



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 Peace Corps 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:

Westfield State University offers students the following five work sectors: Education, Health, Environment, Youth in Development, and Community Economic Development.

Due to the lack of relevant courses, Westfield State does not offer the Agriculture sector as an option. Choose one sector to focus on and 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 Corps' 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
- Your Liberal Studies Major Area

Recommended courses:

EDUCATION METHODS COURSES

EDUC 0260	Global Civic Engagement
EDUC 0335	Literary Instruction for English Language Learners
EDUC 0360	Civil Engagement Capstone: Learning in Community
EDUC 0363	Sheltered English Immersion
EDUC 0370	Language Communication Dev. And Intervention
EDUC 0380	Critical Multicultural Education
ENGL 0221	World Literature
ENGL 0240	Cultural Studies
ENGL 0287	World Drama
ENGL 0338	Young Adult Literature in ELA Classroom

Are there other courses in the catalog that you feel meet the requirement?
Please discuss it with your Peace Corps Prep Coordinator.

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.

Other education related field experience includes volunteer work at:
Westfield Foundation for Education, Springfield School Volunteers, Homework House, United Way, Institute of Youth Development and Excellence, and Cooperative for Education, etc.

#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:

- Biology
- Health Science
- Movement Science
- Nursing
- Nutrition or Dietetics
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Social Work

Recommended courses:

BIOL 0104	Human Biology
BIOL 0209	Medical Microbiology
BIOL 0237	Human Anatomy and Physiology I
BIOL 0239	Human Anatomy and Physiology II
BIOL 0240	Parasitology
BIOL 0313	Immunology
MOVP 0100	Science of Physical Activity and Health
MOVP 0212	Concepts of Nutrition
MOVP 0303	Health Education in the Elementary School
NURS 0307	The Business of Nursing Care
NURS 0311	Community Health Nursing
NURS 0355	Nursing Leadership
PSYC 0101	Intro to Psychology
PSYC 0202	Child Development
PSYC 0203	Adolescent Development
PSYC 0208	Adult Development and Aging
PSYC 0304	Social Psychology
PSYC 0322	Theories of Counseling
PSYC 0336	Psychology of the Family
SOCI 0101	Principles of Sociology
SOCI 0200	Cultural Anthropology
SOCI 0201	The Family
SOCI 0318	Sociology of Medical Care
SOCI 0319	Sociology of Sexualities
SOCI 0337	Death and Dying
SOCI 0338	Families and Dying
SOCW 0103	Intro to Social Work and Social Welfare
SOCW 0241	Human Behavior and Social Environment I
SOCW 0242	Human Behavior and the Social Environment II

SOCW 0243

Social Welfare Policy Analysis

Are there other courses in the catalog that you feel meet the requirement?
Please discuss it with your Peace Corps Prep Coordinator.

And build 50 hours of related field experience through an activity such as:

- Volunteer or work experience in 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 in such places as:

A Positive Place at Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton, Project Life in Holyoke, Fenway Health in Boston, Justice Resources Institute (JRI) in Needham, and Bread of Life International, among others;

- Counseling or teaching in health subjects;
- Internships at local hospitals and clinics; and
- Working as a resident advisor in a dormitory, as a peer nutritionist, or as a sexually transmitted infections counselor.

#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 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:

- Biology, Botany, or Ecology
- Environmental Science or related field
- Forestry
- Geology
- Natural Resource Conservation
- Natural Resource Management
- Wildlife Biology or Management

Recommended courses:

BIOL 0102	Environmental Biology
BIOL 0201	General Ecology
BIOL 0202	Conservation Biology
BIOL 0204	GIS Applications for Natural Sciences
BIOL 0219	Aquatic Biology
BIOL 0279	Topics in Environmental Studies
BIOL 0280-0289	Biology Seminar
BIOL 0334	Animal Behavior
BIOL 0377	Research Experience
ECON 0321	Natural Resource Economics
ENVS 0101	Principles of Environmental Science
ENVS 0105	Natural History and Field Techniques
ENVS 0180	Introductory Environmental Science Seminar
ENVS 0225	Natural Resource Conservation and Management
EVNS 0233	Environmental Legislation
ENVS 0238	Environmental Impact Analysis
ENVS 0240	Writing for Environmental Science
ENVS 0251	Water Resource Planning and Management
ENVS 0300	Wetlands Assessment and Planning
ENVS 0309	Wildlife Ecology and Management
GPS 0101	World Regional Geography
GPS 0105	Intro to Community Planning
GPS 0106	Environment, Sustainability & Society
GPS 0204	Housing in America
GPS 0210	Cultural Geography
GPS 0216	The (Un)Just City
GPS 0219	Land Use and Resource Planning
GPS 0236	Environment Analysis II

GPS 0238	Environmental Impact Analysis
GPS 0244	Intro to Geographic Information Systems
GPS 0311	Regional Geography of Latin American and the Caribbean
GPS 0325	Food Systems Planning
GPS 0331	Severe and Unusual Weather
GPS 0344	Advanced Geographical Information Systems

Are there other courses in the catalog that you feel meet the requirement?
Please discuss it with your Peace Corps Prep Coordinator.

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; and
- Providing technical assistance and training in natural resource management.

Environment-related field experience includes volunteering at: Conservative Energy Network, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Hitchcock Center for the Environment, Berkshire Environmental Action Team, and US Fish & Wildlife Service, etc.

#4. 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:

- Communication
- Education
- English
- Environmental Science
- Ethnic and Gender Studies
- Geography
- Management
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Social Work

Recommended courses:

COMM 0340	Organizational Communications
EDUC 0260	Global Civil Engagement
EGST 0101	Intro to Comparative Ethnic Studies
EGST 0102	Intro to Women's and Gender Studies
EGST 0213	Contemporary Issues in Islamic Studies
EGST 0217	Culture and Personality
EGST 0221	Women in Modern Organizations
EGST 0390	Special Topics in Ethnic and Gender Studies
ENGL 0103	Speech
ENVS 0101	Principles of Environmental Science
ENVS 0233	Environmental Legislation
GPS 0105	Intro to Community Planning
GPS 0106	Environment, Sustainability & Society
MGMT 0107	Software Applications in Management
MGMT 0308	Organizational Development and Behavior
MGMT 0314	Human Resource Management
MGMT 0342	Entrepreneurship
MGMT 0346	Leadership
PSYC 0203	Adolescent Development
SOCI 0202	Race and Ethnic Relations
SOCI 0308	Social Inequality
SOCW 0103	Intro to Social Work and Social Welfare
SOCW 0241	Human Behavior and the Social Environment I
SOCW 0241	Human Behavior and the Social Environment II
SOCW 0243	Social Welfare Policy Analysis

Are there other courses in the catalog that you feel meet the requirement?
Please discuss it with your Peace Corps Prep Coordinator.

And build 50 hours of related field experience through an activity such as:

- Teaching or counseling in at-risk youth programs; and
- 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.

Examples of youth development field experience include volunteer activities at: GLBT Youth Group Network of MA, True Colors Out Youth Theater, Hispanic Black Gay Coalition (HBGC), and Massachusetts Commission on GLBT Youth, etc.

#5. 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:

- Accounting or Finance
- Communication
- Computer Science
- English
- Geography
- Graphic Design
- Management
- Philosophy
- Political Science

Recommended courses:

ACCT 0104	Principles of Accounting I
ACCT 0105	Principles of Accounting II
ART 0108	Computer Graphics for Art Applications I
ART 0212	Computer Graphics for Art Applications II
CAIS 0101	Computers in Society
COMM 0101	Intro to Mass Communication
COMM 0102	Intro to Human Communication
COMM 0203	Principles of Public Relations
COMM 0204	Writing for the Media
COMM 0207	Communication Ethics
COMM 0322	Professional Communication
ECON 0101	Principles of Macroeconomics
ECON 0102	Principles of Microeconomics
ECON 0300	Money and Banking
ECON 0318	International Economics
EDUC 0260	Global Civic Engagement
ENGL 0103	Speech
FINC 0207	Financial Management
GPS 0105	Intro to Community Planning
MGMT 0107	Software Applications in Management
MGMT 0221	Business Management
MGMT 0308	Organizational Development and Behavior
MGMT 0338	International Business
MGMT 0342	Entrepreneurship
MGMT 0344	Project Management
MGMT 0346	Leadership

MRKT 0231	Marketing Management
MRKT 0306	Logistics Management
PHIL 0102	Intro to Ethics
POLS 0320	Politics of Budget-Making

Are there other courses in the catalog that you feel meet the requirement?
Please discuss it with your Peace Corps Prep Coordinator.

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; and
- Founding or leading a community- or school-based organization.

Among examples of community economic development experience are volunteer service at Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity, Springfield Partners for Community Action, Institute for Community Economics, Concerned Citizens for Springfield Inc., Score Association, and Valley Venture Mentoring Service Inc., among others.

**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:

- POLS 0209 International Relations
- POLS 0220 International Law & Human Rights

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

- ART 0357 Islamic Art
- COMM 0209 Global Communication
- COMM 0213 Global Film Studies
- COMM 0222 Intercultural Communication
- COMM 0301 International Conflict Resolution
- COMM 0321 Political Communication
- ECON 0318 International Economics
- ENGL 0221 World Literature
- ENGL 0240 Cultural Studies
- ENGL 0287 World Drama
- ENGL 0327 Contemporary Cross-Cultural Literature
- EGST 0102 Intro to Women's and Gender Studies
- EGST 0206 Intro to Islamic Studies
- EGST 0213 Contemporary Issues in Islamic Studies
- EGST 0217 Culture and Personality
- GPS 0101 World Regional Geography
- GPS 0210 Cultural Geography
- GPS 0217 Contemporary Global Issues
- HIST 0215 Intro to the Middle East, Africa and Asia
- HIST 0276 Latin America to 1800
- HIST 0277 Latin America since 1800
- HIST 0283 Modern Africa

- HIST 0287 Asia Since 1700
- LACS 0101 Intro to Latin American and Caribbean Studies
- LANG 0210 Language, Culture and Society
- LCUL 0201 Women in the Hispanic World
- LCUL 0220 Envisioning the Americas
- LLIT 0210 Studies in the Literature of Africa and the African Diaspora
- LLIT 0220 Studies in European Cultures
- LLIT 0310 Seminar in Hispanic Studies
- MGMT 0338 International Business
- MUSC 0104 World Music
- PHIL 0101 Intro to Social and Political Philosophy
- PHIL 0211 Asian Philosophy
- PHIL 0217 Philosophy and Film
- POLS 0110 Intro to Asian Studies
- POLS 0211 Comparative Foreign Policy
- POLS 0224 Politics of Developing Countries
- POLS 0231 Latin American Politics
- POLS 0230 Asian Politics
- PSYC 0363 Cross Cultural Psychology
- SOCI 0200 Cultural Anthropology
- SOCI 0326 The Global Experience

Are there other courses in the catalog that you feel meet the requirement?
Please discuss it with your Peace Corps Prep Advisor.

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 the Career Center.
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at the Career Center.
3. Engage in a professional interview with a Peace Corps representative or local returned Peace Corps volunteer.
4. Develop at least one significant **leadership experience** and be prepared to discuss it thoughtfully. Organizing a campus event, leading a work or volunteer project, or serving on the executive board of a student organization may also count. Other examples include:

Serving as a peer mentor for international students;
 Act as a Resident Assistant for a residence hall living/learning community;
 Act as a program leader in a Diversity and Inclusion program;
 Act as a Peace Corps Prep program recruitment leader;
 Act as a Study Abroad mentor;
 Act as an assistant for a global service-learning project;
 Serve on the Student Government Association;
 Serve as a student representative on a campus governance committee; and
 Serve on the executive board of a student organization or on the planning committee for a big campus event.

