Peace Corps. Non-competitive eligibility does *not* apply to state or local government jobs.

## **Can Non-competitive Eligibility Be Extended?**

Yes, it can be extended for up to two additional years (up to a maximum of three years from your close of service date) for four reasons. The first three reasons are straight-forward: it can be extended if, after Peace Corps service you enter the military, study at a recognized institution of higher learning (this normally means becoming a full-time student), or work for the Peace Corps in activities related to Volunteer program operations. The fourth reason is more complicated: non-competitive eligibility can be extended if the returned Volunteer engaged in an activity, which the hiring agency believes warrants an extension. The Federal Personnel Manual states, “Generally, work experience which is pertinent to the position being filled and which can be expected to enhance the candidate’s performance and value to the agency could be an appropriate basis for extension. Extensions should not be granted routinely, but should be reserved for situations in which the activity has truly enhanced the returned Volunteer’s value to the agency.”

There is no form or document available from either Peace Corps or the OPM which can be requested by a returned Volunteer to support a claim for extension; it is up to the returned Volunteer to request an extension of non-competitive eligibility from the prospective employer. The returned Volunteer should attach a justification for the extension of non-competitive eligibility by explaining the situation and referring to the extension rules above. As extending non-competitive eligibility is often a gray area, please feel free to contact the Certifying Officer in the Office of Volunteer Financial Operations at Peace Corps Headquarters, if you have any questions.

## **Can Non-competitive Eligibility Be Used Up?**

The general answer to this question is no. As long as the hiring agency permits, a returned Volunteer may use non-competitive eligibility more than once during the period of eligibility.

## Appendix J

### ***MEDICAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS***

**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 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 your physician recommends yearly follow-ups for a specific condition, or your medical history reasonably suggests the need for certain medical resources, you will be accommodated to those limited countries where the required level of medical support is available. If your condition is not appropriately stable to complete 27 months of Peace Corps Volunteer service or the quality of medical support you require is not available in the countries where Peace Corps serves, you may not be medically cleared for Peace Corps service. You should be aware of the following information, which may help you to determine in advance whether medical/dental assessment of your health will be relatively simple or complex.

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

***The following lists are not inclusive of all conditions that may affect clearance or placement. For further information, you may call the Office of Medical Services, at: 800.424.8580 ext. 1500, from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday (Eastern time). Failure to disclose complete information on your application may be grounds for administrative separation from the Peace Corps.***

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

Diabetes  
Asthma, mild to moderate

Seizures  
Conditions requiring necessary site support

**Peace Corps is typically unable to reasonably accommodate the following conditions and recommends that you consult with your physician regarding suitability for the Peace Corps service environment if you have:**

Addison's Disease	History of psychosis
Aneurysm, inoperable	Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's Disease)	Inflammatory bowel disease
Asthma, severe	Irreversible lung disease (emphysema)
Cancer of the bladder	Ischemic heart disease
Cancer with metastasis	Kidney stones (recurrent)
Chronic Glomerulonephritis	Life-threatening allergic reactions
Chronic Hepatitis	Major depression
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)	Muscular Dystrophy (progressive)
Chronic Pancreatitis	Myasthenia Gravis
Chronic Pyelonephritis	Narcolepsy (poorly controlled)
Chronic Reiter's Syndrome	Optic Neuritis
Claudication	Osteoporosis with history of stress fractures
Conditions requiring blood thinner medication	Parkinson's Disease
Conditions requiring oral or injectable steroids	Pituitary Adenoma with acromegaly
Coronary Artery Disease (symptomatic)	Rheumatoid arthritis
Congestive heart failure	Sarcoidosis
Connective Tissue Disorder	Symptomatic cardiac arrhythmias
Diabetes with any complications	Thrombophlebitis
Diverticulitis	Ulcerative colitis
Endocarditis (heart disease or enlarged heart)	Ulcerative proctitis
Esophageal Varices	
Hemophilia	

**If you have any of the following conditions your entry into the Peace Corps will be deferred until resolved:**

Abnormal pap smear	Internal hemorrhoids
Allergies requiring desensitization injections	Kidney or bladder infections
Anemia (cause must be identified)	Orthodontic braces (excluding bite-plate)
Cataracts requiring surgery	Ovarian cyst
Endometriosis	Some psychological conditions
Inguinal hernia	Uterine fibroids (symptomatic)

**If you have any of the following conditions, entry into the Peace Corps will be deferred. The time frames specified for each condition are guidelines for the length of the deferral period and subject to change:**

***Alcoholism, substance addiction*** – minimum of three to five years of sobriety/abstinence

***Cancer*** – three years cancer-free; no deferral for most skin cancers and carcinoma-in-situ)

***Coronary artery bypass surgery or angioplasty*** – one year symptom free, no medications, normal stress test

***Cystic acne-accutane treatment*** – two months after completion of therapy

***Gastritis, esophagitis, peptic or duodenal ulcer*** – minimum of six months well controlled, non-smoker

***Glaucoma*** – three months well controlled with medications or six months after surgical treatment

***Herniated disc*** – minimum of two years symptom free

***Herpes keratitis*** (eye) – two years inactive

***High blood pressure*** – three months well controlled under treatment; weight within medically recommended range

***Joint or back disorders*** must be stable or mild; weight within medically recommended range

***Joint replacement*** (hip, knee, shoulder) or arthroscopy – one year

***Ligament reconstruction*** (knee, ankle, shoulder) or arthroscopy – one year

***Multiple sclerosis*** – minimum of 10 years no exacerbations or new symptoms

***Myocardial infarction (heart attack)*** – 12 months symptom free, not on medication, normal stress test

***Seizure disorder*** – minimum of one year seizure free

***Stroke*** – two years symptom free, not on medication

***Underweight or overweight*** – 20 percent or more over, or 75 percent or less under, the medically recommended weight for *height with associated risk factors* – until within medically recommended weight, or risk factors resolved

**The Office of Medical Services will process your medical review as follows:**

- Receive your Health Status Review (HSR).
- Review your HSR after you have been nominated by a recruiter.
- Mail you a medical clearance packet containing a physical, dental, and eye exam plus any specialist evaluations required in relation to your unique medical history—or if your medical history appears complex for the Peace Corps service environment, we will first ask for specialist evaluations before sending you the physical, dental, and eye exam forms.
- Review your exams and information and reply to you 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 of three-36 months, or a medically not qualified status, and inform the Placement staff of your final medical review status.

The Peace Corps is able to medically clear 85 percent of applicants who complete the medical review process.

Once you receive a medical/dental clearance, it will have been based on your medical/dental status at that time. If after your clearance you become ill, undergo surgery, add to or change medications, undergo therapy or treatment, or develop any condition for which you seek medical assistance, please notify us immediately. Any significant change in your health status may have an impact on your medical/dental clearance. Failure to disclose such information may seriously affect your health overseas, as well as your status as a Peace Corps Trainee/Volunteer.

## **Appendix K**

### ***Office of Safety and Security***

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 security. The office is staffed by an associate director for security, the coordinator for Volunteer safety and overseas security, the safety and security specialist, and nine Peace Corps safety and security officers, three posted to each region. The Office of Safety and Security has as its objectives:

- To plan, coordinate and facilitate activities of the Volunteer Safety Council according to its operational plan;
- To consult with and build consensus among Peace Corps leadership and other offices on a broad range of Volunteer safety and overseas security issues;
- To represent Peace Corps safety and security interests and positions at inter-agency forums;
- To oversee implementation of safety and security improvement strategies developed by posts.

#### **Application Guide: Safety and Security**

Whether you are considering joining the Peace Corps, about to accept an invitation to serve in a particular country, or are a family member or friend of a current or prospective Volunteer, it is important for you to understand the realities of Peace Corps service, particularly with regard to personal safety and welfare. If you or someone you know is about to accept an assignment to serve overseas, this is an exciting time, and we want your expectations to be as realistic as possible. The more you learn now about the realities of Peace Corps service, the better prepared you will be to handle the challenges and rewards ahead.

Because the Peace Corps works in some of the least developed countries and in some of the most remote areas in the world, health, safety, and security risks are an unavoidable part of life and of Volunteer service. While the majority of Volunteers serve their two years without major incident, it is important for you to know that Peace Corps service does involve certain risks, including road accidents, natural disasters, crime, and civil unrest. The Peace Corps devotes significant resources to minimize safety risks to Volunteers and to ensure that they are given the training, support, and information they need for a safe experience. However, there are many variables beyond the agency's control that impact Volunteers' welfare and it is not possible to eliminate all the risks associated with Volunteers' service overseas.

## **Key Points about Safety and Security in the Peace Corps**

In matters of safety and security, the Peace Corps makes the following key assumptions:

- **Serving as a Volunteer involves safety and security risks.**  
Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment, having a limited understanding of local language and culture, and being perceived as well-off are some of the factors that can put a Volunteer at risk. Many Volunteers experience varying degrees of unwanted attention and harassment. Petty thefts and burglaries are not uncommon, and incidents of physical and sexual assaults do occur.
- **Volunteers are expected to adopt a culturally appropriate lifestyle to promote their safety.**  
Being a Volunteer requires changes in lifestyle preferences and habits in deference to host country cultural expectations in order to minimize security risks. Choices in dress, living arrangements, means of travel, entertainment, and companionship may have a direct impact on how Volunteers are viewed, and thus treated by their communities. Navigating the differences in gender relations may be one of the most sensitive and difficult lessons to learn, but one that could have a direct impact on the Volunteers' safety and the protection provided by the local community. Mature behavior and the exercise of sound judgment will enhance personal safety.
- **Each Peace Corps post maintains a Volunteer Safety Support System designed to minimize safety risks, as prescribed by Peace Corps policy.**  
Fundamental to the Peace Corps approach to Volunteer safety is the fact that Volunteers can most effectively minimize their safety risks by building respectful relationships with those in their community. The Peace Corps has instituted a broad and systematic approach to increase Volunteers' capacity to keep themselves safe during their two-year service. This approach is based upon several fundamental tenets of Volunteer safety and security. These include
  - Building relationships,
  - Sharing information,
  - Training,
  - Site development,
  - Incident reporting and response, and
  - Emergency communications and planning.

## **Building Relationships Is Key to Volunteer Safety**

Like the Peace Corps mission, safety and security are predicated on the development of close interpersonal relationships between Volunteers and host-country community members. The agency recognizes that Volunteers' daily safety is, for the most part, best assured when they are well integrated into the local community, valued and protected as extended family members, and viewed as contributors to development. To this end, the Peace Corps strives to build and maintain the support of host country governments, authorities, and local communities for the Peace Corps' presence in country and the work the Volunteers have been requested to perform. The responsibility of Volunteers is to learn the local language and integrate into the host community. Volunteers are expected to build and maintain respectful relationships with sponsoring agency representatives, colleagues, and other community members. These relationships help Volunteers establish a presence in their new homes, pave the way for many work and social opportunities, and become the basis of their new support systems in country.

## **Knowing What to Expect Helps Applicants and Volunteers Make Informed Choices**

The Peace Corps is committed to providing accurate information about Volunteer service to interested individuals. This information describes the nature and conditions of Peace Corps service; the challenges Volunteers face; the impact that serving in another culture will have on individual lifestyle, comfort, and safety (e.g., living with host families, conservative dress, restrictions on movements, and night travel); and the support Volunteers will receive in their respective countries of service. From the moment an applicant is invited to serve in a particular country, specific information about potential challenges is provided from a variety of sources. These challenges often include unwanted attention; harassment; health and safety risks; and cultural behaviors that an American might find offensive, uncomfortable, or threatening. With this information, potential Volunteers can make informed decisions about whether Peace Corps service is right for them and whether they are prepared to live at any site in their host country, where local community members will be their primary support system. Once the Volunteers are in country, Peace Corps staff will keep them informed of security issues and provide guidance for maintaining their safety and well-being as appropriate.

In addition, for the welfare of Volunteers, the Peace Corps' policy requires that Volunteers report their whereabouts when they travel away from their sites or change residences, and that they obtain Peace Corps authorization if they intend to leave their country of assignment for any reason.

## **On-Going Training Equips Volunteers for a Safe and Productive Service**

The Peace Corps takes an integrated approach to Volunteer training. Through language, cross-cultural, and health and safety instruction, training is designed to raise Volunteers' awareness of their new environment, build their capacity to effectively cope with the many challenges they will face, and provide the tools the Volunteers need to adopt a safe and appropriate lifestyle. Volunteers are also instructed in Peace Corps policies and procedures and Volunteers' responsibility is to abide by them.

Before reporting to the communities where they will live and work, Volunteers participate in eight-12 weeks of intensive training in their country of service. During pre-service training, the Peace Corps typically places Volunteers with local families to aid in cultural integration and language acquisition. This early home-stay experience begins the process of building and maintaining various networks of friends and contacts with host country nationals and fellow Volunteers that will support each Volunteer's efforts for a successful service. The Peace Corps provides this integrated safety to help Volunteers better understand their surroundings, how to cope with unwanted attention, and how to develop personal safety strategies.

### **Volunteer Sites are Assessed to Meet Safety and Security Criteria**

Peace Corps staff in country are responsible for assessing and approving the communities where Volunteers will live and work to ensure that placements are appropriate and safe and that secure housing and work sites are available. Site selection is based on established safety and security criteria that reflect consideration of site history; access to medical, banking, postal, and other essential services; access to communication, transportation, and local markets; availability of adequate housing and living arrangements; and the potential for obtaining and maintaining the acceptance and consent of host country authorities and the population-at-large. During their service, Volunteers are visited periodically at their sites by Peace Corps program managers and medical staff members to monitor issues related to Volunteers' site assignments. If a Volunteer's safety or well-being is placed at risk or compromised, the Peace Corps staff will try to resolve the situation or will move the Volunteer to another location.

### **The Peace Corps Responds to Volunteers' Safety Concerns**

Volunteers are strongly encouraged and expected to report safety concerns or incidents to the appropriate Peace Corps staff member. Staff members are prepared to provide appropriate medical, emotional, and administrative support as each case warrants. In such cases, Volunteers' need for confidentiality will be respected. The Peace Corps also maintains a collaborative relationship with the U.S. Embassy and host government officials in order to respond to Volunteers' safety and security concerns as they arise. Improvements in safety reporting have allowed the Peace Corps to identify associated risk factors (time of day, location, alcohol use, means of transportation, etc.) and develop strategies to help Volunteers address them. Volunteers are urged to be aware of their environment and to adopt a safe lifestyle and exercise judgment in a manner that reduces their exposure to risks.

### **Emergency Communications and Planning**

Typically, Volunteers live and work with community members at some distance from the Peace Corps office in the capital city. Volunteers are expected to stay in touch with the Peace Corps office on a periodic basis. They are required to report their whereabouts when they travel away from their sites, and are required to receive Peace Corps authorization if they intend to leave the country of assignment for any reason. *Although some Volunteers consider notification of movement and regular contact with the Peace Corps office restrictive, it is necessary to ensure that Volunteers can be contacted in case of an emergency.*

The Peace Corps addresses larger security concerns through country-specific Emergency Action Plans (EAP) that are in place in each Peace Corps country. These plans, developed to address such events as natural disasters or civil unrest, set forth the strategies developed by each Peace Corps office to prepare for, respond to, and recover from such crises.

The Peace Corps works very closely with the U.S. Embassies to share information, develop strategies, and coordinate communications in a crisis. If a situation arises in a country that poses a potential threat to Volunteers, the Peace Corps will immediately assess the nature of the threat and respond in a manner that ensures the Volunteers' safety and well-being. If the decision is made to evacuate Volunteers from a country, the Peace Corps will commit every resource at hand to safely move each Volunteer and staff member out of harm's way. Although the Peace Corps does not automatically contact family members in all crisis situations the Peace Corps will, in the event of an evacuation, initiate calls to the emergency contact person each Volunteer has identified.

### **Safe Journey**

Every staff member at the Peace Corps is committed to providing Volunteers with the support they need to successfully meet the challenges they will face to have a safe, healthy, and productive service. We hope that the information provided here will help you gain a sense of these challenges, the changes in attitude and lifestyle that may be required to adapt to a new environment, and the level of support that can be expected from the Peace Corps, local colleagues, and host communities. The success of each Peace Corps Volunteer is our goal. ***We rely on Volunteers to exercise personal responsibility, demonstrate a keen awareness of the world around them, and show a willingness to adjust their behavior in a manner that will enhance their safety and well-being. In the end, their efforts will be rewarded with an incredible, unique experience.***

## Appendix L

### *Master's International Contact List*

#### **Alabama at Birmingham,**

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