



EVANS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

PEACE CORPS MASTER'S
INTERNATIONAL ADDENDUM
TO THE MPA PROGRAM
STUDENT HANDBOOK

ENTERING CLASS 2014

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PCMI Administration 2014-2015

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Section I: Introduction to the Peace Corps Master's International Track

Welcome to the Peace Corps Master's International (PCMI) track at the Evans School of Public Affairs. The MPA Student Handbook is the main guide for your degree program. This addendum is designed to serve as a reference for the specific requirements of the PCMI track. We will assist you in navigating this process but want to remind you that you are responsible for all aspects of the Peace Corps application process, and we would ask you to be as flexible and patient as you can throughout the process.

Differences between Traditional and PCMI Program Requirements

PCMI students are expected to fulfill all of the requirements described in "MPA Degree Requirements" in the student handbook. PCMI requirements differ from these only in that students enrolled in the PCMI program must:

1. Earn at least 60 credits [Note that traditional students must earn 72 credits in total]. Of these, at least 48 must be in courses numbered 500 or above. 48 credits must be within the Evans School.
2. Any 400-level course needs to be approved in advance of registration by the graduate program coordinator to be counted towards these totals. For 400-level course reviews, please contact the Student Services staff at evansdss@uw.edu; staff will consult with the graduate program coordinator and notify a student whether the 400-level course has been approved.
3. Complete 27 months of Peace Corps service. As part of the PCMI track, twelve credits are waived in recognition of this service as a Peace Corps volunteer. For information on evacuations, medical separations, administrative separation, or early terminations, see "Guidelines Regarding Incomplete Peace Corps Service" below.

Timeline

In most cases, students will spend the first three quarters (Autumn through Spring) at the Evans School and will complete the fourth quarter during the Autumn quarter after their return from the Peace Corps (see

Appendix I and Appendix II for suggested course plans and timelines). However, it is also possible to complete the fourth quarter of courses during the Autumn quarter before your departure for the Peace Corps (if you will not be leaving until after December) or to work out another schedule with the Evans School staff.

Capstone Project

Like all MPA students, PCMI students must complete a capstone project. PCMI students may fulfill this requirement using any of the four options outlined in the main Student Handbook: participating in a Capstone Project seminar or a “Deep Dive” Capstone Seminar class, completing an approved certificate, or writing an independent research project (see main Student Handbook). Many PCMI students will wish to develop an independent research project that is directly related to their Peace Corps service. There is flexibility as to the focus of the research; it may be based on the primary project of your Peace Corps assignment or on a secondary project you undertake. The research project should integrate the knowledge and skills gained at the Evans School with the Peace Corps experience. A written report must be produced, though the length and format may vary depending on the type and scope of the work; in general, the report should be commensurate with the work of a standard four-credit course.

Each student is responsible for finding an Evans School faculty reader who can provide guidance through all stages of the research and evaluate the final report. The reader is not necessarily the student’s advisor. The PCMI faculty chair cannot be the reader for all PCMI research projects, but will assist students in linking up with a reader during the course of their service. Once you have completed a year of service, or identified a topic you would like to study, you are encouraged to write a one- to two-page description of your proposed topic and send it to a potential reader or the PCMI faculty chair. You should consult with your reader early and often in order to develop the topic and to maintain focus and clarity on the expectations and content of the project. The proposal must be formally approved by the reader as well as the Graduate Program Coordinator before the student can enroll for project credits.

PCMI students should check the project forms and submission requirements listed on the Evans School website (<http://evans.uw.edu/myevans/students/peace-corps-master-s-international-mpa-track-degree-requirements>).

Below are some typical options for research project topics for PCMI students:

- **Program or Project Evaluation** – an evaluation of a project developed by the student or an agency or NGO working with the student.
- **Needs Assessment** – assess the needs faced by the clients (or a subset of clients) of an NGO or agency. The student could propose potential ways of serving those clients.
- **Policy Analysis** – analyze a problem faced by your NGO or agency, develop potential policies that might be employed, or develop recommendations for improving, streamlining or restructuring the NGO and/or transitioning the PCMI project to other staff or a new Peace Corps Volunteer.

Sample of project topics completed by PCMI students in recent years include:

- A strategic plan for a women’s development NGO in Mongolia
- A strategy paper, training manual, and mini-cases for classroom use on the issues faced by women in public service in central and eastern Europe.

- A program assessment of a nonprofit agency in South Africa that provides counseling and support services to victims of rape and domestic violence.
- An assessment of a nonprofit NGO support and internet center in Krgyzstan.

SECTION II: PEACE CORPS-SPECIFIC ISSUES

Peace Corps Application Process

It is expected that you have applied to the Peace Corps and completed your interview with a Peace Corps recruiter before starting classes at the Evans School. You must submit a copy of your Peace Corps nomination letter at the start of the academic year. If you have been awarded a PCMI scholarship, you must provide a copy of the letter in order to receive the first half of the scholarship award; the second half will be disbursed at the start of Spring Quarter.

As you wait to be nominated for an assignment (wait to find out where you will be going), you have two primary tasks as the Peace Corps website notes: following up on information requests, and waiting for a response. In general, you want to be sure to follow up on any time-sensitive documents you receive from the Peace Corps. A quick and thorough response is your best strategy for gaining your clearances and invitation in a timely way. Without all requested documentation (medical, legal, or references), your file cannot be processed and you may lose the opportunity to serve in the timeframe and location you prefer. In this regard, you also should keep the Peace Corps updated as to any address or contact information changes (e.g., change in residence if you moved from out of state to attend the program here). Because items can get lost in the mail (or sometimes within the bureaucracy) you should photocopy everything. It is also helpful to keep records of conversations with Peace Corps staff, including dates and the name of the person with whom you spoke.

Regarding the medical components of the process, it is essential that you read your medical information kit carefully—it has been customized based on information you provided in the Health Status Review. If you're missing any portion of the kit, including forms, request them immediately (call headquarters at 800.424.8580 ext. 1500). Also, you should contact your doctor and dentist as soon as possible to schedule the necessary appointments. Additionally, you should see your optometrist or ophthalmologist if you wear contact lenses or glasses. Lastly, you may receive additional requests for medical information, and it is best to respond to all requests promptly and thoroughly to avoid any complications or confusion later in the process.

It helps to use the timeline (included as Appendix II) to plan for deadlines and to know when to expect certain parts of the process. By the time you begin classes, you should have already had your interview with your Peace Corps recruiter and be nominated by the recruiter for Peace Corps, which would start the clearance process. So, hopefully by the start of classes, you should have received forms for your medical and legal clearance. It can be critical that you begin the medical process early. Though most of your medical clearance should be fairly basic, starting your medical clearance early will help in case something unexpected comes up and you need to see a specialist.

Medical Clearance

Many phases of the placement process for Peace Corps take time and patience, including the medical clearance. Peace Corps notes on its website that medical clearance usually takes four to six weeks from the time they receive your completed examination forms. If you have a special need for medical accommodations, your clearance will take longer. Additionally, if you have not submitted all of your medical paperwork (or followed up on any extra steps they have asked you to take), they cannot “log in” your medical papers, meaning your application doesn’t make any progress at all toward being considered for final placement by the Peace Corps placement recruiter at headquarters. If you don’t complete this paperwork promptly, you won’t

get your assignment by summer. Though you may be aware of your own stage of completion of the medical paperwork, Peace Corps suggests contacting the Office of Medical Services (OMS), which you can do by calling the general Peace Corps' number (1.800.424.8580); you can find out if your papers are all there, and if they are logged in.

A PCMI student offered this suggestion for those who wear glasses and must complete medical forms for their vision test: if your gross vision test at the doctor's office shows that your vision with corrected lenses is still adequate, you can get your eye doctor to fill out the eyeglasses prescription form from the prescription that they have on file for you without getting a new exam. This is particularly useful if your insurance (such as the student insurance) doesn't cover vision tests. This can save you the cost of a new eye exam, especially since the Peace Corps only reimburses \$12 for this exam.

Legal Clearance

The Peace Corps has established legal standards of eligibility for all applicants. The Peace Corps Placement Office will send you a package with the necessary forms that need to be completed and are customized to your personal situation. You will return them to the Peace Corps' Legal office.

One of the items you have to complete for your legal clearance is sending them your fingerprints. There are a variety of locations where you can do fingerprinting; two locations include the following:

- The University of Washington Police Department fingerprints by appointment only, which you can schedule by calling 206.543.0507. Their appointment hours include: Tuesday 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., and Thursday 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.. The Department is located in the south of campus in the Bryants Building at 1117 NE Boat Street. The fee for fingerprinting is \$10.00 per card with no limit to the number of cards.
- The Public Request Unit of the Seattle Police Department also fingerprints on regular business days between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The Public Request Unit is located in the lobby of the Seattle Police Department Headquarters Building (Seattle Justice Center). It is located at 610 5th Avenue, at the corner of 5th Avenue and Cherry Street. You will need to bring a fingerprint card and picture identification with you. Print cards may be acquired from the requestor of the prints. You will be charged \$7.00 per card. This may be paid by cash, check, or money order. If you need more than three sets of cards, please make an appointment in advance.

You will also be issued a passport specifically for your Peace Corps service. They will provide processing forms for this with your invitation/assignment packet.

Loan Deferments During Peace Corps Service

1. As a volunteer, you may defer repayment for Stafford Loans, Perkins Loans, Federal Consolidation Loans, or Direct Loans. Specifically with Perkins loans, 15 percent of your loan can be cancelled upon the completion of each 365 days of service during your first two years of service, and 20 percent can be cancelled upon completion of each of the third and fourth years. Four full years of service would equal a 70 percent cancellation of your existing loan. Complete the (very short) form

"Required Off Site Education (ROSE) Approval Form" (Link here:
<http://www.grad.washington.edu/forms/roseform.pdf>)

2. Submit this form to the faculty Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) in your department for signature.
3. Submit to the Graduate Student Services office in the Graduate School, which (if approved) will be sent to the Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office will then change the student's status in the national enrollment reporting system (NSLDS) for the quarters indicated, thus deferring loans that would normally come due for non-enrollment. There will be no additional fee for this service, beyond the normal fee to students to apply for On-Leave status.

Websites and contacts

- UW Office of Student Financial Aid: <http://www.washington.edu/students/osfa/>
- The Graduate School (UW): <http://www.grad.washington.edu/>
- Required Off Site Education (ROSE) Form: <http://www.grad.washington.edu/forms/roseform.pdf>
- Location of all loan forms: <http://www.grad.washington.edu/forms/>
- Graduate Office of Student Services: Graduate Student Services, G-008 Communications Bldg., Box 353770, Seattle, WA 98195-3770 - Contact: Lia Kontraros, Assistant Director, Graduate Education Services, liakont@u.washington.edu
- Registrar's Office: <http://depts.washington.edu/registra/> - Contact: Robert Rhodes. rhoderj@u.washington.edu

The Peace Corps does not grant deferments, cancellations, or grace periods for student loans; you must obtain these directly from your lending institutions. It is also important that whoever you've given power of attorney to or whoever will be handling/managing your affairs stateside (e.g., your parents) knows that you'll be getting a deferral and they should keep an eye out for any loan materials that come for you while you're overseas.

Tax Filings

You are responsible for filing your own taxes. You will have to file while you are a volunteer; your country Peace Corps office should have federal forms available for you. You (or your proxy in the States) will be responsible for getting your state income tax forms (if your state, e.g., California, has income tax). As a volunteer, you have basically no income, which is documented by the tax forms you file and is good if you're aiming to get financial aid for your last quarter.

Peace Corps Contacts

Seattle Peace Corps Office

Main Office: 206.553.5490
1601 Fifth Avenue, Suite 605
Seattle, WA 98101

seattle@peacecorps.gov

Peace Corps Master's International Headquarters (DC)

When it comes time for Peace Corps to match your skillset with an available assignment overseas (i.e., once you have been nominated and medically cleared), the PCMI office in Washington, D.C. takes over from your regional recruiter.

Peace Corps (toll free – this can be used with all the extensions below): 855.855.1961

Master's International office staff: 855.855.1961, ext. 1812

Email: mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov

SECTION III: ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Required Evans School Steps to be completed before your departure

At the end of your first year, there are several things you must do in order to be sure that your records here are in good order and you can be properly advised while overseas. Remember that faculty and staff may change while you are gone, so it is essential to leave a clear record behind. During the Spring Quarter of your first year you **must**:

1. Complete a PCMI exit checklist which provides the Evans School with your contact information while overseas (this checklist will be provided by Student Services).
2. Set up a meeting with Student Services to review documents and PCMI checklist.

In addition, we strongly recommend that you complete the course planning form, identify your remaining degree requirements, and meet with your academic advisor to discuss any concerns or questions.

Tuition and Status as a Student while Overseas

You will not have to pay tuition while in your Peace Corps service. However, you will need to do the following:

ON-LEAVE STATUS

Students must be accounted for (i.e., either registered or officially on-leave) during every term but Summer Quarter, from the time they are accepted to Evans School until they complete their MPA degree. PCMI students must officially go on-leave by going to their MyUW page, and requesting leave online for each quarter that the student is overseas with the Peace Corps. For each quarter of leave, a \$25 fee must be paid. PCMI students may request up to one year's leave at a time.

The process is simple:

1. Student submits the on-leave request via MyGrad-Student
View: <http://grad.washington.edu/mygrad/student.htm>
2. Student is notified by email to submit an online credit card payment for the quarterly \$25 nonrefundable fee (only MasterCard or Visa may be used and there is no service charge for credit

card use). On-Leave status is not finalized until payment has been submitted, and must be completed by the last day of instruction for the quarter of leave requested.

Students with financial aid, loans, or enrolled in the Graduate Appointee Insurance Program (GAIP) should consult with the Office of Financial Aid or the UW Benefits Office to prevent a loss of aid, loan repayment, or benefit coverage. If there are student loans that should be deferred while on leave, the Required Off-Site Education Approval (ROSE) Form must also be completed. This form is available online <http://www.grad.washington.edu/forms/roseform.pdf>.

Please contact Graduate Student Services at gsstusrv@u.washington.edu or 206.685.2630 for further information.

On-Leave Status entitles students to use the University of Washington's libraries and maintain access to their email accounts, which is very important if you want to remain on Evans School-related listservs and receive other important messages from the program. However, you are NOT entitled to residency credit, student insurance, or any form of financial assistance. More details can be found on the webpage about on-leave status: <http://www.grad.washington.edu/policies/general/leave.shtml>

QUARTER OF RETURN/GRADUATION

To return from on-leave status, students register for the following quarter. No additional forms need to be submitted.

Please be aware that the Graduate School requires all students are registered for at least one credit for the quarter in which they officially graduate.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for in-state residency for in-state tuition after Peace Corps, you'll have to meet the requirements for obtaining residency outlined on the following website: <http://www.washington.edu/students/reg/residency>

The Residency Office has said that Peace Corps can qualify as civil service, but you would still have to fulfill the residency parameters related to that status. Please call 206.543.5932 for more information.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE EVANS SCHOOL WHILE OVERSEAS

As part of the On-Leave status mentioned previously, your email address will remain active and you will still be able to access your email while you're gone, provided you have access to email in your country. You will still get evansgrads listserv messages as well as the PCMI listserv messages.

You will be expected to send quarterly updates to the PCMI recruiter and faculty contacts. These updates can be similar to those you are required to send to your associate Peace Corps director in your host country. Typically these updates include one paragraph on the past quarter's (past three months) accomplishments, one paragraph on your project progress, one paragraph on cultural challenges/accomplishments, and one paragraph on plans for the next quarter. After one year, you should add a paragraph in each quarterly report (to the PCMI recruiter and faculty) describing your progress on your capstone project or thesis.

HOME OF RECORD

Before you leave for your Peace Corps assignment, you will be asked for your Home of Record. This is considered to be your permanent address for Peace Corps purposes. The address you select is very important because of its implications. Peace Corps will send all final paperwork, including your readjustment allowance, to this address. It is also where you must leave or return from or to before and after service. An exception to this is if you choose money in lieu of a return ticket home (if this option is available to you). In addition, if an immediate family member falls ill, this is where the Peace Corps will pay to fly you. It is also where Peace Corps will send your tax information. You should absolutely not use the Evans School address for this purpose. Most volunteers use a family member who they know will probably not move in the next two years.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

When Peace Corps Volunteers finish their tour of service, they receive a Description of Service Statement signed by the Country Director, which describes the length and nature of their work. You will be required to submit a copy of this document to the Graduate Program Coordinator upon your return from the Peace Corps as a condition of graduation.

WITHDRAWING FROM PEACE CORPS

Some of you may find that you no longer want to join the Peace Corps but wish to continue the MPA program at the Evans School. If you choose to withdraw from the Peace Corps part of the program, you must contact the Peace Corps Placement Office at headquarters to withdraw your application. If you withdraw earlier in the process (i.e., you haven't completed your clearance forms yet), you should contact the regional office where you originally submitted your application. You also must notify the Evans School Student Services Office of your decision. It is requested that you schedule an "exit interview" with Student Services; your responses will be kept confidential.

GUIDELINES REGARDING INCOMPLETE PEACE CORPS SERVICE

The goal of the Peace Corps Master's International (PCMI) track is to enable students to acquire and share technical expertise that is valued by people in developing nations throughout the world. As part of the PCMI track, twelve credits are waived in recognition of the student's two years of service as a Peace Corps volunteer. However, various situations may arise that prevent the student from completing her or his service.

Situations that could end a volunteer's service consist primarily of the following scenarios:

EVACUATION

Political conflict or natural disasters can occur in Peace Corps host countries, necessitating the evacuation of volunteers. Whether a volunteer is reassigned to another host nation often depends on how much time the volunteer has completed in service. If the volunteer has less than three to six months of service to complete, often they are given the option to end their service at that point.

MEDICAL SEPARATION

Illness in different forms can prevent a volunteer from continuing his or her service, ranging from the relatively minor (the volunteer's condition might not be grave but is one that the Peace Corps medical officer

as well as existing medical facilities in the host country, are unable to adequately treat) to the serious (the volunteer must return indefinitely to the U.S. to recuperate from their injuries or illness).

ADMINISTRATIVE SEPARATION

If a volunteer is not performing to the level expected of them, or has shown negligence and/or extremely poor behavior as a volunteer, the Peace Corps officers in the host country may decide to terminate the volunteer's service.

EARLY TERMINATION

For many reasons, such as homesickness, an ill parent, dissatisfaction with the Peace Corps experience, some volunteers will choose to terminate their service.

These situations involving incomplete Peace Corps service will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the Graduate Program Coordinator, using a general set of criteria to determine whether or not the student will continue under the PCMI track and requirements, or will transfer over to the MPA program; and how many credits will be given in recognition for the time that the student has served in Peace Corps.

The primary criteria the Evans School will consider are the duration of service, nature and quality of work performed in your Peace Corps assignment, and the reason for termination, i.e., if it is voluntary or involuntary. The Evans School will need to determine if the experience was sufficient in length and quality of service that the student could continue their studies under the PCMI requirements, or, if those were lacking, would need to transfer over to the MPA requirements. The main point of determination in these different scenarios is that the PCMI student has had a level of Peace Corps service that meets the goals of the PCMI track and merits the amount of credits granted for time served.

The following schematic will guide the graduate program coordinator in assessing what course of action is suitable for a student who has not completed their 27 months in the Peace Corps:

COMPLETION OF THREE-MONTH TRAINING PROGRAM

- One credit or consider the experience the equivalent of an international internship (one credit could be equivalent to that of a skills workshop at the Evans School)
- Continue studies under MPA track

ONE TO SIX MONTHS OF SERVICE

- Three credits
- Continue studies under MPA track

SIX TO 12 MONTHS OF SERVICE

- Four to five credits
- Continue studies under MPA track

12-18 MONTHS OF SERVICE

- Six to eight credits
- Continue studies under PCMI track

18-24 MONTHS OF SERVICE

- Nine credits
- Continue studies under PCMI track

Section IV: Other Items

Readings

The readings from your classes may prove to be quite useful for your service. You should download and save electronic versions of course readings, and scan sections of books that might be useful. You can bring these files with you on a laptop, flash drive, or CD to save weight. Although internet access is becoming nearly ubiquitous, there remain many places where it is non-existent or (more likely) very slow. You should not count on downloading files easily while abroad.

Further Advising

In addition to your academic advisor, Student Services and PCMI Faculty Coordinator can help you plan courses or handle other student-related issues or questions about Peace Corps service.

While you are overseas, your advisor is a good person to contact regarding your capstone project or any other academic issues that arise. You may also contact the PCMI faculty chair with any questions you have.

Listsers

PCMI LISTSERV

Each cohort is provided a PCMI listserv to be able to communicate with each other before, during, and after their Peace Corps service. It also facilitates communication between students and staff with regard to administrative and programmatic issues specific to PCMI students.

SEAPAX LISTSERV

The Seattle Area Peace Corps Association (SeaPax), a group of returned Peace Corps volunteers committed to improving international understanding at the local, state, and national level by actively promoting an increased appreciation for the social, political, and economic circumstances of people living in the developing world, has a listserv that anyone can subscribe to free of charge. There are frequently messages pertaining to activities, housing opportunities and establishing contacts with returned Peace Corps volunteers in the Seattle area. It also provides a forum for discussing policy issues relating to the Peace Corps and other international issues of interest. Their website is <http://home.seapax.org/>

APPENDIX I: SAMPLE PEACE CORPS INTERNATIONAL MASTERS (PCMI) MPA PROGRAM COURSE SCHEDULE

Year One			Peace Corps Service & Final Quarter			
Quarter	Course	Credits				
Autumn	PA 511 Managing Politics & Policy Process	4	<p>Peace Corps Service (27 months) – After the first year students will be placed by the Peace Corps, go on-leave from the UW, and prepare to leave for their service placement. Placement is at the discretion of the Peace Corps. Please visit their site for more information: http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=learn.whyvol.eduben.mastersint</p>			
	PA 516 Economics for Policy Analysis and Management I	4				
	PA 522 Budgeting & Financial Management	4				
	Total Autumn Quarter credits	12				
Winter	PA 512 Managing Org. Performance	4				
	PA 527 Quantitative Analysis I	4				
	PA 517 Economics for Policy Analysis and Management II	4				
	Elective	4				
	Total Winter Quarter credits	16				
Spring	PA 513 Policy Analysis	4			Final Quarter	Capstone Project
	PA 528 Quantitative Analysis II	4	Elective	4		
	PA 526 Program Evaluation	4	Elective	4		
	Elective	4	Elective	4		
	Total Spring Quarter credits	16	Total Final Quarter Credits		16	
Annual credits, year one		44	Total Credits Needed to earn degree		60	

Notes:

- A minimum of 10 credits per quarter is required for full-time enrollment.
- This timeline is only provided as one possibility. Some students will prefer to complete the program in more than four quarters to avoid carrying 16 credits (which can be quite demanding, especially in the first year of core classes).
- Students should consult the course planning guide (<http://evans.uw.edu/degree-programs/course-listings>) to see the international electives planned for the coming academic year.

APPENDIX II: Timeline for PCMI Students (typical schedule)

Year One	
January	Apply to Peace Corps and the Evans School
February	
March	Receive notification on acceptance to the Evans School
April	Do interview with Peace Corps recruiter Get Peace Corps nomination Begin medical and legal clearance process with Peace Corps Take summer classes at UW?
May	
June	
July	
August	
September	Begin graduate program at Evans School Continue to complete all clearance forms with Peace Corps
October	
November	
December	
Year Two	
January	Complete and submit clearance forms to Peace Corps
February	Receive word about nomination to Peace Corps country, or resolve any remaining medical other clearance questions
March	
April	

May	
June	Complete first year of coursework and leave for Peace Corps assignment, or continue coursework at the Evans School and prepare for Peace Corps departure in summer, fall, or winter
July	Leave for Peace Corps service and start three month training
August	
September	
October	Complete Peace Corps training and start work in post
November	
December	
Year Three	
January – December	Peace Corps Service
Year Four	
January - August	Peace Corps Service
September	Return to the Evans School for final quarter Finish coursework and graduate
October	
November	
December	