



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 or Linguistics
- Computer Science
- Engineering
- Math
- Any Physical or Biological Science

Courses relevant to the Education sector include:

ANTH 4420 Theories of Language (Linguistics)

ANTH 3490 Language & Thought (Linguistics)

EDLF 3220 What is Education For?

ENWR 1520 Writing & Critical Inquiry: Community Engagement

STS 2500 Science and Technology in Social and Global Context

*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
- Volunteering with the ESL program in Albemarle County.
- Volunteering with the English Speakers of Other Language program through UVA's Madison House.
- Volunteering in UVA's Volunteers for International Students and Scholars (VISAS) program.
- Completing the practicum required for the UVA's TESOL certificate program.
- Volunteering through Madison House programs such as Bridging the Gap, Cavs in the Classroom, Latino and Migrant Aid, or the after school Tutoring program.
- Joining Wahoo Wizards through the School of Engineering and Applied Science
- Joining one of the many CIOs that provide mentorship programs in the local community.

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
- Environmental Engineering
- Global Development Studies: Global Public Health
- Biology
- Public Health Sciences

Courses relevant to the Health sector include:

BIOL 1210 Human Biology and Disease
PHS 2291 Global Culture and Public Health
PHS 3050 Fundamentals of Public Health
CE 2100 Introduction to Environmental Engineering
GSGS 3120 Engineering, Public Health, & Development

*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
- Volunteer through Madison House with Medical Services or Recreational Therapy
- Volunteer for the Charlottesville Free Clinic or the HIV/AIDS Services Group
- Working as a resident advisor in a dormitory
- Get involved in Peer Health Educators, CASE or the Coalition on Eating Disorders
- Join Nursing Students Without Borders
- Get involved with the UVA Water Project in Limpopo, South Africa

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
- Natural Resources Conservation
- Wildlife Biology
- Biology, Botany, or Ecology

Courses relevant to the Environment sector include:

EVSC 1080 Resources and the Environment
EVSC 2200 Plants, People and Culture
BIOL 3180 Introduction to Plant Biology
BIOL 3450 Biodiversity and Conservation
BIOL 4100 Management of Forest Ecosystems

*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
- Get involved in Student Council's Environmental Sustainability committee
- Participate in one of the student community gardens on grounds or the gardens at UVA's Morven Farm.
- Volunteer with the Rivanna Conservation Society, the Southern Environmental Law Center, or the Piedmont Environmental Council

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:

- Commerce
- Botany
- Entomology
- Business or economics
- Biology

Courses relevant to the Agriculture sector include:

ECON 3430 Economics of Sustainability and the Environment
BIOL 2100 Introduction to Biology with Laboratory
BIOL 3180 Introduction to Plant Biology
BIOL 4758 Field Biology of Insects
COMM 1100 Understanding the World of Business
GSVS 3160 The Politics of Food

*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
- Volunteer at UVA's Morven Farm.
- Volunteer with Charlottesville's Local Food Hub.

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:

- Sociology of Youth
- Developmental Psychology
- Human Development
- Community Development
- Family Studies

Courses relevant to the Youth in Development sector include:

SOC 2052 Sociology of the Family
EDLF 3150 Introduction to Child Growth and Development
EDLF 3170 Introduction to Adolescence
PSYC 2150 Introduction to Cognition
GSVS 3110 Sustainable Communities

*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
- Volunteer through Madison House with any of these programs: Athletics, Big Siblings, Day Care, PLAY or Youth Mentoring.
- Participate in either the Young Women's Leadership Development Program or the Young Men's Leadership Development Program sponsored by the Women's Center.

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

Courses relevant to the Community Economics Development sector include:

COMM 3845 Foundations of International Business

COMM 4742 International Finance and Accounting

GDS 3100 Development on the Ground

ECON 4610 Economic Development

LPPS 4220 Comparative Budgeting & Economic Policy

*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
- Volunteer with one of these Madison House programs: Creating Assets, Savings and Hope, Hoos Assisting with Life Obstacles, or Housing Improvement.
- Volunteer with Computers4Kids
- Work on one of the SEAS Concrete Canoe or Steel Bridge competition teams
- Join Engineering Students Without Borders

**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.

Students who are **Global Studies** majors meet this requirement.

Students in other majors should:

take at least 1 of these core courses:

- GSGS 3030 - Global Cultural Studies
- ANTH 2120 - The Concept of Culture
- LPPL 3210 - Intro to Civic Leadership
- EDLF 3240 - Educ in Multicultural Societies

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

- Any GDS course
- ANTH 2400 - Language and Culture
- ANTH 2430 - World Languages
- ANTH 3129 - Marriage, Mortality, Fertility
- EVSC 2010 - Materials That Shape Civilization
- EVSC 3200 - Fundamentals of Ecology
- ECON 4430 - Environmental Econ.
- ECON 4610 - Econ. Development
- HIAF 2002 - Modern African History
- HILA 2002 - Modern Latin America
- PLCP 3130 - Political Economy of Development
- PHS 3825 - Global Public Health: Challenges & Innovations
- PHS 5015 - Qualitative Methods
- SOC 3480 - Soc. of Globalization

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

Peace Corps Prep 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. There are many volunteer opportunities through Madison House that are available. For more information about study abroad, visit the International Studies Office in Minor Hall.

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 UVA Career Center
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at the UVA Career Center.
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.