



# 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 (<https://www.peacecorps.gov/ways-to-serve/service-assignments/browse-opportunities>), 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](https://www.peacecorps.gov/ways-to-serve/our-work-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



**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:*

- |                                                   |                                    |                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ○ Education or Education Curriculum & Development | ○ Education, or Special Education  | ○ Computer Science                   |
| ○ Teacher Education, Middle Grades                | ○ English, Reading, or Linguistics | ○ Engineering                        |
|                                                   | ○ Math or Integrated Math & Sci    | ○ Psychology or Sociology            |
|                                                   |                                    | ○ Any Physical or Biological Science |

*Recommended courses:*

- SOCI 205: Introduction to Sociology
- GLST 210: Languages of the World
- GLST 211/ENGL 211: Foundations in Cultural Studies
- INST 222: Foundations of Education in a Multicultural Society
- TEFB 273: Introduction to Culture, Community, Society and Schools
- INST 301: Educational Psychology

*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
- Tutoring or volunteering at College Station ISD or Bryan ISD schools
- Tutor at the Texas A&M Tutoring Center
- Be a conversation partner at the Writing Center to help students practice their English speaking and listening

## 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 | ○ Nutrition | ○ Health or Public Health |
|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|

- Biomedical Engineering
- Biology or Biochemistry
- Psychology

**Recommended courses:**

- AFST 206/PBSI 206: Black Psychology
- HLTH 236: Introduction to Health Disparities and Diversity
- KINE 282: Culture of Wellness
- FSTC 300/NUTR 300: Religious and Ethnic Foods
- AFST 303: Psychology of Women of Color
- HLTH 333/PHLT 363: Spirituality and Health
- FSCI 334: One Health in Coastal Regions
- HLTH 334: Women's Health
- PHLT 336: Health Disparities and Diversity in Society
- PHLT 360: Women's Health
- ANTH 426: Anthropology of Food and Nutrition
- ANTH 435: Medical Anthropology

**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
- Volunteer at local health organizations including Baylor Scott & White Helping Hands, Texas A&M Health Science Center, Health for All, Hope Pregnancy Center, etc.
- Help to sort and distribute food at a food pantry or bank such as the Brazos Valley Food Bank or the 12<sup>th</sup> Can
- Volunteering in the AgriLife extension Master Wellness Volunteer Program

### 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:**

- |                                                                                               |                                              |                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ○ Bioenvironmental Science, Environmental Studies or Molecular and Environment Plant Sciences | ○ Rangeland, Wildlife & Fisheries Management | ○ Horticulture or Botany             |
|                                                                                               | ○ Ecology and Conservation Biology           | ○ Marine Science or Maritime Studies |
|                                                                                               | ○ Atmospheric Sciences                       | ○ Architecture                       |
|                                                                                               |                                              | ○ Geology                            |

**Recommended courses:**

- CARC 101: Cultural and Social Issues in the Natural, Built and Virtual Environment
- ATMO 110/GEOL 110: Disasters and Society

- GEOG 201: Introduction to Human Geography
- GEOG 205: Environmental Change
- MARS 210: Marine Geography
- COSC 222: Social Issues in the History of the Construction Environment
- MARS 280: Coastal and Ocean Resources
- ECCB 308: Fundamentals of Environmental Decision-Making
- BESC 311: International Perspectives on Environmental Issues
- FSCI 334: One Health in Coastal Regions
- HORT 335: Sociohorticulture
- ARCH 346: Architecture, Heritage and Culture

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
- Volunteering at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Keep Brazos Beautiful, or The Gardens
- Participating in Aggie Replant Day
- Volunteering in the Master Wellness, Master Gardeners, or Master Naturalists Volunteer Program
- Work conducted as an Office of Sustainability and Campus Enrichment ambassador
- Conducting research or volunteering with the Department of Ecology and Conservation Biology

## 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:

- |                                             |                                                                                                   |                                              |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| ○ Agricultural Economics                    | ○ Food Science and Technology                                                                     | ○ Plant Pathology, Horticulture, or Botany   |
| ○ Agriculture Communication and Development | ○ Bioenvironmental Sciences, Environmental Studies, or Molecular and Environmental Plant Sciences | ○ Entomology                                 |
| ○ Animal Science                            |                                                                                                   | ○ Rangeland, Wildlife & Fisheries Management |
| ○ Ecology and Conservation Biology          |                                                                                                   | ○ Soil and Crop Sciences                     |
|                                             |                                                                                                   | ○ Business or Economics                      |

Recommended courses:

- AGSM 105: The World Has a Drinking Problem - Global Water Scarcity

- FSTC 300/NUTR 300: Religious and Ethnic Foods
- RWFM 314: Principles of Rangeland Management Around the World
- SCSC 330: Social and Ethical Aspects of International Cropping Systems
- HORT 335: Sociohorticulture
- ALEC 350: Global Agricultural Issues
- ANTH 426: Anthropology of Food and Nutrition
- AGECE 452: International Trade and Agriculture

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
- Volunteering at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
- Participating in the Master Wellness Volunteer Program to receive education and training related to health, nutrition, and food safety
- Working to provide business management or marketing support to local farmers markets such as The Farm Patch and Farmers Market at Bryan City

## 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              | ○ Education and Human        | ○ Agricultural Leadership, |
| ○ Psychological & Brain  | Resource Development         | Education, and             |
| Sciences                 | ○ Nutrition or Public Health | Communications             |
| ○ Educational Psychology |                              |                            |

Recommended courses:

- PBSI 208: Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Minority Experience
- PBSI 209/AFST 209: Psychology of Culture and Diversity
- EPFB 210: Family Engagement and Empowerment
- INST 301: Educational Psychology
- PHLT 336: Health Disparities and Diversity in Society

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
- Volunteering at the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Brazos Valley
- Working or volunteering at an organization that focuses on youth education and development such as a summer camp, afterschool program, library, or YMCA/YWCA
- Working as a 4-H and Youth Development Volunteer or Mentor
- Volunteering at Philosophy for Children

## 6. Community Economic Development



**Harness 21<sup>st</sup>-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 International Business | ○ Economics or Econometrics | ○ Computer Science            |
| ○ Political Science                  | ○ Accounting or Finance     | ○ Communications or Marketing |

*Recommended courses:*

- INTA 201: Introduction to International Studies
- IBUS 310: Global Context of Business
- ECON 312: Poverty, Inequality and Social Policy
- IBUS 320: Global Sustainable Business
- COMM 343: Communication in a Diverse World
- ACCT 445/IBUS 445: International Accounting
- AGECE 452: International Trade and Agriculture

*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
- Contribute to revitalization projects in downtown Bryan
- Work or volunteer at the Small Business Development Center at Texas A&M to assist small businesses with business planning, marketing, or financial management
- Participate in McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship initiatives

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 introspective diversity and inclusion courses:**

- ANTH 205: Peoples and Cultures of the World
- SOCI 207/WGST 207: Introduction to Gender and Society
- ANTH 210: Social and Cultural Anthropology
- SOCI 217: Introduction to Race and Ethnicity
- ANTH 222: Cross Cultural Competency

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

- RELS 312: Contemplation in the Modern World
- COMM 335: Intercultural Communication
- COMM 338/AFST 338: Critical Race Discourse
- COMM 346/JOUR 346: Media, Culture and Identity

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

- **Studying or volunteering abroad** can count towards the intercultural competence elective if it was in one of the [Peace Corps Countries](#).
  - Studying/volunteering abroad may substitute for one course. Experiences that last a full 16-week semester or longer may substitute for both electives.
- **Other immersive and reflective intercultural experiences** may also count. Each distinct intercultural experience lasting at least 40 hours may substitute for one elective. Please discuss experience eligibility with your PC Prep Coordinator.

**Peace  
Corps  
Tip!**

*Prolonged intercultural experiences completed concurrently with your undergraduate studies—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. 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.