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

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/](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
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Computer Science
- Any Physical or Biological Science
- English or Linguistics

Recommended courses -

Courses in Curriculum and Instruction (CI)
CI 3300 – Middle School Curriculum and Instruction
CI 3310 – Public Education in a Multicultural Society
CI 3315 – Human Development: Learning and Being in Social Contexts
CI 3325 – Adolescent Growth and Development
CI 3332 – Foundations of Bilingual and ESL Education
CI 4350 – Mathematics in the Integrated Elementary Curriculum
CI 4355 – Science in Elementary Education
CI 4360 – Methods and Materials for Teaching ESL in the Content Areas
CI 4361 – Psychological Foundations of Bilingual Education
CI 4365 – Biliteracy for Bilingual Learners

Courses in Early Childhood Education (ECE)
ECE 4300 – The Languages of Children: Acquisition and Use
ECE 4310 – Seminar for Teachers of Young Children
ECE 4380 – Independent Study in Early Childhood

Courses in Reading (RDG)
RDG 3312 – Reading and Writing Instruction for Children with Special Needs
RDG 3320 – Integrating Reading and Writing
RDG 4320 – Language and Literacy in Diverse Communities

Courses in Special Education (SPED)
SPED 2360 – Survey Exceptionality
SPED 3338 – Education Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders
SPED 3390 – Assessing Students with Disabilities
SPED 4381 – Educating Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Courses in English (ENG)
ENG 3311 – Practices in Writing and Rhetoric
ENG 3319 – The Development of English

Courses in Computer Science (CS)
CS 1308 – Computer Literacy and the Internet

Physical or Biological Science Courses
BIO 1320 – Modern Biology I
PHYS 1310 – Elementary Physics
PHYS 1315 – General Physics
CHEM 1310 – Introductory Chemistry for Non-Science Majors
CHEM 1341 – General Chemistry I
ANTH 2414 – Biological Anthropology
GEO 2410 – Physical Geography

Students will also be required to complete 50 hours of related field experience through activities 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, or a STEM subject.
- Students may secure teaching/observation hours through SMCISD, HAYS CISD, New Braunfels ISD or surround school district, pending participation approval by district and Texas State University.
- Relevant teaching experience/service learning through a faculty led or affiliated study abroad program.

#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:
- Nutrition
- Health Education
- Biology
- Sociology
- Psychology
- Geography
Recommended courses:

Courses in Nutrition and Foods (NUTR)
NUTR 1362 – Food Science
NUTR 2360 – Nutrition Science
NUTR 3362 – Nutrition and Health

Courses in Geography (GEO)
GEO 3351 – Geography of Health

Courses in Health Education (H_ED)
H_ED 1310 – Foundations of Personal Health
H_ED 1320 – Introduction to Health and Wellness
H_ED 2340 – Community Health
H_ED 3301 – Environmental Health
H_ED 3348 – Prevention of Disease
H_ED 3350 – Consumer Health

Courses in Psychology (PSY)
PSY 2311 – Psychology of Human Sexuality
PSY 3331 – Social Psychology
PSY 3361 – Health Psychology

Courses in Sociology (SOCI)
SOCI 3363 – Medical Sociology: The Sociology of Health and Illness Behavior
SOCI 3383 – Aging and Society
SOCI 3395 – Sociology of Sexuality

Courses in Biology (BIO)
BIO 1320 – Modern Biology I
BIO 1421 – Modern Biology II

Students will also be required to complete 50 hours of related field experience through activities 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
**#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:*

- Geography
- Natural Resources Management
- Biology
- Geology
- Sociology

*Recommended courses:*

Courses in Biology (BIO)
- BIO 1320 – Modern Biology I
- BIO 1330 – Functional Biology
- BIO 1331 – Organismal Biology
- BIO 1421 – Modern Biology II
- BIO 3308 – Global Ecology

Courses in Geology (GEOL)
- GEOL 1410 – Physical Geology
- GEOL 1420 – Historical Geology

Courses in Geography (GEO)
- GEO 1310 – World Geography
- GEO 2310 – Environmental Geography
- GEO 2410 – Introduction to Physical Geography
- GEO 3313 – Natural Resource Use and Management
- GEO 3320 – Community and Regional Planning
- GEO 3321 – Energy Resource Management
- GEO 3349 – Population Geography
- GEO 3351 – Geography of Health
- GEO 3434 – Water Resources
- GEO 4313 – Environmental Management

Courses in Health Education (H_ED)
- H_ED 2340 – Community Health
- H_ED 3301 – Environmental Health
Courses in Sociology (SOCI)
SOCI 3320 – Population Dynamics
SOCI 3330 – Globalization and Development
SOCI 3365 – Society and Environment

Students will also be required to complete 50 hours of related field experience through activities such as:

- Educating the public on environmental or conservation issues, or working on environmental campaign.
- 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

#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:

- Horticulture
- Agricultural Science
- Agribusiness
- Agroforestry
- Agricultural Economics
- Business or economics
- Business or economics
- Biology

Recommended courses:
Courses in Agriculture (AG)
AG 1445 – Basic Animal Science
AG 2379 – General Horticulture
AG 2383 – Introduction to Agricultural Economy
AG 3308 – Organic Gardening
AG 3351 – Agricultural Marketing and Sales
AG 4300 – Greenhouse and Nursery Management

Courses in Biology (BIO)
BIO 1320 – Modern Biology I
BIO 1330 – Functional Biology
BIO 1331 – Organismal Biology
BIO 1421 – Modern Biology II
BIO 3308 – Global Ecology

Courses in Economics (ECO)
ECO 2301 – Principles of Economics
ECO 2314 – Principles of Microeconomics
ECO 2315 – Principles of Macroeconomics

Students will also be required to complete 50 hours of related field experience through activities such as:

- Working with a large-scale or family-run business involving vegetable gardening, farming, nursey work, tree planting or care, urban forestry, landscaping, or livestock care and management
- Teaching or tutoring in the public in environmental or agricultural issues/activities
- Working on the business management or marketing side of a commercial farm

#5 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
- Developmental Psychology
- Human Development
- Community Development
- Psychology
- Family Studies

Recommended courses:

Courses in Diversity Studies (DVST)
DVST 3301 – Introduction to Diversity

Courses in Social Work (SOWK)
SOWK 1350 – Introduction to Social Work
SOWK 2375 – Social Services in the Community
SOWK 4315 – Child Welfare
SOWK 4318 – Social Work and Health Care

Courses in Psychology (PSY)
PSY 1300 – Introduction to Psychology
PSY 3300 – Lifespan Development
PSY 3316 – Personality Psychology
PSY 3331 – Social Psychology
PSY 3323 – Evolution and Behavior
PSY 3334 – Psychology of Human Diversity

Courses in Family and Child Development (FCD)
FCD 1351 – Lifespan Development
FCD 2351 – Child Development
FCD 2353 – Principles of Guidance
FCD 3352 – Development of Programs for Young Children
FCD 3394 – Adolescent Development
Courses in Health Education (H_ED)
H_ED 1310 – Foundations of Personal Health
H_ED 1320 – Introduction to Health and Wellness
H_ED 2340 – Community Health

*Students will also be required to complete 50 hours of related field experience through activities 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

**#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, Economics, or Finance
- Computer Science
- Mass Communications
- International Business

*Recommended courses:*

Courses in Accounting (ACC)
ACC 2301 – Accounting in Organizations and Society
ACC 2361 – Introduction to Financial Accounting
ACC 2362 – Introduction to Managerial Accounting

Courses in Computer Science
CS 1308 – Computer Literacy and the Internet

Courses in Economics (ECO)
ECO 2301 – Principles of Economics
ECO 2314 – Principles of Microeconomics
ECO 2315 – Principles of Macroeconomics
ECO 3317 – International Economics
Courses in Marketing (MKT)
MKT 3343 – Principles of Marketing
MKT 4310 – International Marketing

Courses in Management (MGT)
MGT 3303 – Management of Organizations
MGT 3375 – International Business

Courses in Mass Communication (MC)
MC 1301 – Introduction to Mass Communication
MC 3355 – Mass Media and Society
MC 4303 – International Advertising

Course in Political Science/Public Administration (POSI)
POSI 3322 – Introduction to International Studies
POSI 3316 – Introduction to Public Administration
POSI 3325 – Economic Development in Latin America
POSI 4359 – Politics of International Economic Relations

Students will also be required to complete 50 hours of related field experience through activities 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

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 2000-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 2000-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 hope to serve in a country that speaks your same language, you can skip this requirement!

The Department of Modern Languages at Texas State University offers courses in Spanish, French, German, Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, and Italian.

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. Courses can also be substituted through the completion of an intercultural experience. 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:**

Courses in Anthropology (ANTH)
ANTH 1312 – Cultural Anthropology
Courses in Diversity Studies (DVST)
DVST 3301 – Introduction to Diversity Studies

Courses in Political Science (POSI)
POSI 3322 – Introduction to International Studies

Courses in Sociology (SOCI)
SOCI 3327 – Multicultural Relations
SOCI 3330 - Globalization

And choose 2 additional electives from the above list or these below:
Courses in Anthropology (ANTH)
ANTH 3311 – Disease and Society
ANTH 3314 – Latin American Cultures
ANTH 3322 – Peoples and Cultures of Africa
ANTH 3323 – Cultures of the Middle East

Courses in Communication Studies
COMM 2315 – Interpersonal Communication
COMM 3318K – Diversity and Communication
COM 3318M – Intercultural Communication in the Americas
COMM 3329 – Intercultural Communication

Courses in English (ENG)
ENG 3341 – Studies in World Literature

Courses in Geography (GEO)
GEO 1309 – Introduction to Cultural Geography
GEO 3307 – Geography of Europe
GEO 3308 – Geography of Latin America
GEO 3309 – United States and Canada
GEO 3328 – Geography of North Africa and the Middle East
GEO 3332 – Geography of South and Southeast Asia
GEO 3333 – Geography of China and Japan

Courses in History (HIST)
HIST 2310 – Western Civilization to 1715
HIST 2311 – History of World Civilization to the 17th Century
HIST 2312 – History of World Civilization from the 17th Century
HIST 2320 – Western Civilization, 1715 to Date
HIST 3320 – History of Mexico
HIST 4318S – Britain and the World
HIST 4328 – History of India
HIST 4343 – Modern China
HIST 4344 – Modern Japan
HIST 4346 – Modern Korea
HIST 4350R – Workers and Work in the Arab World
HIST 3357 – History of U.S. Foreign Relations
HIST 3368F – History of U.S. Foreign Policy Making in the Muslim World
HIST 3368O – U.S. Foreign Relations from Revolution to Reconstruction

Courses in Political Science (POSI)
POSI 4326 – Issues in World Politics
POSI 4327 – Theories of International Politics
POSI 4356 – International Law
POSI 4357 – International Organization
POSI 4358 – United States-Latin American Relations
POSI 4359 – Politics of International Economic Relations
POSI 4367 – International Conflict and Security

Courses in Women’s Studies (WS)
WS 3376 – Images of Women
WS 3377 – Realities of Women

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

You may also choose to satisfy electives through the completion of an intercultural experience. ALL INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES MUST BE APPROVED BY THE PC PREP COORDINATOR. In order to do this, students must do one of the following:

- **Study or Volunteer Abroad** - Student must choose a country that has at some point hosted Peace Corps Volunteers (see list of current and past countries at www.peacecorps.gov/countries). Studying/volunteering abroad in these countries from 1 week to a summer may substitute for one course.

- **Other Intercultural Experience** – Student can complete an intercultural experience such as helping new immigrants/refugee acculturate to the U.S. or volunteering in diverse
schools, may also count. Each distinct intercultural experience lasting at least forty hours may substitute for one elective.

_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

_Peace Corps Tip!_ 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 Services at Texas State. They can be reached at 512-245-2645
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at Career Services.
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.