

# 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
  - a. 3 courses that align with a specific work sector
  - b. Minimum of 50 hours of volunteer or work experience in that same sector
  
2. Foreign language skills
  - a. 2 language courses
  - b. For Spanish: Two, 200-level or above required
  - c. For French: One, 200-level or above required
  - d. 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
  - a. 1 core introspective diversity and inclusion courses from list
  - b. 2 additional electives from list
  - c. Studying or volunteering abroad may count if approved by PCP advisor
  
4. Professional and leadership development
  - a. Have your resume critiqued by someone in your Career Services center.
  - b. Attend a workshop or class on interview skills at your Career Services center.
  - c. Develop at least one significant leadership experience and be prepared to discuss it thoughtfully

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, 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](#) 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:*

- o Sociology
- o English
- o Any Physical or Biological Science
- o Sociology (concentration in Education and Youth)
- o Math
- o Computer Science

*Recommended courses:*

- o INTD 110 Intro to Teaching Profession
- o RHET 295 How Language Works
- o INTD 320 Teaching the Life Sciences
- o SOC 338 Sociology of Education
- o COMS 362 Communication Education
- o INTD 315 Multilingual Engagement

*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

**Be involved at USF:**

- Conversation Partner Program - [Academic English for Multilingual Students Program](#)
- [Equity Scholars Internship Program](#) (Leo T. McCarthy Center)
- [Engage San Francisco](#)

**Study Abroad:**

- [School for International Training \(SIT\)](#) with programs that focus on Education and Social Change in the Czech Republic, Morocco and Senegal through internships and field studies.

**Volunteer:**

- [San Francisco Public Library](#)
- [Hamilton Family Center](#)
- [826 Valencia](#)
- [Community Youth Center](#)

## 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:*

- o Nursing
- o Biology
- o Psychology
- o Kinesiology
- o Health Studies

*Recommended courses:*

- o BIOL 100 The Science of Life
- o RHET 111 Public Speaking / Health Professions
- o BIOL 113 Human Anatomy
- o BIOL 115 Human Physiology
- o PSYC 270 Biological Psychology
- o ENVA 319 Health and the Environment
- o KIN 330 Exercise and Health Promotion
- o KIN 360 Exercise and Healthy Kids
- o COMS 369 Communications and Health Disparities
- o KIN 398 Professional Practicum

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

**Be involved at USF:**

- Nursing Clinical Labs
- [USF Volunteer Opportunities](#)
- [Health Outreach Team USF](#)
- [Veteran Affairs Nursing Partnership](#)
- [Engage San Francisco](#)
- Working in a lab focused to health studies

**Study Abroad and domestic programs:**

- [School for International Training \(SIT\)](#) programs that focus on Global Health and Wellbeing in China and India through field studies.
- School of Nursing short term programs offered domestically and abroad.

**Volunteer:**

- [SF Dept of Public Health Community Clinics](#)
- [Maitri Residential Care](#) for People Living with AIDS
- [VolunteerMatch](#) website for local Health opportunities and placements
- [Hamilton Family Center](#)

### 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:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Environmental Sciences | <input type="radio"/> International Studies (concentration in Sustainable Development) | <input type="radio"/> Sociology (concentration in Globalization, |
| <input type="radio"/> Biology                |  |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Environmental Studies  |  |  |

Development and Sustainability)

Recommended courses:

- o ENVA 109 Environment and Society
- o ENVS 110 Intro to Environmental Sciences w/ Lab
- o ENVS 100 Understanding our Environment w/Lab
- o ENVS 210 Ecology-Human Impact w/Lab
- o ENVA 344 Environmental Communications
- o ENVA 310 Commons: Land, Water and Air
- o ENVA 367 Environmental Justice
- o ECON 230 Environmental Economics
- o POLS 382 Politics of International Aid and Development
- o POLS 360 Global Environmental Politics

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

**Be involved at USF:**

- [USF Eco-Restoration Club](#)
- [USF's Environmental Education and Outdoors Club](#)
- Associated Students of USF (ASUSF) Sustainability Committee

**Study Abroad:**

- Study Abroad options with the [School for Field Studies \(SFS\)](#) that focuses on Environmental Field Studies in Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Kenya, Panama and Perú.

**Volunteer:**

- San Francisco Parks and Recreation [CommUNITY Educational Gardens](#)

## 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:

- o Environmental Sciences
- o Environmental Studies
- o Urban Agriculture
- o Biology
- o International Studies (concentration in Sustainable Development)
- o Sociology (concentration in Globalization, Development and Sustainability)

Recommended courses:

- o ENVA 230 / 233 Urban Agriculture
- o ENVA 245 Community Garden Outreach
- o ENVS 110 Intro to Environmental Sciences w/ Lab
- o ENVS 100 Understanding our Environment w/Lab
- o ENVA 109 Environment and Society
- o ANTH 235 Anthropology of Food
- o BAIS 311 Global Food Security
- o POLS 382 Politics of International Aid and Development

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

**Be involved at USF:**

- [Star Route Farms](#)
- [USF Beehive](#)
- [Community Garden](#)

**Study Abroad:**

- Study Abroad with the [School for Field Studies \(SFS\)](#) which focuses on Environmental Field Studies in Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Kenya, Panama and Perú

**Volunteer:**

- [San Francisco Parks and Recreation CommUNITY Gardens](#)

## 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:*

- |  |              |                              |
|--|--------------|------------------------------|
| o Sociology  | o Economics  | o Critical Diversity         |
| o Sociology<br>(concentration in<br>Education and Youth) | o Psychology | Studies                      |
|  |              | o Child and Youth<br>Studies |

*Recommended courses:*

- o CDS 195 First Year Seminar
- o PSYC 312 Child Development
- o PSYC 354 Adolescent Development
- o SOC 323 Urban Education
- o SOC 329 Social Worlds of Children
- o SOC 356 Juvenile Justice
- o SOC 392 Community Organizing
- o COMS 306 Family Communication
- o INTD 202 Leadership for Civic Engagement

*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

**Be involved at USF:**

- [Equity Scholars Internship Program](#) (Leo T. McCarthy Center)

**Study Abroad:**

- [School for International Training \(SIT\)](#) with programs that focus on Education and Social Change in the Czech Republic, Morocco and Senegal through internships and field studies.

**Volunteer:**

- [SF Skate Club - EduSkate](#)
- [Hamilton Family Center](#)
- [FACES - SF](#)
- [SF Shared Schoolyard Project](#)
- [Community Youth Center](#)

## 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:*

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Entrepreneurship and Innovation | <input type="radio"/> Accounting       | <input type="radio"/> Sociology              |
| <input type="radio"/> International Studies           | <input type="radio"/> Computer Science | <input type="radio"/> Communications         |
|   |  | <input type="radio"/> International Business |

*Recommended courses:*

- BAIS 103 The Global Economy
- ECON 112 Principles of Macroeconomics
- BUS 350 International Business
- BUS 452 The Manager in the Global Economy
- SOC 392 Community Organizing
- POLS 382 The Politics of International Aid and Development
- COMS 356 Organizational Communications
- BUS 352 Doing Business in a World Region
- BUS 448 Emotional and Cultural Intelligence
- BUS 457 International Negotiation

*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
- Working with Career Services to secure an internship placement in the sector

**Be involved at USF:**

- Accounting and Finance Association (AFA)
- Women in Business
- Entrepreneurs Club

**Study Abroad:**



- Study Abroad options with [School for International Training \(SIT\)](#) that focuses on Development and Micro Financing in Jordan, Vietnam and Ecuador.

**Volunteer:**

- [La Cocina](#)
- [Hospitality House](#)
- [San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development](#)
- [Community Youth Center](#)

*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*

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 + 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:**

- CDS 100 Ideal of Citizenship
- CDS 200 Intersectional Theory
- COMS 204 Communication and Culture
- ANTH 200 Intro to Anthropology
- Any Arrupe immersion Course

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

- Any Core CD Cultural Diversity course
- Any Arrupe Immersion Course
- Any Area Studies Course (e.g. African, Latin American, Middle Eastern, or Asian Studies Course)

*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** may count *if* the abroad experience is in a country that has at some point hosted Peace Corps Volunteers (see the list of current and past countries [here](#)).

- Studying/volunteering abroad in these countries from one week to a summer may substitute for one course.
- Experiences that last a full semester may substitute for both electives.



*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 Services Center](#).
  - a. Appointments are conducted via Zoom or in-person on University Center 5th Floor
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at the [Career Services 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.