

Peace Corps Prep Student Guide

The Peace Corps Prep program (PC Prep) 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, or "learning objectives," are the following:

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

This PC Prep Student Guide 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 in one 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 identify the type of assignments in which you'd like to serve through this interactive tool at: www.peacecorps.gov/openings, then review the positions' desired qualifications and build them up accordingly. In the process, you should fulfill these PC Prep experiential requirements!

Choose one of six sectors to focus on: There are six sectors in which Peace Corps Volunteers serve—detailed below.

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!

Sector One: Education

www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/whatvol/edu_youth/assignments/



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:

Adolescent and Young Adult Education	Human Development	Education
Early Childhood Education	Special Education	TESOL

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

Sector Two: Health

www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/whatvol/edu_youth/assignments/



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:

Exercise & Sport Sciences	Healthcare Administration	Health
Family & Consumer Sciences	Medical Assisting	Nursing
Dietetics	Nutrition	Wellness

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 or 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

Sector Three: Environment

www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/whatvol/env/assignments/



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 these areas:

Energy Management Technology	Water Resources Management	Engineering
Environmental Science	Environmental Studies	
Natural Resources Management	Sustainability	

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

Sector Four: Agriculture

www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/whatvol/agr/assignments/



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:

Food Science Technologies	Water Resources Management
Agricultural Science	Sustainability
Horticulture	

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, tree planting, urban forestry, landscaping, livestock care & management, or fish cultivation & production
- Teaching or tutoring the public in environmental or agricultural issues/activities
- Working on the business management or marketing side of a commercial farm

Sector Five: Youth in Development

www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/whatvol/youth/assignments/



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:

Family & Consumer Sciences	Community Development	Engineering
Early Childhood Education	Human Development	Social Work
Exercise & Sport Sciences	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

Sector Six: Community Economic Development

www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/whatvol/busdev_01/assignments/



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:

Human Services Administration	Accounting	Management
International/Global Studies	Computer Science	
Business Administration	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

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.

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/whatvol/>

2. Foreign language skills

Requirements vary by language

Working across cultures often entails verbal and nonverbal languages distinct from your own. Building foreign language skills is thus a second key component of the PC Prep curriculum.

Where would you like to serve? PC Prep minimum course requirements align with those needed by applicants to the Peace Corps itself, which vary by linguistic region.

- Latin America: Individuals wanting to serve in Spanish-speaking countries must apply with strong intermediate proficiency. This typically means completing **two 200-level courses**.
- West Africa: Individuals wanting to serve in *French-speaking* African countries should be proficient in French (or, in some cases, any Romance Language), usually through **one 200-level course**.
- Everywhere else: The Peace Corps has **no explicit language requirements** for individuals applying to serve in most other countries. However, you will still likely learn and utilize another language during service, so it is only helpful to have taken at least one foreign language class.

Note: If you are a strong native speaker and want to serve in a country that speaks your same language, you are not required to take courses, but you will need to demonstrate an equivalent level of mastery to two 200-level courses.

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 course:

Core course: ICC3200 Intercultural Competence

Plus, two electives such as those below. If there are other courses that you feel meet this requirement, please discuss this with your PC Prep Coordinator.

- COM4320 Social Media & Social Change
- CRE3100 Understanding Conflict in a Changing World
- CRE3500 Identity and Conflict Analysis
- CRE3600 Conflict Inside Organizations
- CRE4300 Politics, Power and Conflict
- HUM3052 Colonialism
- HUM3053 Postcolonialism
- HUM3600 Justice and Equity
- HWL4040 Gender and Multicultural Issues
- SST3600 Population Growth & Global Poverty
- SST3700 Culture and Ecology

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

International development is a highly professional sector. It is difficult to break into and demands great initiative and leadership to advance professionally within the field. 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 as part of LDR3600 Seminar in Leadership for Service and Change: Personal and Professional Development, using *myCareer Planner* services, or by someone in your campus career services office
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** of LDR3600 Seminar in Leadership for Service and Change: Personal and Professional Development, using *myCareer Planner* services, or by someone in your campus career services office
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. LDR3500 Seminar in Leadership for Service and Change: Community Engagement will help you plan your leadership experience.