



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 ([latest version always posted](#)). *Use this guide to map out your Peace Corps Prep course of study. Keep in mind that you may need to adjust your plan based on course availability.* In particular, refer to this when completing your PC Prep planning form, where you'll need to document how you plan to fulfill each requirement. **This guide aligns point-by-point with each section of the planning form! Remain FLEXIBLE: listing a class on your planning form does NOT guarantee you a space in that class.**

ELIGIBILITY:

- You must have at least four (4) fall or spring semesters remaining before graduation in order to have time to meet the requirements.
- Both to be eligible *and* to complete the program, students must be in good academic standing (minimum grade point average of 2.0 or C). All courses taken toward Peace Corps Prep must be passed with a C or higher.
- You may be pursuing any major or minor.
- U.S. citizenship is *not* required for Peace Corps Prep. All students, regardless of citizenship status, may participate with the goal of receiving a Certificate of Completion from the Peace Corps. However, to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer after graduation, you must be a U.S. citizen.

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 (9 credit hours)** 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.

Note that these are MINIMUM requirements. Particularly, increasing the quality and/or quantity of your field experience may help your application to Peace Corps. Each sector below includes examples of relevant volunteer or work experiences. We strongly encourage you to:

- Search for sector-related internships and employment opportunities posted in [Hire-A-Redbird](#). [Career Services](#) has additional internship resources and events.
- If your sector is closely related to your major, consult with Career Services regarding [internships](#) to help you gain field experience.
- Explore the [Center for Civic Engagement](#) to learn more about Alternative Breaks and volunteering with [local organizations](#).
- Research [service learning](#) and [internship](#) programs related to your sector available through [Study Abroad](#). In some cases the cost is less than attending Illinois State, AND there are [scholarships](#)! Just one award to consider is the [Hoon Mok Chung Undergraduate Scholarship](#).
- You might also explore the [Civic Engagement and Responsibility minor](#) as a way to deepen your commitment.
- Investigate [service-oriented student organizations](#) related to your chosen sector.
- Check out the [United Way](#) and [Serve Illinois](#). Talk about your interests and plans with professors, advisors, and peers. As you discover ideas that may benefit other Peace Corps Prep students, please share them!

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/) 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
- TEFL/TESL
- Math
- Computer Science
- Engineering Technology
- Any Physical or Biological Science

Recommended courses:

- BSC: 101a01, 161, 201
- CHE: 140, 161, 301
- ENG: 343, 344, 345
- PHY: 105, 108, 109, 209
- TCH: 110, 2
- 04, 207, 209, 216a01-19, 222, 223

*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
- In addition to the resources on page one, some places that may offer the activities described above include:
 - [America Reads/America Counts at Illinois State](#)
 - [Department of Mathematics Tutoring Center](#)
 - [Glenn Elementary](#)
 - [Metcalf Elementary School](#)
 - [STAR Adult Literacy](#)
 - [University High School](#)
 - [University College](#)
 - [Western Avenue Community Center](#)
 - [CeMaST](#)
 - [Julia N. Visor 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:

- Nursing
- Food, Nutrition, and Dietetics
- Technology and Engineering Education
- Biology
- Health Sciences, including Community Health Education, Environmental Health, Public Health, School Health Education

Recommended courses:

- BSC: 145, 160
- FSC: 102, 217, 219, 252
- HSC: 156, 206, 249, 252, 292
- NUR: 223, 225, 226, 313, 317, 329, 330

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
- In addition to the resources on page one, some places that may offer the activities described above include:
 - [Advocate BroMenn Medical Center](#)
 - [Alzheimer's Association, Greater Illinois Chapter](#)
 - [American Cancer Society](#)
 - [American Red Cross](#)
 - [Chestnut Health Systems](#)
 - [McLean County Health Department](#)
 - [OSF St. Joseph Medical Center](#)
 - [PATH](#)
 - [Student Wellness Ambassador Team](#)

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 Health
- Recreation and Park Administration
- Biology, including Conservation Biology and Plant Biology
- Geology, especially Environmental Studies
- Renewable Energy

Recommended courses:

- BSC: 196, 201, 202, 211, 212, 280
- GEO: 102, 103, 205, 276, 317, 326, 426, 456
- KNR: 270, 271, 371

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
- In addition to the resources on page one, some places that may offer the activities described above include:
 - [Ecology Action Center](#)
 - [Ewing Cultural Center Gardens](#)
 - [Green Team](#)
 - [Horticulture Center](#)
 - Local farms, which can be located through organizations such as [The Land Connection](#), the [Illinois Stewardship Alliance](#), [Local Harvest](#), and the [University of Illinois Extension](#)
 - [Parklands Foundation](#)
 - [Refuge Food Forest](#)
 - [University Farm](#)
 - [West Bloomington Active Garden](#)

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:

- Agriculture
- Biology, including Plant Biology
- Business or economics

Recommended courses:

- AGR: 110, 201, 234, 280, 305, 346, 364, 424, 464
- BE: 140, 361, 362
- BSC: 160, 196, 201, 280

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
- In addition to the resources on page one, some places that may offer the activities described above include:
 - **LOCAL FARMS**, which can be located through organizations such as [The Land Connection](#), the [Illinois Stewardship Alliance](#), [Local Harvest](#), and the [University of Illinois Extension](#)
 - [Horticulture Center](#)

- [Refuge Food Forest](#)
- [University Farm](#)
- [West Bloomington Active Garden](#)

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:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| ○ Social Work | ○ Community Health | ○ Family and Consumer |
| ○ Children's Studies
(emphasizing Social
Science courses) | Education | Sciences-Human
Development and Family
Resources |
| | ○ Psychology (limited to
Developmental and
Counseling courses) | |

Recommended courses:

- FCS: 101, 222, 232, 252, 304
- PSY: 301, 302, 327, 351
- SWK: 170, 223, 225, 310
- TCH: 110, 130, 210

*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
- In addition to the resources on page one, some places that may offer the activities described above include:
 - [Big Brothers Big Sisters](#)
 - [Boy Scouts - W. D. Boyce Council](#)
 - [Boys & Girls Club of Bloomington Normal](#)
 - [Center for Youth and Family Solutions](#)
 - [Center of Hope Outreach Program](#)
 - [Children's Discovery Museum](#)
 - [Children's Home + Aid](#)
 - [College Mentors for Kids](#)
 - [Glenn Elementary](#)
 - [Heartland Head Start](#)
 - [McLean County Health Department](#)
 - [Metcalf Elementary School](#)
 - [Normal Public Library](#)
 - [Special Olympics](#)
 - [The Baby Fold](#)
 - [Unity Community Center](#)
 - [University High School](#)
 - [Western Avenue Community Center](#)
 - [YMCA](#)
 - [YWCA](#)

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 Administration | ○ Accounting or Finance | ○ Art-Graphic Design |
| ○ Management-
Entrepreneurship and
Small Business
Management | ○ Computer Science and
related majors | ○ Marketing |
| | ○ Business Information
Systems | ○ Mass Media |
| | | ○ International Business |

Recommended courses:

- ACC: 131, 132, 230, 231, 232
- ART: 226, 227
- COM: 160, 178
- FIL: 185, 240, 242, 246
- MKT: 190, 230, 236, 310
- MQM: 128, 220, 223, 224, 227, 350

*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
- In addition to the resources on page one, some places that may offer the activities described above include:
 - [Bloomington-Normal Convention and Visitors Bureau](#)
 - [Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council](#)
 - [Bloomington-Normal Volunteer Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\)](#)
 - [Crossroads Handcrafts of the World](#)
 - [Downtown Bloomington Association](#)
 - [George R. and Martha Means Center for Entrepreneurial Studies](#)
 - [Green Top Grocery](#)
 - [Junior Achievement](#)
 - [KTB Financial Services, Inc.](#)
 - [McLean County Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [Technology Support Center](#)
 - [Uptown Partners](#)

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

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. (NOTE that if you take these classes, you may be able to add a [minor](#) in Spanish.)
- ❑ 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. (NOTE that if you take these classes, you may be able to add a [minor](#).)
- ❑ 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 + 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.

Illinois State University offers an array of [study abroad](#) programs that count towards this **intercultural competence requirement, or you may volunteer or work abroad**. Seek out a country that has at some point 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 from one week to a summer 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. Each distinct intercultural experience lasting at least forty hours may substitute for one elective. On campus, you might check out [Voices of Discovery](#), [Global Redbirds Mentorship Adjustment Program](#), or [International House](#).

Students can target programs that provide sector-specific experience along with intercultural competence skills.

The course list is subject to change. Some classes may have prerequisites. Some classes may be limited by major (may be designated by "M"). Many overlap with General Education requirements!

You'll take at least 1 of these core courses:

- ANT 176 Culture, Power, and Civic Life (Prerequisite: COM 110 or ENG 101)
- ANT 185 Cultures of The World (Prerequisite: COM 110 or ENG 101 or concurrent registration)
- ANT 281 Principles of Socio-Cultural Anthropology (Prerequisite: ANT 185)
- COM 272 Foundations of Intercultural Communication (**M**)
- SOC 108 Contemporary Social Problems in Global Perspective
- SOC 220 Global Social Change
- WGS 120 Gender, Sex, and Power
- **OR** complete [Leaders of Social Change](#) program w/ Dean of Students office

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

- ACC 340 International Accounting
- AGR 201 Resources, Food, and Society: A Global Perspective
- ANT 270 Anthropology of Gender and Sexuality
- ANT 273 Foodways
- ANT 277 Principles of Language and Culture
- ANT 303 Latin America in Ethnographic Perspective
- ANT 307 Japanese Diasporas, Culture, and Identity
- ANT 308 Japanese Communicative Strategies
- ANT 383 Studies in Selected Cultures
- ANT 385 Media and Visual Anthropology
- CJS 102 Individuals, Society, and Justice
- CJS 369 World Criminal Justice Systems
- COM/ENG/LAN 128 Gender in The Humanities
- COM 372 Theory and Research in Intercultural Communication (**M**)
- ENG/LAN 206 Cultural Expressions in Social Contexts: Women of Asia, Latin America, and Africa
- ENG 255 - Modern Global Literature: 1800-Present
- ENG 261 Women's Literature in a Global Context

- ENG 343 - Cross-Cultural Issues in TESOL
- GEO 142 Human Geography
- GEO 235 Geography of Emerging Areas
- HIS 104 History of Asia, Middle East, Africa, Latin America, or Native Americans
- HIS/SOC 111 American Diversity: Contested Visions of U.S. Experience
- HIS 266 Modern Africa
- HIS 267 Modern South Asia
- HIS 272 Modern Middle East
- INB 225 Understanding the Global Business Environment
- IDS 111 Peace Studies
- IDS 203 Nations and Narration
- KNR 270 Inclusive Recreation
- LAN:
 - SPA 233, 243, 244
 - FRE 215, 224, 237
 - ITA 221, 222
 - JPN 231, 232
 - GER 211, 217
 - All 300-Level
- MQM 340 Competing in Emerging Markets
- MQM 349 Cross-Cultural Behavior in Business
- MUS 153 Black Music I
- MUS 154 Black Music II
- NUR 237 Cultural and Spiritual Dimensions in Healthcare (1 hour, **M**)
- NUR 313 International Studies in Transcultural Nursing (**M**)
- POL 140 Introduction to The Politics of Africa, Asia, & Latin America
- POL 240 Latin American Politics
- POL 245 Asian Politics
- POL 246 African Politics
- POL 247 Middle East Politics
- POL 254 Global Issues
- POL 334 Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Inequality
- SED 205 - Family, Professional, and Community Collaboration
- SOC 109 Introduction to U.S. Latina/o Studies
- SOC 112 American Family: Change and Diversity
- SOC 241 People in Places: Understanding and Developing Community
- SOC 295 Sociology of Culture
- SOC 310 Medical Sociology
- SOC 318 Children in Global Perspective
- SOC 320 Global Development and Economic Change
- SOC 330 Society and Environment
- SOC 362 Population
- SWK 310 Understanding Diverse Populations (**M**, SWK majors may not count this class)
- TCH 110 Cross Cultural Teaching and Learning
- TCH 207 Literacy Instruction in Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Middle Level Classroom (**M**)
- TCH 248 Foundations for Effective Practice with English Learners
- WGS 292 Introduction to LGBTQ Studies

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

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 [Career Services](#) staff. You can meet with your career advisor, take advantage of drop-in hours.
2. Complete an **interview preparation appointment** with your [career advisor](#).
3. Develop at least one significant **leadership experience** and be prepared to discuss it thoughtfully. For example, organize a campus event, lead a work or volunteer project, or serve on the executive board of a student organization. To further grow your skills, take advantage of several [leadership programs](#) through the Dean of Students Office.)

STUDENTS, if you complete the program, you will receive a Certificate of Completion from Peace Corps as well as a competitive edge when applying for Peace Corps service. You will need to apply to the Peace Corps the same as any other individual wishing to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer, and your selection is not guaranteed. Include “Peace Corps Prep” on the résumé you submit with your Peace Corps application. Also, upload the signed Exit Checklist as part of your application.

FACULTY/STAFF, would you like to support Peace Corps Prep? Please contact the [Stevenson Center](#) and explore ways to promote [global learning](#) on campus!