



# 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**

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. [Alumni and Student Connections](#) can help you to identify relevant volunteer positions, internships and employment.

### 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](http://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](http://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/) ([www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/](http://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. If you find a course that is not listed that you think would also fulfill this requirement, please discuss it with the PC Prep Program Coordinator.

*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:*

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Education
- English
- Geosciences
- Math
- Physics

*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
  - Note that PLU has partnerships with some local schools which would be good places in which to conduct your field experience
  -
- Campus-based education opportunities
  - [Academic Assistance](#)
  - [Writing Center](#)
  - [Center for Diversity Justice and Sustainability](#)
  - [Language Resource Center](#)
  - [Parkland Literacy Center](#)
- PLU partners and initiatives
  - [Communities in Schools](#)
  - [Franklin Pierce Schools](#)
  - [Peace Community Center](#)
  - [Puget Sound Education Service District Afterschool Programs](#)
  - [Tacoma Community House Read 2 Me](#)
  - [Tacoma MESA](#)
  - [YMCA Center for Community Impact](#)

## 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 (12 credits) from any of the following areas:*

- **Biology:** BIOL 111: Biology and the Modern World; BIOL 201: Introductory Microbiology; BIOL 205: Human Anatomy and Physiology I; BIOL 206: Human Anatomy and Physiology II; BIOL 225: Molecules, Cells, and Organisms; BIOL 341: Developmental Biology; BIOL 342: Microbiology; BIOL 352: Comparative Anatomy; BIOL 444: Neurobiology; BIOL 448: Immunology; BIOL 449: Virology; BIOL 453: Mammalian Physiology
- **Chemistry:** CHEM 105: Chemistry of Life; CHEM 403: Biochemistry I; CHEM 405: Biochemistry II
- **Kinesiology:** KINS 227: Foundations of Kinesiology; KINS 279: Teaching Physical Activity; KINS 280: Fitness and Recreation Programming and Delivery; KINS 315: Body Image; KINS 320: Nutrition, Health, and Performance; KINS 324: Physical Activity and Lifespan; KINS 366: Health Psychology; KINS 384: Foundations of Health and Fitness Promotion; KINS 395: Comprehensive School Health
- **Nursing:** Any nursing courses
- **Additional Courses:** PSYC 388: Culture and Health; SOCW 325: Social Education and Health Services in Tobago

*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
  
- Campus-based health opportunities
  - [Center for Diversity, Justice, and Sustainability](#)
  
- PLU partners and initiatives
  - [Trinity Lutheran Church](#)
  - [Nourish Pierce County](#)
  - [Emergency Food Network](#)
  - [Catholic Community Services](#)
  - [Community Health Care](#)
  - [Lindquist Dental Clinic for Children](#)
  - [Molina Healthcare](#)

### 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 (12 credits) from any of the following:*

- **Biology:** BIOL 116: Introductory Ecology; BIOL 226: Genes, Evolution, Diversity, and Ecology; Any course in the Ecology and Evolution track of the major
- **Environmental Studies:** Any ENVT course; ANTH 368: Edible Landscapes, the Foraging Spectrum; BIOL 116: Introductory Ecology; BIOL 367: Conservation Biology and Management; BIOL368 Ecology; BIOL 369 Marine Biology; CHEM 104: Environmental Chemistry; ECON 101: Principles of Microeconomics; ECON 313: Environmental Economics; ECON 215: Investigating Environmental & Economic Change in Europe; ENGL 234: Environmental Literature; GEOS 104: Conservation of Natural Resources; GEOS 332: Geomorphology; HIST 370: Environmental History of the US; PHIL 226: Environmental Ethics; PHIL 327: Environmental Philosophy; POLS 346: Environmental Politics and Policy; RELI 239: Environment and Culture; RELI 365: Climate Justice; RELI 393: Topics in Comparative Religions (when topic is “Native Traditions in PNW” only)
- **Geosciences:** GEOS 103: Earthquakes, Volcanoes and Geologic Hazards; GEOS201: Geologic Principles
- **Native American and Indigenous Studies:** NAIS 244: Environmental Justice and Indigenous People

*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
- Working or volunteering at the area’s national parks, including Mount Rainier and Olympic National Park
- Providing technical assistance and training in natural resource management
  
- Campus-based environment opportunities
  - [PLU Facilities Management](#)
  - [Center for Diversity Justice and Sustainability](#)
  - [PLU Sustainability](#)
- PLU partnerships and initiatives
  - [Center for Urban Waters](#)
  - [Citizens for a Healthy Bay](#)
  - [Metro Parks Tacoma](#)
  - [Pierce County Parks and Recreation](#)
  - [Pierce Conservation District](#)
  - [Puyallup Watershed Initiative](#)

## 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 (12 credits) from any of the following:*

- ANTH 368: Edible Landscapes, The Foraging Spectrum; BIOL 116: Introductory Ecology; BIOL 356: Economic and Cultural Botany; BIOL 358: Plant Physiology; BIOL 367: Conservation Biology and Management; BIOL 368: Ecology; BIOL 443: Plant Development & Genetic Engineering; BIOL 462: Plant Diversity and Distribution; ECON 101: Principles of Microeconomics; ENVT/GEOS 104: Conservation of Natural Resource

*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
  
- Campus-based agriculture opportunities
  - [PLU Habitat Restoration](#)
  - [PLU Community Garden](#)
- PLU partners and initiatives
  - [Franklin Pierce Farm](#)
  - [Harvest Pierce County](#)
  - [Hilltop Urban Garden](#)
  - [L'Arche Farm](#)

## 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 (12 credits) from any of the following:*

- **Education:** Any course in Elementary Education or Secondary Education
- **Gender, Sexuality, and Race Studies:** Any course that counts for the major
- **Global Studies:** Any course in the Development and Social Justice Concentration
- **Kinesiology:** Any course in the Health and Fitness Education Concentration
- **Additional Courses:** ENGL 235: Children's Literature; ENGL 334: Studies in Literature for Young Readers; PSYC 101: Introduction to Psychology; SOCI 101: Introduction to Sociology; SOCI 226: Delinquency and Juvenile Justice; SOCI 240:

Social Problems; SOCI 330: The Family; SOCW 320: Child Welfare, A Global Perspective; SOCW 375: Social Services in the Community; SOCW 460: Social Work Practice II: Families and Groups

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 on PLU's Sexuality Awareness & Personal Empowerment Team or for other Women's Center Programs
  
- Campus-based youth in development opportunities
  - [Center for Diversity Justice and Sustainability](#)
  - [Parkland Literacy Center](#)
- PLU partners and initiatives
  - [Communities in Schools](#)
  - [Franklin Pierce Schools](#)
  - [Peace Community Center](#)
  - [Puget Sound Education Service District Afterschool Programs](#)
  - [Tacoma Community House Read 2 Me](#)
  - [Tacoma MESA](#)
  - [YMCA Center for Community Impact](#)

## 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 (12 credits) from any of the following

- Business Administration
- Communications
- Computer Science
- Economics
- Global Studies (any course in the Development and Social Justice Concentration)
- Studio Arts (any course in Graphic Design)

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
  
- PLU partnerships and initiatives
  - [Habitat for Humanity](#)
  - [Sound Outreach](#)
  - [Tacoma Community House](#)
  - [United Way of Pierce County](#)

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

**Requirement:** Four credits in a foreign language, or equivalent demonstrated proficiency.

**Additional language considerations:** *Where would you like to serve?* 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: 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!*



### 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 (four credits):**

- ANTH 102: Human Cultural Diversity
- COMA 304: Intercultural Communication
- ECON 333: Economic Development
- GLST 210: Contemporary Global Issues: Migration, Poverty, and Conflict
- HIST 103: Modern World History
- RELI 230: Religion and Culture

**And choose 2 additional courses (8 credits) from the above list or from these below:**

- ANTH 102: Introduction to Human Cultural Diversity
- ANTH 203: Great Discoveries in Archaeology
- ANTH 335: The Aztecs, Mayans, and Their Predecessors
- ANTH 343: East Asian Cultures
- ANTH 368: Edible Landscapes, The Foraging Spectrum
- ANTH 370: The Archaeology of Ancient Empires
- CHIN 371: Chinese Literature in Translation
- COMA 304: Intercultural Communication
- DANC 301: Dance and Culture
- ECON 333: Economic Development
- EDUC 385: Comparative Education
- ENGL 216: Topics in Literature
- FREN 204: Postcolonial Francophone Fictions and Criticism
- FREN 211: Francophone Africa in Global Context
- FREN 305: French/Francophone Film (when topic is Francophone African Cinema)
- FREN 311: Francophone Africa in Global Context
- FREN 404: Postcolonial Francophone Fictions and Criticism
- FREN 305: French/Francophone Film (when topic is Francophone African Cinema)
- GLST 210: Contemporary Global Issues: Migration, Poverty, and Conflict
- GLST 357: Global Development
- HISP 231: Intensive Spanish in Latin America
- HISP 301: Hispanic Voices for Social Change
- HISP 322: Latin American Cultural Studies



- HISP 325: Introduction to Hispanic Literary Studies
- HISP 331: Intensive Spanish in Latin America
- HISP 401: Introduction to Hispanic Linguistics
- HIST 102: The Pre-Modern World: Explorations & Encounters
- HIST 103: Conflicts and Convergences in the Modern World
- HIST 109: East Asian Societies
- HIST 210: Contemporary Global Issues: Migration, Poverty, and Conflict
- HIST 218: Women and Gender in World History
- HIST 220: Modern Latin American History
- HIST 335: Slavery, Pirates, and Dictatorships: The History of the Caribbean
- HIST 337: The History of Mexico
- MUSI 105: The Arts of China
- NAIS 230: Indigenous Creation Narratives of the Americas and their Resonance
- NAIS 361: Storied Survivance: Seminar on Indigenous Literatures
- PHIL 229: Human Rights
- PSYC 335: Cultural Psychology
- PSYC 388: Culture and Health
- RELI 131: The Religions of South Asia
- RELI 232: The Buddhist Tradition
- RELI 233: The Religions of China
- RELI 235: Islamic Traditions
- RELI 238: The Religions of Korea and Japan
- RELI 245: Global Christian Theologies

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

**Optional: Intercultural experience in place of elective(s)**

- Studying or volunteering abroad in PLU's Namibia, China, and Mexico Gateway programs as these countries have hosted Peace Corps Volunteers. Other study away opportunities offered by our study away partners may count if the country hosts or has hosted Peace Corps Volunteers (see the list of current and past countries [here](http://www.peacecorps.gov/countries) [www.peacecorps.gov/countries]).
  - Studying/volunteering abroad in these countries for J-term may substitute for one course.
  - Experiences that last a full semester may substitute for both electives.
- Other intercultural experiences, such as helping new immigrants/refugees acculturate to the U.S. or volunteering in diverse schools, may also count.
- PLU partnerships and initiatives
  - [Tacoma Community House](#)

Each distinct intercultural experience lasting at least 40 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. We encourage (but do not require) PC Prep students to take advantage of at least one of PLU's study away programs, whether it be a semester-long program or a January term program. Many courses taken during study away fulfill some of the above requirements. Please see the PC Prep Program Director to discuss which requirements your program may fulfill.*

### 3. 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 [Alumni and Student Connections](#).
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at [Alumni and Student Connections](#).
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.