



IPSL Global Institute at NUNM

Graduate Programs FAQs

**Master's in International Development & Service (IDS) and
Community Organizing and Social Activism (COSA)**



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General Information

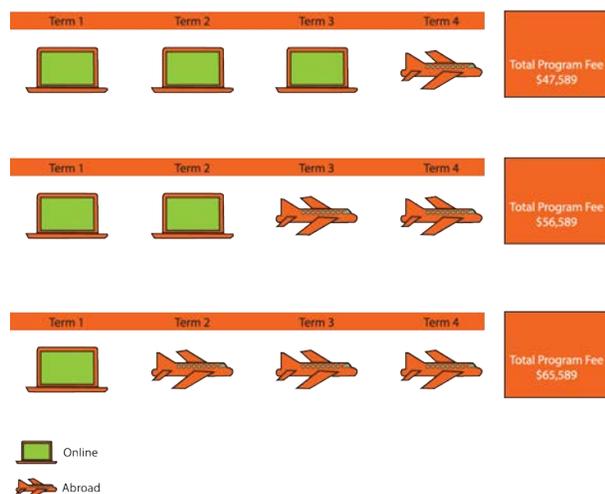
IPSL Global Institute at NUNM is redefining higher education in the 21st century — leveraging international partnerships that eliminate boundaries between academia and society, and intentionally attuning students' learning experiences to the challenges and opportunities of today's world. Our unique educational environment is characterized by intellectual rigor, openness, reciprocity, creativity, and the skills and determination for empowerment.

Our institute offers two multi-national and multi-institutional graduate programs: International Development & Service (IDS), and Community Organizing and Social Activism (COSA). Both programs are designed to meet the global demand for ethical leaders who can effectively engage and facilitate partnerships and empower communities. Students are prepared for careers with nonprofit and community development organizations through an interdisciplinary program that combines rigorous academic training with hands-on skill development through volunteer service worldwide.

REGARDING COVID-19

Until travel is permissible again, IPSL Global Institute at NUNM is offering its graduate programs online. Once travel is permissible again, students may immediately shift to onsite study and service abroad, or they can elect to continue the program online.

The COVID-19 outbreak has forced all of us to reconfigure how we live our lives. At the same time, this is an opportunity to rethink how IPSL supports our communities abroad, and we are excited to make you aware of some of the benefits of our recent pivot to a hybrid online/onsite program. Please know that IPSL is still offering the same, three terms abroad but with an initial online term. Four terms total. Students may choose the **number** and **sequencing** of online-versus-onsite terms.



What makes our graduate programs unique?

- *Unique Design:* Independently designed and curated curriculum that responds to current social issues, aligns with service and research opportunities, and reflects student interests and latest trends in the field of International Development.
- *12-Month Programs:* A departure from the traditional 2-year graduate model, students can save tens of thousands of dollars, commit half the time normally required of a graduate program, and begin their careers and earning potential sooner.
- *Flexible Start Dates:* Take advantage of flexible start dates and accommodate your busy life and work schedules. We offer four cohorts per year - September, January, April and July.
- *Class Size:* Our programs are designed to be small, intimate, and nurturing. Cohorts typically consist of 6-10 students to ensure one-on-one staff support and access to individually curated learning and service opportunities throughout the program.
- *Study Abroad:* Because of COVID19, IPSL has implemented a flexible four term program. One term must be spent abroad but students will have the option to take up to three of them abroad (travel permitting). If travel remains impeded by a students' final term, the student can take a leave of absence until travel is possible or complete the program online. Students will choose up to 3 countries in which to live, work, and study international development and citizen engagement. During all four terms students will be expanding their professional network and gaining real work experience abroad. Current program locations include Colombia, Greece, Guatemala, South Africa and Vietnam. *Locations are subject to change.*
- *Airfare:* International flights are included in the program fee. Restrictions apply.
- *Global Network:* Students will have the opportunity to get a head start in developing a strong and valuable professional network due to their access to IPSL Global Institute at NUNM's international partners and institutions abroad.

For more information on IPSL Global Institute at NUNM graduate programs visit www.ipsl.org/graduate-education-abroad.

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Application

What are the application requirements?

- IPSL [online graduate application](#)
- \$75 application fee
- Official, sealed transcripts verifying a baccalaureate degree from an accredited post-secondary institution
- A recommended 3.0 GPA. Note that students below the recommended GPA will have the opportunity to demonstrate the justification for a waiver.
- Two confidential letters of recommendation sent to ebabcock@nunm.edu.
- Once online application is submitted, candidates will be contacted for an informal interview (IPSL Institute Portland office or Skype/Zoom/WhatsApp).
- Valid Passport. U.S. applicants must have a passport that is valid for at least six months **after the program end date** of your last term abroad. If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately.

How do I apply to IPSL Institute graduate programs?

To complete your online application, visit www.ipsl.org/graduate or click [here](#).

What is the minimum GPA?

A minimum 3.0 Grade Point Average on a 4.0 scale, or the equivalent, is required. However, lower GPAs may be considered if the candidate submits to the admissions team a brief explanation of circumstances that may have affected the GPA.

Is the GRE required?

No. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is not required for admission.

Do I need to have a specific undergraduate degree?

No. We accept undergraduate program credentials from all accredited institutions.

What is the application deadline?

Complete applications for IPSL Global Institute at NUNM graduate programs are reviewed on a rolling basis. Official application deadlines per cohort:

- Fall start (September): **August 1st**
- Winter start (January): **December 1st**
- Spring start (April): **March 1st**
- Summer start (July): **June 1st**

When will I hear if I have been accepted?

IPSL Global Institute at NUNM will notify applicants via email of a final and official admissions decision within two weeks after their completed interview. If a candidate has not

submitted all application requirements by this time, they may receive a *conditional* admission decision pending the completion of their application.

What is included/not included in the program fee?

- Program fee covers all tuition, room-and-partial board abroad, international airfare (restrictions apply), most fees (including graduation fee), orientations, professional development, career guidance, and service-learning placement and oversight for each term. Program fee also covers emergency medical/evacuation insurance while abroad and most enrichment activities/excursions abroad.
- Program fee does NOT cover books, living expenses during online components, personal spending money, local transportation, and independent travel. Students are responsible for securing their own visas and any expenses related to obtaining visas or passports. Students are also responsible for any vaccines required for travel. Additionally, students must submit proof of insurance during the intensive residencies in the U.S.

Where does the degree come from?

The degree-granting institution is the National University of Natural Medicine, specifically IPSL Global Institute at NUNM.

Is the IPSL program an accredited program?

Yes. The IPSL Global Institute at NUNM is part of the National University of Natural Medicine; NUNM is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).

Accreditation of an institution of higher education by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality evaluated through a peer review process. An accredited college or university is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purposes through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity is also addressed through accreditation. This also means that federal financial aid is available for eligible students.

May I defer my offer of admission?

Yes. Students can defer their admission for up to one year after acceptance. However, a non-refundable \$300 deposit is required to hold one's place in the program.

Can international students apply?

Yes. International students are encouraged to apply. Once travel is permitted again, international students will be responsible for understanding visa processes as it relates to their country of citizenship.

What are the top things you look for in a candidate?

Top characteristics of strong IPSL applicants include prior international work, study, or travel abroad and prior service-learning/community service experience. Flexibility, adaptability, and a passion for working with/within diverse communities are also key characteristics for program and professional success.

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Financial Aid

Is Financial Aid available?

Yes. As with nearly all graduate students in the United States, students in an IPSL program primarily finance their graduate education with personal funds, loans and scholarships. Loans and scholarships are procured generally through the federal government. Please visit our institution's website for more information: <https://nunm.edu/financial-aid>

AmeriCorps Alums and Peace Corps Returnees

IPSL Global Institute at NUNM is a “matching institution,” which means AmeriCorps Alums and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) automatically receive a \$5,500 scholarship in addition to any other scholarships offered by IPSL. For qualifying AmeriCorps Alums and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, the \$75 IPSL application fee is also waived.

Where can I learn more about scholarship options?

Two great databases of private scholarship options are Fastweb.com and FinAid.org. These are easily searchable and provide information on specific scholarships for which students might apply. Students are also encouraged to see if their home states maintain any kind of central scholarship database; for example, Oregon residents can find scholarships through [Oregon Student Aid](#) and [Unigo](#).

Research your state for potential scholarship opportunities!

Should I fill out a FAFSA application even if I don't need financial aid?

Yes. Many private scholarships determine need based on a FAFSA. All students are encouraged to fill out the *free* federal financial aid application at fafsa.gov.

Where is the IPSL Global Institute at NUNM located?

The IPSL Global Institute at NUNM is located in Portland, Oregon, on the West Coast of the United States.

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Classes and Curriculum

What classes will I take during the Online Residency?

During the Online Residency, IPSL graduate students take two required foundational courses. Each student is automatically pre-registered for these courses by IPSL.

- * Social Research Methods (3 credits)
- * History and Ethics of International Engagement (3 credits)

More info on these classes can be found on the IPSL website. Courses are subject to change without notice.

Are there any required courses?

Yes. Each term students will take the foundational service-learning reflections course called “Community Organizing and Social Activism”. The rest of the courses are electives and students can choose to take whatever they wish based on academic goals and personal interest.

How do I register for the classes during the subsequent terms?

Students are given about ten days after the start of each term to decide which courses they want to take the following term. IPSL will assist with this. After the add-drop date, no changes to course registrations are allowed.

What are the class schedules like during the terms?

Most of the courses are scheduled according to the module format. This is similar to the system used in the UK, Europe, Australia, South Africa, parts of Asia, and elsewhere. Courses are taught in condensed intensives that last one to two weeks. When the course is over, students then serve in their organization in a more concentrated format permitting them to focus on their experiential learning. The module-based scheduling format is both logistically preferable and it facilitates the application of academic learning to the service, and vice versa. Not all courses are offered in the module format, but most are; the service-learning Reflections courses are generally offered throughout the term.

Courses are subject to change without notice. Not all courses are available each term. Please inquire with IPSL.

Please note that IPSL programs are based in learning from both scholars and scholar-practitioners. As such, IPSL may include lectures and presentations by experts in the field as we learn of such opportunities and as these professionals are available to work with our students. These additional learning opportunities may be focused on International Relief Work, Sustainable Development, Global Health, Human Rights, Conservation, Intercultural Communication, or other areas of interest within International Development.

How many credits can I take each term and over the course of the program?

While there is no maximum number of credits allowed per term, students are required to complete 49.5 quarter-based credits over the course of the program in order to graduate. In addition, program tuition and fees cover a maximum of 54 credits over the course of the program; any credits taken beyond this level will require additional payment from the student.

Minimum Grade Requirements

A cumulative average of C (2.0) is required for graduation for all programs. In addition, a 2.0 cumulative GPA is required for all required courses and any elective coursework that is taken.

IPSL students will receive credit for a course in which they receive a C– or better. Any grade lower than C– in a course does not count as credit toward the degree and the student must repeat the course or an approved substitute.

If an upper division undergraduate course is taken for graduate credit a final grade of B or better must be earned in order for the course to apply toward the degree. A student may receive graduate credit for one 300-level, or higher, course completed while a student in the program with prior written approval of the IPSL Academic Officer.

Graduation with distinction is reserved for those students obtaining an overall grade point average of 3.6 or above.

Any student not receiving the required minimum grade in a required course taught abroad may need to pay an additional distance-learning fee to re-take the course.

Can I take electives?

Students can and do take elective courses. See the IPSL website for course offerings for elective details.

What language courses are offered, and will I receive credit?

IPSL graduate students enroll in language courses and/or participate in community workshops and conversation groups in each location. However, in order to receive graduate-level credit for any language-based course, an Independent Study Project must be completed as part of the language instruction, and that project must be graded by a credentialed faculty member. Such language courses will be transcribed as “Language Across the Curriculum” and shall be worth 4.5 credits.

Who teaches the courses?

All IPSL Global Institute at NUNM courses are taught by credentialed faculty, scholars, and scholar-practitioners who are generally locals in that community/country. In some instances, visiting faculty from the United States may teach a course at one of IPSL’s study abroad centers.

What does the service-learning and experiential-learning methodology look like in the classroom?

Students explore, practice, and enrich their classroom learning via indirect and/or active service with local NGO, nonprofit, and government agency partners. In addition, students enroll in a guided reflections course (“Community Organizing and Social Activism”) each term where they engage in interactive discussions and written reflections to challenge and learn from their discoveries and experiences. The real-world practice, insights, and skill development provided via service work with local organizations, paired with the foundational knowledge provided by academic resources and reflective/interactive classroom activities, is a vital component of the IPSL service-learning model. For more information on service roles see the **Service Placements** section below.

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Service Placements

What are service placements?

Volunteer service lies at the heart of IPSL's pedagogy. Students are required to perform 10-15 hours, per week, of direct or indirect service (hands-on/in-country or virtual) for nonprofit, community-based organizations and public agencies, during each of the four terms. IPSL and its partners assist students in identifying placements and opportunities, and support students in their service. This service is designed to provide practical, hands-on experience and skill development, as well as opportunities for students to develop their professional networks and compare and contrast classroom learning with real world practice.

How many hours per week will I serve?

All students engage in service for 10-15 hours per week. On average, students serve 15 hours per week during each term of the program.

How do I choose my service placement?

The IPSL Graduate Admissions team will assess student interests and skills, then communicate with the teams abroad in order to prepare for the student's participation. The local teams abroad will connect with diverse community partners to identify potential needs and opportunities. The local teams then secure service placements that best match student interests and organizational needs. Please note that student's service placement work may be impacted by particular skill sets.

Learning about different cultural expectations of, and practices for, engaging volunteers and interns is part of the experience, and this process varies depending upon which country a student is involved with. Assigning students to service agencies abroad is often structured more as a placement or matching, rather than competitive application, process. Please note that student's service placement work may be impacted by language abilities and particular skillsets.

Typical programs, organizations, and environments in which students engage in service can include:

- * Programs for at-risk youth
- * Immigration/refugee services and assistance
- * International education/student service/study abroad schools and offices
- * Disaster relief agencies
- * Rehabilitation and empowerment centers for women in post-conflict societies
- * Public health clinics, wellness programs, and health-related agencies
- * Programs for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities
- * Advocacy organizations focused on LGBTQ rights
- * Arts and theatre organizations
- * Animal welfare programs and organizations
- * Organizations coordinating international development agencies
- * Entities focused on conservation, the environment, and sustainability

Why does IPSL require service-placements as part of the graduate program?

Service placements offer IPSL graduate students' invaluable opportunities to learn from and alongside real-world scholar-practitioners. The professional networks and skills developed during these service placements are rich complements to classroom learning and prepare students to more seamlessly transition from graduate education to career-level employment upon graduation.

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Research Opportunities

Will I conduct research as an IPSL graduate student?

All IPSL students learn how to conduct ethical research that empowers and sustains communities, especially the marginalized and vulnerable among us. Some students may conduct primary research (Advocacy Research). Other students may focus more on secondary research.

During the initial Online Residency, all students take the Social Research Methods course (3 credits), which introduces students to quantitative, qualitative, and – importantly - ethical approaches to research.

What is Advocacy Research?

As part of the IPSL Graduate Degrees, students will engage in either primary or secondary research (or both) in support of their Culminating Project or Thesis. If you choose to engage in primary research your Academic Advisor (as well as other faculty and staff) and the structure of the IPSL Advocacy Research Program will support you in this process. Your research will be officially reviewed by the IPSL International Institutional Review Board (IRB) which makes it eligible for publishing and presentation. During the Residency there will be an Advocacy Research Orientation and the IPSL research support person will assist throughout your program.

Who will help me conduct research?

IPSL strongly encourages and supports ethical, innovative research for all students. Student research advances social, racial, environmental, and economic justice in communities across the globe. Research is made possible via IPSL's International Institutional Review Board (IRB).

The IPSL IRB is a fully licensed and registered independent Institutional Review Board specializing in international research. The IPSL IRB accepts proposals and protocols from individuals, nonprofits and businesses seeking approval.

Students conducting Advocacy Research as part of an IPSL program have their IRB approval included in the program cost. Persons seeking approval from the IPSL IRB do not need to be a student enrolled in an IPSL program to qualify for review.

What is Sponsored Research?

IPSL provides students with an opportunity to engage in Sponsored Research where the specific research topic is pre-identified by the community organization and conducted either online or *in situ* by the student researcher. IPSL's community partners abroad contribute expertise and share decision-making and ownership of the research. For any given Sponsored Research topic, data sets are collected over time by multiple student researchers, leading to an incremental increase in the findings and their utility for the host organization and community.

The sponsored research program is especially useful for beginning researchers who may want to engage in the international research process but who do not have previous experience.

Students who have previous research experience or have the time to dedicate to designing a research project from scratch may be interested in original research. Original research projects are initially designed by the student – in consultation with the IPSL IRB and the host community. Student and organization collaborate to finalize the research design for the benefit of both.

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Pre-Departure, Terms 1 - 4 and Re-entry

What are the dates for Residencies?

Please see the IPSL website for dates of the online Residencies.

Do students work while they're in school?

Given the rigorous academic course load and 10-20 hours per week doing indirect or on-site service, IPSL students are discouraged from seeking employment while they are a student. Furthermore, most students – depending on their citizenship – are not permitted to work legally during the study abroad terms. The terms that you choose to spend abroad in the program are an opportunity to delve into studies and service with the goal of obtaining satisfying, rewarding employment upon graduation. Full immersion in the IPSL program allows students to maximize their academic and experiential learning while in graduate school.

Depending upon travel restrictions, students can choose to spend 1-3 terms abroad (1 term must be completed abroad). Students will choose 1-3 different country locations in their order of preference. Please see the website for current locations, which are subject to change. For country-specific information, please contact IPSL staff in Portland.

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Travel Specifics

How do I get my airline ticket(s)?

International airfares are included in IPSL Global Institute at NUNM's graduate program fee* (* restrictions apply). Students will be responsible for purchasing their own airfare and will be reimbursed according to IPSL's travel policy (not to exceed the maximum reimbursement fee or \$1,000 USD). Note that students who purchase a flight using miles (mileage redemption) will only be reimbursed the actual cost associated with the airline's mileage redemption plan (not to exceed the MRF).

Maximum reimbursement fees (MRF) are determined every term and are country-specific. MRFs are calculated using the average cost of a one-way ticket between program locations or a gateway city. Students will be notified of a country's MRF during the term preceding their departure. Please note that students will not be able to purchase airfare or receive reimbursement until full payment for the term is received.

Reimbursements will only be given via ACH (Automated Clearing House)/Direct Deposit to your preferred bank account. Our university, NUNM, will provide all students with an ACH form for your convenience.

Graduation/Career Development

Are professional development opportunities offered as part of the program?

IPSL offers professional development opportunities throughout the program. Students have the opportunity to network and connect with people involved in the nonprofit world in numerous ways, including via their service placements. Additionally, professional development opportunities are provided every term through community events, IPSL-hosted talks and workshops, and facilitated informational interviews.

How will I transition from graduate studies to career?

IPSL has an exemplary placement record, and our students' successes are self-explanatory; no other program provides students the opportunities to build their skills and professional network while they're getting their graduate degree. IPSL provides students with significant support and guidance during the transition from school to career. This happens during the program, the Re-Entry Residency, and afterward. In addition, the IPSL team members may provide individualized career transition support.

How do we know whether a higher education program prepares students well for the changing world of work in the 21st century? It's a big question with serious implications for students and families who invest their time and money and for employers and communities that seek capable career candidates. We know from the research – and from our 40 years of experience – that graduates who are most employable—that is, ready to succeed after graduation and over a lifetime—possess a set of essential qualities that include:

- * People skills such as collaboration, teamwork, and cross-cultural competence
- * Problem-solving abilities such as inquiry, critical thinking, and creativity
- * Professional strengths such as communication, work ethic, and technological agility

Your IPSL graduate program is designed to provide all of these opportunities for you, and more. But as with all professional endeavors, it is up to the individual candidate to dive in, explore, examine, and make the most of these opportunities.

What support does IPSL offer its alumni?

IPSL has created a robust alumni network and encourages alumni to keep in touch and stay up-to-date with IPSL initiatives and one another. IPSL offers lifetime support to alumni by providing resources, guidance, professional development, and continued learning opportunities.

What kinds of work do IPSL alumni go on to do?

IPSL alumni go on to work in a variety of fields for community, public, educational, and NGO/nonprofit organizations in the U.S. and abroad. Current alumni work in such fields as international education, international development, public health, government, and social advocacy, among many others, and serve in professional roles ranging from program manager to faculty to executive director.

Here are some examples of what IPSL alumni are doing today:

- Executive Director, NGO Fighting Human Trafficking (Washington, D.C.)
- Event Coordinator, International Education Non-Profit (The Hague, Netherlands)
- Program Director/Faculty, University (Quito, Ecuador)
- Physician (New Orleans, LA)
- Founder and Director, HIV/AIDS Prevention NGO (India)
- Communications and Operations Director, Disability Advocacy Organization
- Grants Manager, International Education Non-Profit (New York, NY)
- Program and Training Officer, Peace Corps (Washington, D.C.)
- Service-Learning Program Director and Faculty, University (St. Louis, MO)
- Program Manager, Non-profit Empowering Women (Minneapolis, MN)

Can I talk to IPSL alumni about their experiences in the program?

Yes. IPSL would be happy to put potential applicants in touch with alumni or students currently in the program. Please contact IPSL for further information.

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