



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, or "learning objectives," 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. Some specific Madison House programs are noted below, but you should also refer to the Learning In Action resources found here: <http://www.virginia.edu/publicservice/exp-index.html> This UVA website provides links to local opportunities to gain experiential learning in one of these sectors. They list ongoing projects as well as one-time opportunities and the site is updated with new information frequently.

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](http://www.peacecorps.gov/openings) (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!

There are six sectors 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** (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:

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

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

- 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** (www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/whatvol/health/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:

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

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

- 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** (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 the following areas:

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

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

- 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** (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:

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

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, 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

(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:

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

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

- 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

(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:

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

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

- Volunteer with one of these Madison House programs: Creating Assets, Savings and Hope, Hoos Assisting with Lifes 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 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 can skip this requirement!

3. Intercultural competence

3 approved courses

Engaging thoughtfully and fluidly across cultures begins with one's own self-awareness. Students should deepen their cultural agility through **a mix of three introspective courses** in which they learn about others while reflecting upon their own selves in relation to others. The goal is for students to build their capacity to shift perspective and behavior around relevant cultural differences. Some example courses:

Students who are Global Studies majors meet this requirement.

Students in other majors should:

take at least 1 of these core courses:

- GDS 2020
- ANTH 2120
- PPOL 3210
- EDLF 3240

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

- Any GDS course
- EVSC 2010
- EVSC 3200
- ECON 4430
- ECON 4610
- ANTH 2400
- ANTH 2430
- ANTH 3129

- HIAF 2002
- HILA 2002
- PLCP 3140
- PHS 3825
- PHS 5015
- SOC 3480

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

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 by someone in UCS.
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at UCS.
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.