



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](#) (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.

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

- [Elementary, Secondary or Special Education]
- [English Education]
- [Engineering]
- [English or Linguistics]
- [Math]
- [Any Physical or Biological Science]
- [Computer Science]

Recommended courses:

- RDNG 4315 Methods of Teaching Reading
- EDUC 3301 Human Growth and Development
- EDUC 3303 Classroom & Behavior Management
- EDUC 4303 English Methods
- EDUC 2309 Instructional Media and Technology
- CHEM 2300 Earth Science
- AGEN 3320 Agricultural Engineering Safety

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
- Student teaching practicum for education majors or self-designed ABCD mapping exercise of community education resources.
- 4-H ABCD volunteer practicum with the FCDC, a community partner committed to improving the social, educational and cultural development of the citizens of north Pine Bluff. The Family Community Development Corporation (FCDC) aspires to motivate all sectors of the community by providing educational, cultural, vocational and civic programs in a friendly neighborhood community center.

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:

- NURS 3203 Fundamentals of Nursing Practicum
- NURS 4203 Nursing Care of Children
- HUSC 1311 Nutrition and Wellness
- HUSC 3325 Nutrition through the Life Cycle
- HUSC 4240 Food Politics
- HLPE 3220 First Aid/CPR
- TECH 4307 Quality Control
- TECH 4320 Estimating and Scheduling/Project Management

*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
- Self-designed ABCD mapping exercise of community health resources
- 4-H ABCD volunteer practicum utilizing the Learn, Grow, Eat and Go research based, evidence based curriculum project of the International Junior Master Gardener Program

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:

- [Environmental Science or related field]
- [Natural Resources Conservation]
- [Park Administration]
- [Wildlife Biology]
- [Natural Resources or Wildlife Management]
- [Forestry]
- [Biology, Botany, or Ecology]
- [Geology]

Recommended courses:

- AGRI 3399 (REG SCI TRACK) Man, Environment & Pollution
- AGRI 4386 (REG SCI TRACK) Geographic Information Systems and Watershed Mngmt
- BIOL 1460 General Zoology
- BIOL 2360 Ecology
- BIOL 1470 General Botany

*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
- Self-designed ABCU community mapping of environment, natural resource assets
- 4-H ABCD volunteer practicum with the Hurricane Hype Center, a community partner that provides an environment that strengthens the community and nurtures family relationships through recreational, educational, social, spiritual, health and wellness opportunities inclusive to all people

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:

- [Agronomy]
- [Horticulture]
- [Botany]
- [Entomology]
- [Agricultural Science]
- [Agribusiness]
- [Agricultural Economics]
- [Business or economics]
- [Biology]

Recommended courses:

- AGRI 3334 Soil Physics
- AGRI 4313 Farm Management
- FINA 2321 Business Math
- FINA 4312 Risk Management
- ECON 4305 Introduction to International Trade

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
- Self-designed ABCD community mapping exercise focusing on resources, assets for urban gardening, farmers and ranchers
- 4-H ABCD volunteer practicum with S.A.R.E., a community partner whose mission is to advance the American agriculture through innovations that improve profitability, stewardship and quality of life by investing in groundbreaking research and education
- Volunteer one to five nights at the Heifer International Ranch in Perryville as an intensive educational experience

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:

- [Social Work]
- [Counseling]
- [Community Development]
- [Developmental Psychology]
- [Human Development]
- [Family Studies]

Recommended courses:

- SWRK 2307 Social Welfare Policy and Services
- SWRK 3322 Human Behavior and the Social Environment
- SWRK 3333 Rural Social Work
- HUSC 1340 Child Development
- HUSC 2340 Adolescent and Adult Development
- HUSC 3341 Parenting Education

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
- Self-designed ABCD community mapping exercise focusing on youth development resources and assets
- 4-H ABCD volunteer practicum with one of three organizations: 1) TOPS (Targeting Our People's Priorities with Service), an organization committed to providing a safe haven for youth, building positive social bonds and helping kids develop the necessary tools to produce academic success; 2) YEAH (Youth Education Arts and Health) 8 Foundation,

another community partner that empowers marginalized and at-risk youth through life-changing programs; and 3) Juvenile Justice School, a community partner that provides opportunities for teens to work, learn, have fun and give back to their communities.

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:

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

Recommended courses:

- FINA 3340 Financial Markets & Institutions
- FINA 4320 International Finance
- MKTG 4320 International Marketing
- PSCI 4315 International Relations
- ART 33-0 Desktop Publishing

*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
- Self-designed ABCD community mapping exercise focusing on resources that support community engagement in media, advocacy and mobilization
- 4-H ABCD volunteer practicum with Innovation Hub, a community partner that helps entrepreneurs and manufacturers design, prototype, build, test and deliver new products.

**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. Some example courses:

You'll take at least 1 of these core courses:

- AGRIV 3V30 (special course to prepare students for cross-cultural education abroad experiences)
- SOCI 3315 Inequality in America
- SOCI 3320 Race and Ethnic Relations
- SOCI 3325 Sociology of Sex Roles
- HUSC 4361 Families Across Cultures

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

- EDUC 3236 Cultural Diversity/School/Family/Comm
- PSCI 4216 Global Issues
- ENGL 2360 or 2361 World Literature
- HIST 3310 Latin American History
- HIST 4385 African History
- HIST 3360 Middle East and the Islamic World
- HIST 4360 Modern Russia
- HIST 4396 Seminar in Third World Studies

- PSCI 3322 Political Systems of the Far East
- SOCI Peoples and Cultures of Latin America
- PSCI 3328 Politics of Developing Nations
- PSCI 3342 Developing Black African Nations
- PSCI 4316 Global Issues
- Introduction to Anthropology, SOCI 2330
- SOCI 3331 Rural Sociology
- SOCI 3360 Peoples and Cultures of Africa South of the Sahara

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

Optional: Intercultural experience in place of elective(s) one or both of the electives:

- Students may also substitute an education abroad experience for one or more of the above listed inter-cultural electives. As the selection of education abroad experiences vary from year to year, students should seek approval in advance of an education abroad program selection. Examples of education abroad programs that are planned during the period of 2022-2027 include the following:
 - Aquaculture/Fisheries experiential learning in Colombia and Ghana
 - Intensive Spanish learning and service learning in Guatemala
 - Agriculture/food nutrition experiential learning in Ghana
 - Textile, merchandising and design experiential learning in Kenya
 - Agriculture/cowpea production experiential learning in Colombia
 - Impacts of COVID-19 on food value chain in Burundi and Kenya

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 a Peace Corps Prep Program Mentor or someone in the Office of Career Services
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at the Office of 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.