

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.

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!

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. **The sectors include Education, Health, Environment, Agriculture, Youth in Development, Community Economic Development.** **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.

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

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> [Elementary, Secondary or Special Education] | <input type="radio"/> [TEFL/TESL] | <input type="radio"/> [Engineering] |
| <input type="radio"/> [English or Linguistics] | <input type="radio"/> [Math] | <input type="radio"/> [Any Physical or Biological Science] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Computer Science] | | |

Recommended courses (Additional courses may be cleared through consultation with the Peace Corps Prep advisor):

AL220 – Languages of the World
AL101- Introduction to Language and Linguistics
ED231 – Education in the 21st Century
ED251 – Child Development and Education
ED271 – Adolescent Development in a Culturally Responsive Classroom
PS 252/253 – Child/Adolescent Development
ED325 - Teaching Elementary School Math and Science
ED335 - Literacy in the Elementary Classroom
ED340 - Teaching in Inclusive Elementary Classrooms
ED370 - Teaching in the Inclusive Middle/High School Classroom

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
- Participating as a tutor in the SMC Peer Tutoring Program
- Participating as a coach in the SMC Writing Center
- Volunteering with a local agency such as USCRI Vermont
- Student teaching as part of your Education degree
- MOVE programs related to education/children such as DREAM and LUND
- MOVE domestic and international trips related to education/children

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.

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

- [Nursing]
- [Nutrition or Dietetics]
- [Health Education]
- [Pre-med]
- [Biology]
- [Technical Education]
- [Environmental or Sanitary Engineering]

Recommended courses (Additional courses may be cleared upon consult with the Peace Corps Prep advisor):

PB 101 - Introduction to Public Health
BI152 - Introduction to Health Science
BI153 – Cell Biology
BI108 - Topics in Organismal Biology: Human Nutrition
BI 207 - Human Anatomy and Physiology I
BI 219 - Human Anatomy and Physiology II
BI 215 - Epidemiology
BI 230 - General Microbiology
BI365 - Immunology and Parasitology
ES330 - Sustainable Food Systems
PO215 - Demography and Public Health
PO255 - Health Policy
PO351 – Politics Global AIDS Pandemic
PS330 – Psychology of Well Being
PS 350 - Psychology of Health and Illness
SO101 – Introduction to Sociology
SO215 – Social Determinants of Health

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
- SMC Fire and Rescue Squad Volunteering
- University of Vermont Medical Center Volunteering
- MOVE domestic and international trips related to health

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.

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

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|--|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> [Environmental Science or related field] | <input type="radio"/> [Park Administration] | <input type="radio"/> [Forestry] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Natural Resources Conservation] | <input type="radio"/> [Wildlife Biology] | <input type="radio"/> [Biology, Botany, or Ecology] |
| | <input type="radio"/> [Natural Resources or Wildlife Management] | <input type="radio"/> [Geology] |

Recommended courses (Additional courses may be cleared through consultation with the Peace Corps Prep advisor):

BI151 – Introduction to Ecology and Environment
ES105 – Nature and Culture
ES 106 – Environment and Society
ES107 - Environmental Science
ES 211 - Water Resources
ES 213 - Earth Systems and Processes
ES 225 - Food Systems & Sustainable Agriculture
ES 243 - Environmental Study of Sustainable Place
ES301 - Advanced Topics in Environmental Studies
ES306 – Environmental Justice
ES310 – Environmental Hazards
ES320 - Environmental Conflict Resolution
ES327 - Environmental Policy
ES330 - Sustainable Food Systems
ES357 – Environmental Restoration

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
- Internship through the SMC Center for the Environment
- Volunteer work on the SMC International Garden
- Internship in environmental related sites such as public parks, nature camps and environmental research
- MOVE domestic or international trips related to environmental causes

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.

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

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> [Agronomy] | <input type="radio"/> [Entomology] | <input type="radio"/> [Agricultural Economics] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Horticulture] | <input type="radio"/> [Agricultural Science] | <input type="radio"/> [Business or economics] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Botany] | <input type="radio"/> [Agribusiness] | <input type="radio"/> [Biology] |

Recommended courses (Additional courses may be cleared through consultation with the Peace Corps Prep advisor):

BI 108 – Nutrition
BI 247 - Plant Biology
ES 105 - Nature and Culture
ES 225 - Food Systems and Sustainable Agriculture
ES 337 - Farm and Food Intensive Spring
ES 339 - Farm and Food Intensive Fall
ES 340 – Sustainable Entrepreneurship
PO325 – Politics of Food

*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
- Internship through the SMC Center for the Environment or a similar internship
- Volunteer work on the SMC International Garden
- Volunteer work through MOVE's FEED and other food insecurity related programs
- MOVE Domestic or International trips related to rural life and agriculture

5. 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:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> [Social Work] | <input type="radio"/> [Developmental Psychology] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Counseling] | <input type="radio"/> [Human Development] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Community Development] | <input type="radio"/> [Family Studies] |

Recommended courses (Additional courses may be cleared through consultation with the Peace Corps Prep advisor):

ED 251 – Child Development and Education
ED271 Adolescent Development in a Culturally Responsive Classroom
ED357 – Early Childhood Education
PS 252 – Child Development
PS 253 – Adolescent Development
PS 270 – Cognitive Psychology

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
- PS 450 - Practicum I: Interpersonal Skills
- PS 460 - Practicum II: Working in the Mental Health System
- Volunteer work at Boys or Girls Club, YMCA, King Street Youth Center, or Camp Ta-Kum-Sa or another youth camp
- MOVE volunteer work as a mentor through DREAM and other mentoring programs.
- MOVE Domestic and International trips related to children (Buffalo, Immokalee and South Dakota)

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.

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

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> [Business or Public Administration] | <input type="radio"/> [Accounting, Banking or Finance] | <input type="radio"/> [Graphic Design] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Nonprofit Management] | <input type="radio"/> [Computer Science and related majors] | <input type="radio"/> [Mass Communications] |
| | | <input type="radio"/> [International Business] |

Recommended courses (Additional courses may be cleared through consultation with the Peace Corps Prep advisor):

BU214 - Management
BU215 - Marketing
BU271 - International Business
BU – 440 Entrepreneurship
BU452 – New Business & Management
EC303 - Public Finance
EC317 - International Economics
EC321 - Economics of Development and Poverty
EC351 - Environmental Economics
ES 340 – Sustainable Entrepreneurship

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
- MOVE volunteer work with a small business or other related focus
- Internships at financial institutions or any business entity
- MOVE Domestic or International trips related to economics/community

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.

Take at least one of these core courses:

AL220 – Languages of the World (formerly AL250 Intercultural Comm.)

AN109 – Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

AN217 – Social Inequities

AN333 – Anthropological of Refugees

AN355 – Anthropology of International Development

And choose at least two additional electives, from the above list, or these below:

AN355 – Gender and International Development
SO302 – Politics, Culture and Globalization in Central America
AL220 – Languages of the World
PO245 – Introduction to International Relations
PO 299 – Identity and Politics
PO 390– Comparative Politics of Racism
SO 221 – Race & Ethnic Relations

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

Intercultural experience in lieu of elective courses

- Studying or volunteering abroad in a country that has at some point hosted Peace Corps Volunteers
 - For at least one week=one elective course
 - For a full semester = two elective courses

- Intercultural experiences such as working with new immigrants/refugees to help them acculturate to the U.S.
 - 40 hours = one elective course

- Academic Study Trip or a MOVE Domestic or International trip with a focus on intercultural experiences (Immokalee, South Dakota, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Kolkata, India)
 - One week = one elective course

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):

1. Have your resume critiqued by someone in Career Education (attend a workshop).
2. Attend a workshop or class on interview skills at Career Education and follow through with a mock interview.
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 as a leader on a student organization.