



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'll build four core competencies through interrelated coursework, hands-on experience, and professional development support. These four competencies are the following:

1. Training and experience in a work sector
2. Foreign language skills
3. Intercultural competence
4. 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

3 courses + 50 hours related experience

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.

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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!

There are [six sectors](http://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/) (www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/) in which Peace Corps Volunteers serve—detailed below. **Choose one sector to focus on** then complete at least 3 courses + 50 hours of related experience in that sector.

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!

1. 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.

Recommended courses:

other upper division courses in these subject areas may be substituted *with advance permission*

- EDTH 330 – Technology for the Classroom
- EDUC 551 – Diversity in the Classroom (with permission)
- HHP 341 – Elementary School Physical Education and Health
- LDSP 600 - Foundations of Leadership
- LDSP 601 and 602 – Service Learning Seminar and Leadership Seminar
- PSYCH 357 – Educational Psychology (3 hours)
- PSYCH 394 - Principles of Learning (3 hours)
- MATH 479 – Techniques for Teaching Mathematics
- MATH 503 – Introduction to Advanced Mathematical Concepts for Education
- BIOL 479 – Techniques for Teaching Biology
- CHEM 479 – Techniques for Teaching Chemistry
- MLL 479 – The Teaching of Languages
- PHYS 479 – Techniques for Teaching Physics
- TTED 694 – Principles of Vocational Education
- TTED 779 – Instructional Methods in Technical Education
- TTED 780 – Classroom Management in Career and Technical Education

For those seeking to teach English in the Peace Corps, choosing from the following is recommended:

- EDUC 552 – Culture and Language Acquisition for English Language Learners
- EDUC 553 – Assessment and the English Language Learner
- EDUC 554 – Methods and Instructional Materials for English Language Learners
- ENGL 202 – English Grammar and Usage
- ENGL 308 – English Linguistics
- ENGL 603 – History of the English Language
- ENGL 479 – Techniques for Teaching English in Middle and Secondary Schools
- MLL 579 – Supervised Student Teaching and Follow-up of Teachers

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, or in a formal tutoring capacity
 - The subject of the teaching may be English as a Foreign/Second Language, special education, drama, or a STEM subject
- Relevant long-term volunteer experience (i.e. tutoring an international student in the Intensive Language Program).

2. 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.

Recommended courses:

other upper division courses in these subject areas may be substituted *with advance permission*

- BIOL-617 - Environmental Health
- FCS-203 – Nutrition and Health
- FCS-285 – Lifespan Human Development
- FCS-480 – Dynamics of Family Relationships
- FCS-581 – Aging and the Family
- NURS-265 – Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
- NURS-405 – Health Alterations in Older Adults
- NURS-445 – Transcultural Health Care
- NURS-482 – Research in Nursing
- PSYCH-571 – Abnormal Psychology
- REC-441 – Therapeutic Interventions for Older Adults
- SOC-584 – Medical Sociology
- SWK-342 – Health Care and Social Work
- SWK-344 – Mental Health Theory and Practice

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

- Volunteer or work experience in such areas as 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 dormitory, as a peer nutritionist, or as a sexually transmitted infections counselor

- Significant experience in mechanical repairs, construction, carpentry, masonry, plumbing, hydrology, or set design

3. 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.

Recommended courses:

other upper division courses in these subject areas may be substituted *with advance permission*

- BIOL 304 – Soil Ecology
- BIOL 313 – Principles of Conservation
- BIOL 330 – Principles of Ecology
- BIOL 502 – Topics in Environmental Biology
- BIOL 615 – Environmental Protection
- BIOL 617 – Environmental Health
- PHIL 114 – Environmental Ethics
- POLS 512 – Environmental Politics
- GEOG 502- Global Environmental Change
- GEOG 302- Introduction to Environmental Geography

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

4. 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.

Recommended courses:

other upper division courses in these subject areas may be substituted *with advance permission*

- BIOL 304 – Soil Ecology

- BIOL 313 – Principles of Conservation
- BIOL 330 – Principles of Ecology
- BIOL 502 – Topics in Environmental Biology
- BIOL 615 – Environmental Protection
- BIOL 617 – Environmental Health
- PHIL 114 – Environmental Ethics
- POLS 512 – Environmental Politics
- GEOG 502- Global Environmental Change
- GEOG 302- Introduction to Environmental Geography

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

- Working with a large-scale or family-run 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

5. YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT



Empower the next generation of change makers. 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.

Recommended courses:

other upper division courses in these subject areas may be substituted *with advance permission*

- SOC 360- Community Sociology
- SOC-548-Juvenile Delinquency
- SWK-375: Multiculturalism and Diversity in Social Work Practice
- SWK-420: Advanced Social Work Practice I
- SWK-598: Chemical Abuse Treatment and Services
- SWK-600: Advanced Social Work Practice II
- SWK-601: Advanced Social Work Practice III
- SWK-621: Practicum in Social Work
- PSYCH-720: Multicultural Issues in Psychology and Counseling
- PSYCH-818: Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy
- PSYCH-819: Techniques of Counseling and Psychotherapy
- PSYCH-844: Diversity Issues in Counseling
- PSYCH-845: Practice in Family Counseling
- PSYCH-854: Group Counseling

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

- 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

6. 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.

Recommended courses:

other upper division courses in these subject areas may be substituted *with advance permission*

- MGMKT 327 – Organizational Theory and Behavior
- MGMKT 330 – Basic Marketing
- MGMKT 439 – International Business
- MGMKT 605 – Cross Cultural Analysis
- MGMKT 611 – International Marketing
- MGMKT 625 – Emerging Markets
- MGMKT 645 – Business Strategy
- ECON 640 – International Trade
- GEOG 507- Geography of the Global Economy
- GIT 230 – Graphic Design
- GIT 322- Web Site Design
- GIT 523- Web Content Management Systems
- CIS350-Introduction to System Administration
- CIS230-Visual Basic Programming
- CIS 240 -- C++ Programming
- CIS 470 -- Computer Networking

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 organization

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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!

2 semesters of a foreign language are required for PSU's Peace Corps Prep Program.

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. Some example courses:

You'll choose three of the following courses:

- ANTH 101 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
- ANTH 301 Food and Culture
- COMM 601 Intercultural Communication
- COMM 785 International Communication
- GEOG 106 World Regional Geography
- GEOG 304 Human Geography
- GEOG 307 East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea

- HIST 102 World History Since 1500
- HIST 501 Special Topics World History (when a contemporary topic)
- HIST 505 African Civilizations
- HIST 507 Modern Africa
- HIST 510 Modern Middle East
- HIST 526 Japan Since 1700
- HIST 527 China Since 1700
- HIST 529 History of South Asia
- HIST 531 Samurai: History, Literature, Myth
- HIST 532 History of Japanese Women
- HIST 533 US-East Asia Relations
- HIST 534 Korea Since 1700
- HIST-536 Modern South America
- HIST 547 Radical Islam
- HIST 605 Africa and the Middle East
- HIST 626 U.S. Iraq and Afghanistan
- INT 699 Senior Seminar in International Studies
- MLL (200) Any language course 200 or above
- PHIL 231 World Religions
- POLS 103 Comparative Political Institutions
- POLS 324 Introduction to Comparative Politics
- POLS 524 European Politics
- POLS 525 Middle Eastern Politics
- POLS 526 Latin American Politics
- POLS 527 African Politics
- POLS 530 International Relations
- POLS 571 Global Human Rights
- POLS 630 International Political Economy
- SOC 200 Introduction to Anthropology
- SOC 676 Global Sociology
- WGS 399 Global Women's Issues

Is there another course in the catalog that you feel meets this requirement? Please discuss it with your PC Prep Coordinator.

**Peace
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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):

1. Have your **resume** critiqued by someone in Career Services.
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** in Career Services.
3. 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.

