

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:

- Training and experience in a work sector
- Foreign language skills
- Intercultural competence
- 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 in the following pages. **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!



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 or Linguistics
- TEFL/TESL
- Math
- Computer Science
- Engineering
- Information Technology
- Any Physical or Biological Science

Recommended Courses

Meet with your Academic Advisor to ensure that these courses fit within your course of study. Please discuss with our PCP Coordinator and PCP Partners to get courses approved. Ask the Center for Community Engagement about Service-Learning course offerings.

Related Field Experience

Build 50 hours of related field experience through suggested leadership activities below:

- Teaching or tutoring one of these areas in a classroom or with a community organization
- Bear Breaks Immersion Trip (~40 hours offered each spring)
- Designate/Component Service-Learning course (40 hours offered each semester)

*Utilize the Community Focus Report resource in the Center for Community Engagement to find opportunities.

*Utilize Givepulse.com to access service opportunities in Springfield, MO.

Notes: _____



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 3 courses from one of the following areas:

- Nursing
- Nutrition or Dietetics
- Health Education
- Pre-med
- Biology
- Technical Education
- Biomedical Sciences

Recommended Courses

Meet with your Academic Advisor to ensure that these courses fit within your course of study. Please discuss with our PCP Coordinator and PCP Partners to get courses approved. Ask the Center for Community Engagement about Service-Learning course offerings.

Related Field Experience

Build 50 hours of related field experience through suggested leadership activities below:

- Researching, teaching, or tutoring one of these areas in a classroom or with a community organization
- Bear Breaks Immersion Trip (~40 hours offered each spring)
- Designate/Component Service-Learning course (40 hours offered each semester)

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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 3 courses from one of the following areas:

- Environmental Science or related field
- Natural Resources Conservation
- Park Administration
- Wildlife Biology
- Wildlife Conservation and Management
- Forestry
- Biology or Ecology
- Geology

Recommended Courses

Meet with your Academic Advisor to ensure that these courses fit within your course of study. Please discuss with our PCP Coordinator and PCP Partners to get courses approved. Ask the Center for Community Engagement about Service-Learning course offerings.

Related Field Experience

Build 50 hours of related field experience through suggested leadership activities below:

- Educating the public on environmental or conservation issues, or working on environmental campaigns
- Conducting biological surveys of plants or animals
- Bear Breaks Immersion Trip (~40 hours offered each spring)
- Designate/Component Service-Learning course (40 hours offered each semester)

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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 3 courses from one of the following areas:

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

Recommended Courses

Meet with your Academic Advisor to ensure that these courses fit within your course of study. Please discuss with our PCP Coordinator and PCP Partners to get courses approved. Ask the Center for Community Engagement about Service-Learning course offerings.

Related Field Experience

Build 50 hours of related field experience through suggested leadership activities below:

- 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
- Bear Breaks Immersion Trip (~40 hours offered each spring)
- Designate/Component Service-Learning course (40 hours offered each semester)

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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.

If you choose Youth in Development, take three courses from one of the following areas:

- Social Work
- Counseling
- Community Development
- Developmental Psychology
- Human Development
- Child and Family Development

Recommended Courses

Meet with your Academic Advisor to ensure that these courses fit within your course of study. Please discuss with our PCP Coordinator and PCP Partners to get courses approved. Ask the Center for Community Engagement about Service-Learning course offerings.

Related Field Experience

Build 50 hours of related field experience through suggested leadership activities below:

- 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.
- Bear Breaks Immersion Trip (~40 hours offered each spring)
- Designate/Component Service-Learning course (40 hours offered each semester)

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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 Development, take three courses from one of the following areas:

- Business or Public Administration
- Nonprofit Management
- Accounting, Banking, or Finance
- Computer Science and related fields
- Mass Communication
- International Business

Recommended Courses

Meet with your Academic Advisor to ensure that these courses fit within your course of study. Please discuss with our PCP Coordinator and PCP Partners to get courses approved. Ask the Center for Community Engagement about Service-Learning course offerings.

Related Field Experience

Build 50 hours of related field experience through suggested leadership activities below:

- Working with businesses or organizations in accounting or finance
- Starting and running your own business or other entrepreneurial activity
- Training others in computer literacy, maintenance, and repair
- Website design or online marketing
- Bear Breaks Immersion Trip (~40 hours offered each spring)
- Designate/Component Service-Learning course (40 hours offered each semester)

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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 placement region

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/electives** 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 core course: (Please refer to the [MSU General Education Program](#) – Human Cultures, Public Affairs) Examples:

- MCL 200
- ENG 222
- GBS 250
- IDS 297

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

- Study Away Experience
- Other Intercultural Experiences

Is there another course in the catalog, or Study Away experience that you feel meets this requirement? Please discuss it with the 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 Center (walk-in hours are available).
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at the Career Center
3. Develop at least one significant **leadership experience** and be prepared to discuss it thoughtfully. For example: participating in the Commerce Bank Emerging Leaders Program, serving as a Peer Leader, Bonner Leaders, Distinction in Public Affairs, Inclusive Excellence Leadership Scholarship, organizing a campus event, leading a service project, or serving on the executive board of a student organization.

Student Name: _____

University: _____

PC Prep Coordinator: _____

