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!

You may also align coursework, experiential learning, intercultural competence and leadership development with the requirements for WSU’s Global Leadership Certificate! Contact Global Learning for more information at ip.globallearning@wsu.edu.

1. Training and experience in a specific work sector

3 courses + 50 hours related experience

Visit the ASCC or the Center for Civic Engagement for opportunities in all work sectors!

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

*Recommended courses:*

- TCH_LRN 301: Learning and Development
- BSCI 102: General Biology
- English 201: Writing and Research

*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
- International Center
- ASCC
- Center for Civic Engagement

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:
- Pre-Nursing
- Nutrition
- Pre-med
- Neuroscience
- Biology

Recommended courses:
- BSCI 101 Biology of Humans
- BSCI 333 Human Nutrition and Health
- DIVR 120 Sex, Race, and Reproduction in Global Health Politics

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
- Volunteering for Alternatives to Violence of the Palouse
- Volunteering as a Health and Wellness Facilitator

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 or related field
- Natural Resources Conservation
- Wildlife Ecology
- Forestry
- Biology, Botany, or Ecology
- Geology

Recommended courses:
- SOE 250 Intro to Earth System Science
- ENVR SCI 275 Watersheds and Communities
- NATRS 300 Natural Resources Ecology

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
• Volunteer with PCEI to educate the public on environmental or conservation issues, or help restore Palouse ecosystems
• Working with the WSU Organic Farm for experience in organic gardening

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 area:

- Horticulture
- Botany
- Crops and Soils Science
- Entomology
- Agricultural Science
- Agribusiness
- Agricultural Economics
- Business or economics
- Biology

Recommended courses:
- Vet Clin 361 Agricultural Animal Health
- Ag Ed 110: Introduction to Agricultural Education
- AFS 101: Introduction to Agricultural and Food Systems

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 with PCEI to educate the public on environmental or conservation issues, or help restore Palouse ecosystems
- Working with the WSU Organic Farm for experience in organic gardening

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
- Teaching and Learning
- Developmental Psychology
- Human Development

Recommended courses:
- SSCI 101 Human Development Across the Lifespan
- COMM 205 Developing Effective Communications and Life Skills
HD 307 Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood

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 at the WSU Children’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
- Entrepreneurial Studies
- Accounting or Finance
- Computer Science
- Communications
- International Business
- Sociology
- Digital Technology Culture

Recommended courses:
- SSCI 103 International Politics
- POL S 305 Gender and Politics
- BA 201 Ethics for Business

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
- Visit the ASCC for opportunities
- Visit the Center for Civic Engagement for opportunities

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

It will be important to hone your capacity to interact professionally using a non-English language. Minimum course requirements vary by desired placement region.

- **Latin America**: If you intend to serve in a Spanish-speaking country, you must build strong intermediate proficiency, having completed two 200-level courses or learned Spanish through another medium.
- **West Africa**: If you intend to serve in a French-speaking African country, you must build proficiency in French or another Romance language, having completed one 200-level course or learned the language through another medium.
- **Everywhere else**: If you intend to serve anywhere else without explicit language requirements, you 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!*

WSU offers courses in Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish!

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:

- UNIV 497 – Leadership in a Global Context
- COMSOC 321 – Intercultural Communication

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

- UNIV 497 – Leadership in a Global Context
- COMSOC 321 – Intercultural Communication
- COM 471 Stereotypes in Communication
- COM 105 Communication in Global Contexts
- COMSOC 421 Intercultural Communication and Globalization
- HD 350 Family Diversity
Is there another course in the catalog that you feel meets this requirement? Please discuss it with your PC Prep Coordinator.

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

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 Academic Success and Career Center (ASCC) or by a Global Learning Advisor.
2.  Attend a workshop or class on interview skills at the Academic Success and Career Center (ASCC).
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.