



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](#) 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.

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

- o Elementary, Secondary or Special Education
- o English or Linguistics
- o TEFL/TESL
- o Math
- o Computer Science
- o Engineering
- o Any Physical or Biological Science

Example courses:

English

- o ENGL 201 World Literature
- o ENGL 363 African American Literature
- o ENGL 364 Asian-American Literature

Math

- o MATH 103 Intro to Contemporary Mathematics
- o MATH 160 Introduction to Applied Statistics
- o MATH 210 Intro to Mathematics of Computer Science

Computer Science

- o CSCI 161 Intro to Computer Science
- o CSCI 240 Software Engineering
- o CSCI 261 Computer Science 2

Physical or Biological Science

- o BIOL 101 Intro to Biology
- o PHYS 111 General College Physics
- o CHEM 110 General Chemistry 1

(students should check with the PC Prep Coordinator to determine which courses are best suited for them to meet the needs of the Education sector)

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
 - o The subject of the teaching may be English as a Foreign/Second Language, special education, drama, or a STEM subject

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:

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

Example courses:

Health Education

- o EXSC 221 Human Physiology
- o EXSC 301 Nutrition and Energy Balance
- o EXSC 329 Exercise Physiology

Pre-Med

- o BIOL 212 Cell Biology
- o CHEM 110 General Chemistry 1
- o PHYS 111 General College Physics

Biology

- o BIOL 101 Intro to Biology
- o BIOL 111 Unity of Life: Cells, Molecules, and Systems
- o BIOL 112 Evolution and the Diversity of Life

(students should check with the PC Prep Coordinator to determine which courses are best suited for them to meet the needs of the Education sector)

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.

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

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Environmental Science or related fieldo Natural Resources Conservation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Park Administrationo Wildlife Biologyo Natural Resources or Wildlife Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Forestryo Biology, Botany, or Ecologyo Geology |
|---|---|--|

Example courses:

Environmental Science

- o ENVR 101 Intro to the Environment
- o ENVR 202 Tools in Environmental Science
- o ENVR 322 Water Policy

Geology

- o GEOL 101 Physical Geology
- o GEOL 226 Intro to Geophysics
- o GEOL 303 Geomorphology

Biology

- o BIOL 101 Intro to Biology
- o BIOL 111 Unity of Life: Cells, Molecules, and Systems
- o BIOL 211 General Ecology

(students should check with the PC Prep Coordinator to determine which courses are best suited for them to meet the needs of the Education sector)

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.

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

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| <u>o Agronomy</u> | <u>o Entomology</u> | <u>o Agricultural Economics</u> |
| <u>o Horticulture</u> | <u>o Agricultural Science</u> | <u>o Business or economics</u> |
| <u>o Botany</u> | <u>o Agribusiness</u> | <u>o Biology</u> |

Example courses:

Business or economics

- o BUS 205 Financial Accounting
- o BUS 305 Principles of Management
- o BUS 310 Principles of Marketing
- o BUS 355 Sustainable Business
- o BUS 361 Business and the Base of the Pyramid
- o ECON 102 Introduction to Behavior and Choice

Biology

- o BIOL 101 Intro to Biology
- o BIOL 211 General Ecology
- o BIOL 332 Molecular Biology and Physiology of Plants

(students should check with the PC Prep Coordinator to determine which courses are best suited for them to meet the needs of the Education sector)

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 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:

- o Social Work
- o Counseling
- o Community Development
- o Developmental Psychology
- o Human Development
- o Family Studies

Example courses:

Social Work

- o SOAN 101 Intro to Sociology
- o SOAN 103 Social Problems
- o SOAN 206 Deviance and Social Control

Community Development

- o COMM 370 Communication and Diversity
- o CONN 340 Gender and Communication
- o SOAN 352 Work, Culture, and Globalization

Developmental Psychology

- o PSYC 220 Developmental Psychology: Prenatal through Childhood
- o PSYC 221 Developmental Psychology: Adolescence Through the End of Life
- o PSYC 350 Developmental Psychopathology

Human Development

- o CONN 320 Health and Medicine
- o PSYC 371 Cognition and Aging
- o SOAN 316 Cultural Politics of Global Development

Family Studies

- o COMM 350 Family Communication
- o COMM 482 Communication in Personal Relationships
- o SOAN 318 Women and Global Inequality

(students should check with the PC Prep Coordinator to determine which courses are best suited for them to meet the needs of the Education sector)

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.

- o Business or Public Administration
- o Nonprofit Management
- o Accounting, Banking or Finance
- o Computer Science and related majors
- o Graphic Design
- o Mass Communications
- o International Business

Example courses:

Business or Public Administration

- o BUS 205 Financial Accounting
- o BUS 305 Principles of Management
- o BUS 310 Principles of Marketing

Accounting, Banking or Finance

- o BUS 205 Financial Accounting
- o BUS 300 Personal Finance
- o BUS 315 Principles of Financial Management

Computer Science and related majors

- o CSCI 161 Intro to Computer Science
- o CSCI 261 Computer Science II

- o CSCI 281 Assembly Language and Computer Architecture

Mass Communications

- o AFAM/COMM 370 Communication and Diversity
- o COMM 181 Intro to Online Communication
- o COMM 252 Health Communication Campaigns

International Business

- o BUS 370 International Business Theory and Strategy

(students should check with the PC Prep Coordinator to determine which courses are best suited for them to meet the needs of the Education sector)

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

Peace
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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 language

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

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 take at least 1 of these core courses:

- o SOAN 102 Introduction to Anthropology
- o GDS 211/IPE Introduction to Global Development
- o AFAM 101 Introduction to African American Studies
- o SOAN 101 Introduction to Sociology

And choose 2 additional electives from the above list or the example courses below:

- o PSYC 265 Cross-Cultural Psychology
- o PSYC 373 Perceiving Self and Other
- o COMM 370 Communication and Diversity
- o PHIL 106 Language, Knowledge, and Power
- o Many others from the KNOW list may qualify:
<https://www.pugetsound.edu/academics/curriculum-courses/knowledge-identity-and-power/>

(students should check with the PC Prep Coordinator to determine which courses are best suited for them to meet the needs of the Education sector)

Is there another course in the catalog that you feel meets this requirement? Please discuss it 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):

1. Have your **resume** critiqued by someone in [Career and Employment Services \(CES\)](#).
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at [Career and Employment Services \(CES\)](#).
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.