



PREP

# 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 will 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 will 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 ([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](#) ([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.

*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 Corps' 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:*

- Any of the School of Education Programs
- TESOL
- English or Linguistics
- Biology, Chemistry, or Physics
- Computer Science
- Mathematics or Statistics

*Recommended courses applicable to one or more of the above programs:*

- Educational Studies (EDS), Educational Foundations (EFN) and Special Education (SPE): any three EDS, EFN, or SPE courses numbered 300 or above, and/or any non-General Education elective course applicable to the STEP Core.
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TSL): any TSL course, and/or any elective courses applicable to the TESOL minor.
- English (ENG): any three ENG courses numbered 301 or above, and/or any elective-category courses applicable to the Linguistics minor.
- Biology (BIO): any three BIO courses numbered 202 or above.
- Chemistry (CHM): any three CHM courses numbered 250 or above.
- Physics (PHY): any three PHY courses numbered 106 or above.
- Computer Science (CS): any three CS courses numbered 103 or above.
- Mathematics and Statistics (MTH): any three MTH courses numbered 171 or above.

*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.
  - For Education majors, student teachers may participate in out-of-area student teaching programs including the Institute for Urban Education (Milwaukee Public Schools), Wisconsin Improvement Program Internships, Educators Abroad, and Fowler School District in Phoenix, Arizona (Arizona Cultural Teaching and Learning).
  - Tutoring in the English as a Second Language Institute, Student Support Services (TRIO), Pre-College program, Mentoring and Readiness for College (MARC) or Upward Bound program UW-La Crosse to help students develop the necessary academic and life skills, English language skills, and cross-cultural competence to be successful in a university setting. These programs typically support first-generation, high financial need and/or diverse populations.
- [Ugetconnected](#) matches prospective volunteers with service opportunities that fit their interest, skills, and availability. Ugetconnected is a collaboration between Great Rivers United Way, UW-La Crosse, Viterbo University, and Western Technical College, and more than 125 community agencies in our area and also serves as an “online yellow

pages” when searching for community non-profit organizations. This program serves early childhood programs (African American Mutual Assistance Network, Inc., Coulee Children’s Center and The Parenting Place) through the school years (Ho-Chunk La Crosse Youth & Learning Center, Southern Bluffs Elementary School and Family & Children’s Center) to adult programs (Hmoob Cultural and Community Agency and Coulee Region Literacy Council).

- Students may participate in the UW-La Crosse Cooperative Education and Internship program through the Career Services Office. Available internships are posted through [Eagle Opportunities](#) with education related internships available within the region.

## #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:*

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| ○ Public Health and<br>Community Health<br>Education | ○ Biology or Microbiology<br>○ Nutrition<br>○ Gerontology | ○ Exercise and Sports<br>Science<br>○ Therapeutic Recreation |
|--|---|--|

*Recommended courses applicable to one or more of the above programs:*

- Community Health Education (CHE), School Health Education (SHE), and Health Education (HED): any three CHE, SHE, or HED courses numbered 210 or above, and/or any interdisciplinary courses required in these programs.
- Biology (BIO): any three BIO courses numbered 202 or above, and applicable to the following concentrations: biomedical science or cellular and molecular biology.
- Microbiology (MIC): any three MIC courses numbered 230 or above.
- Nutrition (NUT): any three NUT courses, and/or any elective courses applicable to the Nutrition minor.
- Gerontology: any three courses listed as a core or supportive course in the Gerontology Emphasis.
- Exercise and Sports Science (ESS): any three ESS courses applicable to the following programs: athletic training, exercise science fitness track, exercises science pre-professional track, or physical education.
- Therapeutic Recreation (RTH): any three RTH courses.

*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, certified nursing assistant, 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 residence hall, as a peer health educator.
- Significant experience in mechanical repairs, construction, carpentry, masonry, plumbing, hydrology, or set design.
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- Volunteer work at WAFER, Hunger Task Force, Salvation Army Shelter, or other food bank/nutrition services.
- International service-learning or missions related medical programs (for example Vida volunteer or like programs).
- Health related fellowships, preceptorships, clinical, and internships.

### #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 Studies      ○ Recreation Management      ○ Archaeological Studies
- Geography/Earth Science      ○ Biology      ○ Geoarchaeology

***Recommended courses applicable to one or more of the above programs:***

- Environmental Studies (ENV): any three ENV courses numbered 301 or higher, and/or any elective courses applicable to the Environmental Studies minor.
- Geography and Earth Science (GEO/ESC): any three GEO/ESC courses numbered 204 or higher, and/or any elective courses applicable to these programs.
- Recreation Management (REC): any three REC courses.
- Biology (BIO): any three BIO courses numbered 202 or above, and applicable to the following concentrations: aquatic science, environmental science, or plant and fungal biology.
- Archaeological Studies (ARC): any three ARC courses numbered 204 or above.
- Geoarchaeology: any three courses applicable towards the Geoarchaeology minor.

***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 through serving as a research assistant to a faculty member.
- Gardening, farming, nursery management, organic or low-input vegetable production, or landscaping.
- Providing technical assistance and training in natural resource management.
- Environmental or sustainability related fellowships, field schools, and internships with non-profit, for-profit, and governmental agencies.
- UW-La Crosse's Students for Sustainability Organization regularly organizes programs and activities to educate the public.
- [Ugetconnected](#) matches prospective volunteers with service opportunities that fit their interest, skills, and availability. Ugetconnected is a collaboration between Great Rivers United Way, UW-La Crosse, Viterbo University, and Western Technical College, and more than 125 community agencies in our area and also serves as an "online yellow pages" when searching for community non-profit organizations. This program serves sustainability and environmental organizations such as River Alliance of Wisconsin, Coulee Partners for Sustainability, Hillview Urban Agricultural Center, and Mississippi Valley Conservancy.

## #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:**

- Biology
- Geography/Earth Science
- Business or Economics
- Recreation Management
- Anthropology

**Recommended courses applicable to one or more of the above programs:**

- Biology (BIO): any three BIO courses numbered 202 or above, and applicable to the following concentrations: environmental science or plant and fungal biology.
- Recreation Management (REC): any three REC courses.
- Geography and Earth Science (GEO/ESC): any three GEO/ESC courses numbered 204 or higher, and/or any elective courses applicable to these programs.
- Anthropology (ANT): 102, 304, 305, and/or 330.
- Business Administration (BUS): any three BUS courses, and/or interdisciplinary electives applicable to the College of Business Administration core or the Business Administration minor numbered 200 or above.
- Economics (ECO): any three ECO courses numbered 300 or above.

**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.
- Involvement in the local community 4-H club who regularly organizes programs and activities to educate the public.
- Agricultural or sustainability related fellowships and internships with non-profit, for-profit, and governmental agencies.
- [Ugetconnected](#) matches prospective volunteers with service opportunities that fit their interest, skills, and availability. Ugetconnected is a collaboration between Great Rivers United Way, UW-La Crosse, Viterbo University, and Western Technical College, and more than 125 community agencies in our area and also serves as an “online yellow pages” when searching for community non-profit organizations. This program serves sustainability and environmental organizations such as Coulee Partners for Sustainability, Community Garden, Hillview Urban Agricultural Center, and Mississippi Valley Conservancy.

## #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:*

- |                      |                         |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| ○ Child & Youth Care | ○ Exercise and Sports   | ○ Communication Studies |
| ○ Psychology         | ○ Science               |                         |
| ○ Women’s Studies    | ○ Recreation Management |                         |

*Recommended courses applicable to one or more of the above programs:*

- Child and Youth Care (CYC): any three CYC courses, and/or interdisciplinary courses applicable to the At-Risk Child and Youth Care minor.
- Psychology (PSY): any three PSY courses except for 282 and 285.
- Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGS): any three WGS courses numbered 105 and above, and/or any elective course applicable in the Women’s Study major.
- Exercise and Sports Science (ESS): any three ESS courses.
- Recreation Management (REC): any three REC courses.
- Communication Studies (CST): any three CST courses numbered 190 or above.

*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.

- 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 in the English as a Second Language Institute, Pre-College program, Student Support Services (TRIO), Mentoring and Readiness for College (MARC) or Upward Bound program at UW-La Crosse to help students develop the necessary academic and life skills, English language skills, and cross-cultural competence to be successful in a university setting. These programs typically support first-generation, high financial need and/or diverse populations.
- [Ugetconnected](#) matches prospective volunteers with service opportunities that fit their interest, skills, and availability. Ugetconnected is a collaboration between Great Rivers United Way, UW-La Crosse, Viterbo University, and Western Technical College, and more than 125 community agencies in our area and also serves as an “online yellow pages” when searching for community non-profit organizations. This program serves early childhood programs (African American Mutual Assistance Network, Inc., Coulee Children’s Center and The Parenting Place) through the school years (Ho-Chunk La Crosse Youth & Learning Center, Southern Bluffs Elementary School and Family & Children’s Center) to adult programs (Hmoob Cultural and Community Agency and Coulee Region Literacy Council).
- Students may participate in a volunteer course and/or UW-La Crosse Cooperative Education and Internship program through the Career Services Office. Available internships are posted through [Eagle Opportunities](#) with youth and at-risk youth populations related internships available within the region.

## #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 Development, take three courses from one of the following areas:*

- |                          |                         |                          |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| ○ Business and Economics | ○ Accounting or Finance | ○ Communication Studies  |
| ○ Public Administration  | ○ Computer Science      | ○ International Business |

*Recommended courses:*

- Business Administration (BUS): any three BUS courses, and/or interdisciplinary electives applicable to the College of Business Administration core or the Business Administration minor numbered 200 or above.
- Economics (ECO): any three ECO courses numbered 300 or above.
- Public Administration (PUB): any three PUB courses, and/or interdisciplinary electives applicable to the public administration major or minor.

- Accounting (ACC): any three ACC courses.
- Finance (FIN): any three FIN courses.
- Computer Science (CS): any three CS courses numbered 103 or above.
- Communication Studies (CST): any three CST courses numbered 190 or above, and applicable to the following concentrations: advocacy and communication criticism, broadcast and digital media, or organization and professional communication.
- International Business (IB): any three courses applicable towards the International Business major or minor.

***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 such as the City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, Small Business Development Center, Chamber of Commerce, 7 Rivers Alliance, Downtown Mainstreet, and the La Crosse Area Development Corporation.
- Starting and running your own business or other entrepreneurial activity.
- Training others in computer literacy, maintenance, and repair including work for the UWL Help Desk which is designed to support students, staff, and administration on campus.
- Website design or online marketing/social media within service learning and classroom opportunities.
- Founding or leading a community- or school-based organization.
- Working in communication and publishing. Opportunities include Campus Connection, Alumnus, The Lantern, La Crosse Magazine, Coulee Women’s Magazine, and Coulee Parenting Connection publications.
- Students may participate in a volunteer course and/or UW-La Crosse Cooperative Education and Internship program through the Career Services Office. Available internships are posted through [Eagle Opportunities](#) with governmental agencies as well as regional and national non-profits related internships available within the region.

***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 200-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 200-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!

## 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 will take at least 1 of these core courses:

- ANT/ECO/GEO/HIS/POL/SOC 202  
Contemporary Global Issues
- ANT/ECO/ENG/PHL/POL/WGS  
212 Search for Economic Justice
- ANT 101 Human Nature/Human Culture
- EDS 203 School, Society, and Teachers
- EDS 206 Multicultural Education
- EFN 205 Understanding Human Difference
- ENG 200 Literature and Human Experience
- ERS 100 Introduction to Ethnic and Racial Studies
- PSY 282 Cross-Cultural Psychology
- POL 205 Women and Politics

- POL 234 Comparative Politics
- POL 244 International Relations
- WGS 100 Gender, Race, and Class in American Institutions

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

- ANT/ERS 362 Hmong Americans
- ANT 375 Language, Power, and Inequality
- ART 301 World Art
- CHI 320 Introduction to Chinese Civilization
- ECO 120 Global Macroeconomics
- ECO 336 Women in the U.S. Economy
- ENG/ERS 207 Multicultural Literature of the United States
- ENG/ERS 210 Literature of Black America
- ENG/ERS 215 African American Authors
- ENV 201 Introduction to Environmental Studies
- FRE 220 France and the Francophone World
- GEO 110 World Cultural Regions
- GEO 200 Conservation of the Global Environments
- HIS 306 Ethnic America
- HIS 336 Hispanics in the United States
- MIC 130 Global Impact of Infectious Disease
- MLG 304 Heritage Language: Advanced
- MUS 201 Musical Cultures
- MUS 204 Latin American Music: Its Context and Impact
- MUS 209 History of Jazz Culture
- PHL 335 Multicultural Philosophy in the United States
- PHL 336 International Multicultural Philosophy
- PHL 349 Asian Philosophy
- PHY 142 Navigating Global Nuclear Issues
- PSY 285 Culture and Mental Health
- PSY 318 Psychology of Women
- SAH 307 Changing the Culture, Women in Science
- SOC 225 Racial and Ethnic Minorities
- THA 351 World Theatre
- WGS 130 Women's Diversity: Race, Class, and Culture

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

**Optional substantive intercultural experience in place of electives:**

There are many other opportunities to engage in intercultural experiences outside of the classroom, such as studying abroad, and you may be able to apply these experiences towards the intercultural competence requirement. Please contact for your PC Prep Coordinator for more information.

***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**

### **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 a professional career advisor in Career Services.
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** hosted by 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.