Peace Corps Master's International Program (PCMI)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

I'm an admitted PCMI candidate. How do my degree requirements differ from non-PCMI students?

Upon successful completion of at least 72 quarter hour credits of coursework at JKSIS + Peace Corps Service (e.g. obtain and submit a Description of Service) + a Substantial Research Paper (SRP) relevant to the student’s service, the PCMI student will be certified to graduate with the following benefits:

1. Waiver of foreign language requirement for MA degree;
2. Waiver of internship requirement for MA degree (unless student is pursuing a certificate program which required an internship); and
3. An 18 credit hour reduction in the overall 90 credit hours required for the MA degree.

PCMI candidates are not eligible for dual degree programs, but they may pursue JKSIS certificates if they are interested in doing so.

How long does it take to complete 72 credit hours?

The vast majority of PCMI candidates complete the 72 credit hour requirement over five quarters (e.g. approximately 15 credit hours/3 courses per quarter).

How, and when, do I apply for Peace Corps Service?

PCMI candidates are encouraged to plan early and reach out to their designated Peace Corps Regional Recruiter for information and assistance with the Peace Corps application process and timeline.

How do I earn the 18 credit hour reduction for my MA degree?

PCMI candidates earn an 18 credit hour reduction in the overall 90 credit hours required for the MA degree, upon successful completion of Peace Corps service (e.g. obtain and submit a Description of Service), and the submission of an “SRP”—a 30-
35 page Substantial Research Paper (INTS 4996), which explores a relevant research interest or experience that links the Peace Corps Service to the student’s academic experience at JKSIS.

How do I register my SRP?

Students must secure a faculty advisor and register INTS 4996 prior to departing for Peace Corp Service. This process requires departmental approval. Please review the SRP section of the most current MA Handbook available on the ISSTA Portfolio Community site for specific details.

NOTE: PCMI candidates must register INTS 4996 for zero credits.

How is my SRP graded?

All SRPs will be evaluated by the faculty advisor and will receive a letter grade per the University of Denver's grading system.

Upon final submission, faculty advisors are required to submit an “SRP Approval and Grade” form to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, in order to facilitate the graduation check and certification process required by the Office of Graduate Studies.

What do I need to do before leaving for my Peace Corps service?

1. Verify that you are on track for degree completion by submitting an updated program statement, which has been approved and signed by your degree director, to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs.
3. Submit a Leave of Absence application in order to maintain Active Student status while on leave. Please cite "PCMI - Peace Corps service" in the "Reasons for requesting a leave of absence" field.
4. If needed, speak to your Peace Corps representative about student loan deferments and payments while in the field and visit the Peace Corp website for additional info.
5. If needed, assign a Power of Attorney during your absence.
6. Arrange a final exit interview with the Director of Graduate Student Affairs to make sure everything is in order.

What do I need to do in preparation for graduation as my Peace Corps Service winds down?

1. As required by the Office of Graduate Studies, students must apply to graduate two quarters prior to their intended date of graduation.

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2. Review the “Instructions & Checklist” guidelines for the relevant term on the “Graduation & Commencement” tab of the Portfolio Community site (http://portfolio.du.edu/issta/page/54365), and follow through as advised.
3. Finalize your SRP for electronic submission (one copy to your faculty advisor, and a second copy to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs at isgrad@du.edu).
4. Ensure that your faculty advisor completes the “SRP Approval and Grade” form and submits it to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs.
5. Upon successful completion of Peace Corps Service, obtain and submit a Description of Service letter to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs.

What are some examples of PCMI SRP topics?

- Barriers to Primary Education in Rural Botswana
- Panamanian Mismanagement: Painstaking Development Despite an Abundance of Capital, Resources, and Support
- Challenges of NGO Development in Panama: How the Role of Agriculture, Conservation, and Government Agencies Overshadows the Needs of Panamanians and NGO Development
- Communal Development Associations: The role they Play in the Post-Civil War Decentralization of the Government and Local Development
- Land Reform in South Africa: Failures and Possible Solutions
- Best Practices Working with Youth from 15-25 in Country
- Tourism as a Form of Development: Does it really work?

What if I change my mind and/or am unable to complete Peace Corps Service?

In the event that a PCMI student is unable to complete Peace Corps Service, is it still possible to earn the MA degree, however the foreign language and internship components (if required for degree) would not be waived, and the student must complete the 90 credit hours required for a traditional degree.

How do I subscribe to the student managed DU Peace Corps Community listserv in order to receive important updates and remain in the loop?

Please email peace-corps@du.edu in order to request that your address be added to the DU Peace Corps Community listserv.