

PEACE CORPS PREP STUDENT GUIDE

The Peace Corps Prep program will prepare you for international development fieldwork and potential Peace Corps service. To accomplish this, you will build four core competencies through interrelated coursework, hands-on experience, and professional development support.

Four Core Competencies

- ✓ Training and experience in a specific work sector
- ✓ Foreign language skills
- ✓ Intercultural competence
- ✓ Professional and leadership development

This document explains each of these requirements in detail. **Use this guide to map out your Peace Corps Prep course of study.** In particular, refer to this when completing your PC Prep application, where you'll need to document how you plan to fulfill each requirement. **This guide aligns point-by-point with each section of the application!**

1. TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE IN A SPECIFIC WORK SECTOR

Choose one of the [six sectors](#) to focus on and complete at least 3 courses and 50 hours of related experience in that sector.

- Leveraging concrete knowledge and skills is central to on-the-ground international development work. Through this PC Prep program, you will begin to build a professional specialty, which should serve your career well whether or not you become a Peace Corps Volunteer.
- For PC Prep, you need to complete at least **3 courses** that align with a specific work sector (they can but do not need to come from your academic major or minor). You also must accumulate a **minimum of 50 hours of volunteer or work experience in that same sector**, preferably in a teaching or outreach capacity.

Peace Corps TIP!

If you intend to apply to the Peace Corps, the best way to assure that you will be a strong candidate is to explore Peace Corps' openings and identify the type of assignments in which you'd like to serve (www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/volunteer-openings), then review the positions' required and desired qualifications and build them up accordingly. In the process, you should fulfill these PC Prep experiential requirements!

Note: Actual Peace Corps assignments are based on local needs, and thus may or may not align seamlessly with your qualifications. Flexibility is central to the Peace Corps experience!

EDUCATION



Teach lessons that last a lifetime. Education is the Peace Corp's largest program area. Volunteers play an important role in creating links among schools, parents, and communities by working in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools as math, science, conversational English, and resource teachers or as early grade reading and literacy teacher trainers. Volunteers also develop libraries and technology resource centers.

If you choose Education, take 3 courses from one of the following areas:

- Elementary Education
- Secondary Education
- Special Education
- English
- Math
- Computer Science
- Biological Science
- Physical Science

Recommended courses:

ECE131: Intro to Pre-K4 Education
ECE344: Families, Schools and Communities
ECE403: Advocacy Early Child Care & Education
HEN112: English I
HEN113: English 2
MAT105: Mathematics for Teachers I
MAT104: Survey of College Mathematics
MAT111: Intermediate Algebra
CIS101: Computer Programming I
SLF100: Biological Science
SLF110: General Biology I
SPH100: Physical Science

And build 50 hours of related field experience through an activity such as:

- Teaching in one of these or a similar form: in a classroom, with a community outreach organization
- Tutoring in the Academic Success Center
- Serving as a mentor through First Year Experience, AmeriCorps Next Steps or TRiO SSS

Note: Please work with your area coordinator to identify a suitable experience.

HEALTH



Serve on the front lines of global health. Health Volunteers work within their communities to promote important topics such as nutrition, maternal and child health, basic hygiene, and water sanitation. Volunteers also work in HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs to train youth as peer educators, develop appropriate education strategies, provide support to children orphaned by the pandemic, and create programs that provide emotional and financial support to families and communities affected by the disease.

If you choose Health, take three courses from one of the following areas:

- Biology: Pre-Nursing
- Biology: Pre-Medicine
- Health Education

Recommended courses:

REC111: Health & Wellness

SLF100: Biological Science

SLF110: General Biology I

SLF320: Human Anatomy & Physiology

And build 50 hours of related field experience through an activity such as:

- Serving as a Title IX Ambassador or It's On Us grant committee member
- Serving as a Wellness Warrior
- Volunteer or work experience in such areas as COVID19 testing/vaccination sites, HIV/AIDS outreach, hospice, family planning counseling, emergency medical technician (EMT) or CPR teaching/certification, maternal health, and hands-on caregiving in a hospital, clinic, or lab technician setting
- Counseling or teaching in health subjects
- Working as a resident advisor in a residence hall

Note: Please work with your area coordinator to identify a suitable experience.

ENVIRONMENT



Help forge a global movement to protect our planet. Volunteers lead grassroots efforts in their communities to protect the environment and strengthen understanding of environmental issues. They teach environmental awareness in elementary and secondary schools and to youth groups and community organizations, empowering communities to make their own decisions about how to protect and conserve the local environment. Volunteers also address environmental degradation by promoting sustainable use of natural resources.

If you choose Environment, take three courses from one of the following areas:

- Environmental Science
- Wildlife Biology
- Natural Resources
- Biology
- Ecology
- Geology

Recommended courses:

SLF100: Biological Science

SLF110: General Biology I

SLF224: Vascular Plants

SLF332: Ichthyology

SLF335: Introduction to Aquaculture

And build 50 hours of related field experience through an activity such as:

- Educating the public on environmental or conservation issues, or working on environmental campaigns
- Conducting biological surveys of plants or animals
- Gardening, farming, nursery management, organic or low-input vegetable production, or landscaping
- Providing technical assistance and training in natural resource management

Note: Please work with your area coordinator to identify a suitable experience.

AGRICULTURE



Lead grassroots efforts to fight hunger in a changing world.

Agricultural Volunteers work with small-scale farmers and families to increase food security and production and adapt to climate change while promoting environmental conservation practices. They introduce farmers to techniques that prevent soil erosion, reduce the use of harmful pesticides, and replenish the soil. They work alongside farmers on integrated projects that often combine vegetable gardening, livestock management, agroforestry, and nutrition education.

If you choose Agriculture, take three courses from one of the following areas:

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| – Agronomy | – Business |
| – Economics | – Biology |

Recommended courses:

SLF100: Biological Science

SLF110: General Biology I

BEC210: Principles of Economics I

BEC320: Intermediate Microeconomics

BGN110: Introduction to Business Environment

BGN350: International Business

And build 50 hours of related field experience through an activity such as:

- Volunteering with the University's Aquaculture Program
- Working with a business involving vegetable gardening, farming, nursery work, tree planting or care, urban forestry, landscaping, livestock care and management, or fish cultivation and production
- Teaching or tutoring the public in environmental or agricultural issues/activities
- Working on the business management or marketing side of a commercial farm

Note: Please work with your area coordinator to identify a suitable experience.

YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT



Empower the next generation of changemakers. Volunteers work with youth in communities on projects that promote engagement and active citizenship, including gender awareness, employability, health and HIV/AIDS education, environmental awareness, sporting programs, and info technology.

If you choose Youth in Development, take three courses from one of the following areas:

- Psychology
- Community Development
- Family Studies
- Counseling
- Human Development

Recommended courses:

ECE344: Families, Schools and Communities

RPS211: Introduction to Psychology

RPS217: Social Psychology

RPS316: Human Growth & Development

RPS319: Personality

And build 50 hours of related field experience through an activity such as:

- Serving as a Resident Advisor
- Serving as Peer Mentor
- Teaching or counseling in at-risk youth programs
- Activities that involve planning, organizing, assessing community needs, counseling, and leadership, in areas such as education, youth development, health and HIV/AIDS, the environment, and/or business

Note: Please work with your area coordinator to identify a suitable experience.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Harness 21st-century tools to help communities lift themselves.

Volunteers work with development banks, nongovernmental organizations, and municipalities to strengthen infrastructure and encourage economic opportunities in communities. They frequently teach in classroom settings and work with entrepreneurs and business owners to develop and market their products. Some Volunteers also teach basic computer skills and help communities take advantage of technologies such as e-commerce, distance learning, and more.

If you choose Community Economic Development, take three courses from one of the following areas:

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| – Business or Public Administration | – Accounting, Banking or Finance | – Computer Science and related majors |
| – Economics | – Biology | – Graphic Design |
| – Mass Communications | – International Business | |

Recommended courses:

BEC210: Principles of Economics I

BEC320: Intermediate Microeconomics

BGN110: Introduction to Business Environment

GN350: International Business

GRD314: Computer Graphics

IGRD330: Introduction to Website Design

And build 50 hours of related field experience through an activity such as:

- Working with businesses, organizations, or cooperatives in accounting, finance, microfinance, management, project management, budgeting, or marketing
- Starting and running your own business or other entrepreneurial activity
- Training others in computer literacy, maintenance, and repair
- Website design or online marketing
- Founding or leading a community- or school-based club or organization

Please work with your area coordinator to identify a suitable experience.

Peace Corps TIP!

Nearly two-thirds of Peace Corps Volunteers serve in Education or Health. Coursework and meaningful experience in one of these areas—especially teaching English as a second/foreign language—produce some of the strongest candidates.

2. FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS

Requirements vary by region of interest. Most students must hone their capacity to interact professionally using a non-English language. Minimum course requirements vary by desired placement region.

Latin America: Students indicating an intention to serve in Spanish-speaking countries must build strong intermediate proficiency, having completed two 200-level courses or learned Spanish through another medium.

West Africa: Students indicating an intention to serve in French-speaking African countries must build proficiency in French or another Romance language, having completed one 200-level course or learned the language through another medium.

Everywhere else: Students indicating an intention to serve anywhere else do not have explicit language requirements to complete the Program, but they should still be encouraged to study a foreign language.

Note: *If you are a strong native speaker and hope to serve in a country that speaks your same language, you can skip this requirement!*

3. INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

3 approved courses or 1-2 courses + substantive intercultural experience

Engaging thoughtfully and fluidly across cultures begins with one's own self-awareness. With this learning objective, you will deepen your cultural agility through **a mix of three introspective courses** in which you learn about others while reflecting upon your own self in relation to others. The goal is for you to build your capacity to shift perspective and behavior around relevant cultural differences.

You must take the following required course:

AAS210: African American Experience in Global Context

And choose 2 additional electives from the following list:

RPO102: Introduction to World Politics

RPO414: International Law

RSO202: Introduction to Social & Cultural Anthropology

RSO301: Social Stratification

*if there is another course in the catalog identified as either a Global Studies or Global Studies Intensive Course, with the (G) designation on self-service that you feel will meet this requirement, please discuss this option with your PC Prep Coordinator.

NOTE: You may be able to exchange one or two of the electives in this category for a Study Abroad experience in a country where Peace Corps Volunteers have worked (see the list of current and past countries [here](#)).

Study abroad opportunities are available to students through the PASSHE system's Summer Honors Program Abroad. Locations vary each year and are offered by the State System universities.

Students may be able to utilize the Cooperative Education course to remain a full-time study while completing an intercultural experience. Please discuss this option with your PC Prep Coordinator.

Peace Corps TIP!

Prolonged intercultural experiences—such as studying or volunteering abroad, supporting new immigrants or refugees acculturate to the United States or volunteering in diverse schools—would also strengthen your Peace Corps candidacy significantly.

4. PROFESSIONAL AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Resume and interview support + leadership experience

Peace Corps service and similar international development work opportunities are highly professional and selective. PC Prep requires **three specific activities** that will strengthen your candidacy for the Peace Corps (or any other professional endeavor):

- Have your **resume** critiqued by someone in Career and Professional Development.
- Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at Career and Professional Development.
- Develop at least one significant **leadership experience** and be prepared to discuss it thoughtfully. For example, organizing a campus event, leading a work or volunteer project, or serving on the executive board of a student organization.