



2026 Guidance for Completing the Student Guide

The Student Guide assists prospective and current student participants with building the required three core competencies through interrelated coursework, hands-on experience, and professional development support. These three competencies are the following:

1. Training and experience in a specific work sector
2. Intercultural competence
3. Professional and leadership development

1. Training and experience in a specific work sector

Please go through each of the six sectors and revise the highlighted information to align with your own college or university's offerings.

- **For the academic areas**, you may remove any majors/disciplines/areas of coursework that your institution genuinely does not offer and write in any CLOSELY related disciplines that your university does offer.
- **For the recommended courses**, please list courses that are particularly relevant to service-oriented fieldwork in that sector.
 - *For example, Teaching English as a Foreign Language* for the Education section, *Business Fundamentals* in the Community Economic Development section, or service-learning courses in any sector. This does not need to be an exhaustive list, just a highlight of ideal options.
- **For the field/volunteer experience**, you should not delete anything listed, but please highlight *a minimum of two additional* relevant service opportunities available on campus or in the nearby community, for each of the six sectors.
 - *For example*, a campus program in which students tutor peers or other students would be excellent to highlight in the Education section, and a partnership with a local clinic through which students provide outreach to families would be perfect for the Health section.
 - This is one of the key areas that Peace Corps will review when scoring this proposal. A Career Services Office or related office may be able to help fill out these internship/volunteer opportunities.
- You may also highlight **options that fulfill multiple requirements at once**.
 - *For example*, a study abroad/international program in the Galapagos Islands or service learning at a nearby state park in which students' study and work in natural resource management would be wonderful to highlight within the Environment section.
- This learning objective aims to prepare students for the on-the-ground, human-to-human, intercultural realities inherent to Peace Corps service. It provides a space for colleges and

universities to highlight relevant curricular options as well as experiential opportunities, such as service learning, internships, apprenticeships, study abroad, or alternative spring/fall break programs they have that address the learning objective.

2. Intercultural Competence

Students must deepen their intercultural competence through a mix of three self-reflective courses focused on global perspectives, intercultural experience or foreign language courses/proficiency.

If a Peace Corps Prep program would like to, it may give students the option of engaging in substantive intercultural experiences or foreign language courses/proficiency as a substitute for up to two intercultural courses.

- **Course(s)** should include a self-reflective aspect that helps students increase cultural understanding, building their cultural agility and intercultural competence. To fill out this competency, programs may require that students take two more courses of the above type or more globally-oriented classes such as International Development, area studies (i.e., African Studies, Latin American Studies, etc.), the Economics of Poverty, Peace Studies, Cultural Anthropology, Emerging Markets, World Literature, etc.
- Alternatively, some Peace Corps Prep partner colleges/universities have created or adapted a specialized “Global Service” course to fulfill this requirement.
- **Substituting Intercultural experience or Foreign Language Course/Proficiency in place of intercultural courses.** If you would like to give your students the option of substituting intercultural experiences, here are the guidelines:
 - A maximum of two courses can be substituted with an Intercultural Experience or Foreign Language Course/Proficiency:
 - Intercultural Experience – Engage in an intercultural experience - including studying, volunteering, and/or teaching abroad or in a different cultural context from their own in the United States (including U.S. territories).
 - For example, studying or volunteering abroad or in a different cultural context from their own from one week to a summer may substitute for one course.
 - Experiences that last a full semester may substitute for two courses.
 - **Other intercultural experiences:** Feel encouraged to highlight relevant opportunities here. If they also align with one of Peace Corps’ six sectors, these experiences may simultaneously count for the hands-on experiential requirement.
 - Each distinct intercultural experience lasting at least 40 hours may substitute for one course.
 - **Foreign Language Skills:** Develop language skills by taking courses in a foreign language or American Sign Language. Please note that sign language or

native/fluent experience with more than one language can also satisfy this requirement. All are encouraged to hone their capacity to interact professionally in more than one language.

- For courses and electives please include an initial list of your own approved courses offered in your catalog. The list may be as short or long as you desire and may evolve with time. If you are allowing intercultural experiences to count as a substitute for courses, please include appropriate language and guidance.

3. Professional and leadership development

Peace Corps service and similar international development work opportunities are highly professional and selective. Peace Corps Prep requires **the following activities** that will strengthen your candidacy for the Peace Corps (and other professional endeavors):

1. Have your **resume** critiqued by someone in [your Career Services office/center].
2. Attend a workshop or class on interview skills or participate in a mock interview at [your Career Services office/center].
3. Develop at least one significant **leadership experience** and be prepared to discuss it thoughtfully. For example, organizing a campus or community event, leading a work or volunteer project, or serving on the executive board of a student organization.
4. Connect with a **Peace Corps Recruiter, Strategic Campus Recruiter, or Returned Peace Corps Volunteer** about Peace Corps service, the application process and benefits of service. All Peace Corps Prep participants interested in applying for Peace Corps should complete this online form at [Peace Corps Prep Connect](#) to connect with Peace Corps recruiters.

[College/ University Logo]



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 three core competencies through interrelated coursework, hands-on experience, and professional development support. The three competencies are the following:

1. Training and experience in a specific work sector
2. Intercultural competence
3. 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.*** Refer to this when completing your Peace Corps 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!**

Please note the courses and descriptions included come from each university or college and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Peace Corps. This content is for educational purposes.

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 Peace Corps Prep program, you will begin to build a professional specialty, which should serve your career well and prepare you for Peace Corps service.

For Peace Corps 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 work experience in that same sector**, preferably in teaching or outreach capacity.

Peace Corps Tip!

When applying 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 (<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 Peace Corps Prep experiential requirements!

There are six sectors (<https://www.peacecorps.gov/ways-to-serve/our-work-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:

- [Elementary, Secondary or Special Education]
- [Teaching English as a Second Language]
- [Engineering]
- [English or Linguistics]
- [Math]
- [Any Physical or Biological Science]
- [Computer Science]

Recommended courses:

- [_____]
- [_____]
- [_____]

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
 - For example, the teaching subject(s) might include English as a Second Language, special education, drama, or a STEM subject
- [_____]
- [_____]

2. HEALTH



Serve on the front lines of global health. Health Volunteers work with clinics and healthcare providers in their communities to develop strategies to promote nutrition, maternal and child health, hygiene, water and sanitation, malaria prevention, and HIV/AIDS education.

If you choose Health, take three courses from one of the following areas:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> [Nursing] | <input type="radio"/> [Pre-med] | <input type="radio"/> [Environmental or |
| <input type="radio"/> [Nutrition or Dietetics] | <input type="radio"/> [Biology] | Sanitary Engineering] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Health Education] | <input type="radio"/> [Technical Education] | |

Recommended courses:

- [_____]
- [_____]
- [_____]

And build 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as:

- Volunteer or work experience in such areas as health outreach, hospice, nutrition counseling, emergency medical technician (EMT) or CPR teaching/certification, maternal health, or 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 peer health counselor
- Significant experience in mechanical repairs, construction, carpentry, masonry, plumbing, hydrology, or set design
- [_____]
- [_____]

3. ENVIRONMENT



Create a more sustainable world. Volunteers promote efforts to protect natural resources at the local level and strengthen understanding of environmental and sustainability issues.

If you choose Environment, take three courses from one of the following areas:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> [Environmental Science or related field] | <input type="radio"/> [Park Administration] | <input type="radio"/> [Forestry] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Natural Resources Conservation] | <input type="radio"/> [Wildlife Biology] | <input type="radio"/> [Biology, Botany, or Ecology] |
| | <input type="radio"/> [Natural Resources or Wildlife Management] | <input type="radio"/> [Geology] |

Recommended courses:

- [_____]

- []
- []

And build 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as:

- Educating the public on environmental or conservation issues
- 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
- []
- []

4. AGRICULTURE



Strengthen food security. Agriculture Volunteers work with farmers to support programs in food security, nutrition, and sustainable livelihoods.

If you choose Agriculture, take three courses from one of the following areas:

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| ○ [Agronomy] | ○ [Entomology] | ○ [Agricultural Economics] |
| ○ [Horticulture] | ○ [Agricultural Science] | ○ [Business or Economics] |
| ○ [Botany] | ○ [Agribusiness] | ○ [Biology] |

Recommended courses:

- []
- []
- []

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, fish cultivation and production, or related areas
- Teaching or tutoring the public in environmental or agricultural issues/activities
- Working on the business management or marketing side of a commercial farm
- []
- []

5. YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT



Empower the next generation. Volunteers work with youth in communities to increase youth community engagement and strengthen leadership, life, and employability skills, guiding young people to realize their social, economic, and civic potential.

If you choose Youth in Development, take three courses from one of the following areas:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> [Social Work] | <input type="radio"/> [Developmental Psychology] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Counseling] | <input type="radio"/> [Human Development] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Community Development] | <input type="radio"/> [Family Studies] |

Recommended courses:

- []
- []
- []

And build 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as:

- Teaching or counseling in youth programs
- Activities that involve planning, organizing, assessing community needs, counseling, and leadership, in areas such as education, youth development, health, the environment, and/or business
- []
- []

6. COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Cultivate and grow local economic opportunities. Volunteers work to strengthen economic infrastructure through urban planning or supporting entrepreneurs and business owners.

If you choose Community Economic Development, take three courses from one of the following areas:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> [Business or Public Administration] | <input type="radio"/> [Accounting, Banking or Finance] | <input type="radio"/> [Graphic Design] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Nonprofit Management] | <input type="radio"/> [Computer Science and related majors] | <input type="radio"/> [Mass Communications] |
| | | <input type="radio"/> [International Business] |

Recommended courses:

- []
- []
- []

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, marketing, or related areas
- Starting and running your own business or other entrepreneurial activity
- Training others in computer literacy, maintenance, or repair
- Website design or online marketing

- Founding or leading a community- or school-based organization
- [_____]
- [_____]

**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 language—produce some of the strongest candidates.

2. Intercultural Competence

Approved courses or a substantive intercultural experience or foreign language skills or any combination of all three

Engaging thoughtfully and fluidly across cultures begins with one's own self-awareness. With this learning objective, you will deepen your cultural agility - by taking three intercultural courses that provide opportunities to learn about others while reflecting upon your own self in relation to others. The goal is for you to build your capacity to understand multiple cultures and build intercultural competence.

Intercultural Courses

Students will deepen cultural agility through **a mix of three self-reflective courses focused on global perspectives.**

You'll take at least 3 of these intercultural courses:

- []
- []
- []
- []

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

Substitution Option:

A maximum of two courses can be substituted with an Intercultural Experience or Foreign Language Course/Proficiency

Intercultural Experience – Engage in an intercultural experience—including studying, volunteering and/or teaching abroad or in a different cultural context from your own in the United States (including U.S. territories).

Select from these intercultural experiences:

- []
- []

- []
- []

Foreign Language Skills – Develop language skills by taking courses in a foreign language or American Sign Language. Please note that sign language or native/fluent experience with more than one language can also satisfy this requirement. All are encouraged to hone their capacity to interact professionally in more than one language.

Select from these language courses:

- []
- []

- []
- []

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. Peace Corps Prep requires **the following activities** that will strengthen your candidacy for the Peace Corps (and other professional endeavors):

1. Have your **resume** critiqued by someone in [your Career Services office/center].
2. Attend a workshop or class on interview skills or participate in a mock interview at [your Career Services office/center].

3. Develop at least one significant **leadership experience** and be prepared to discuss it thoughtfully. For example, organizing a campus or community event, leading a work or volunteer project, or serving on the executive board of a student organization.

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