



Peace
Corps

PREP

PEACE CORPS PREP STUDENT GUIDE

To be eligible for the Peace Corps Prep Program, students must be in good standing at the time of application. If selected for participation, they must maintain such standing throughout their enrollment in the institution. (06/25)

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:

- Training and experience in a work sector
- Foreign language skills
- Intercultural competence
- 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!**

1. Training *and* experience in a specific work sector

3 courses + 50 hours related

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
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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](http://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/) (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
- Engineering
- Any Physical or Biological Science

Recommended courses:

- **ANTY 473. Language & Culture**
- EDU 211D. Multicultural Education
- EDU 411. ESL: Teaching Culturally/Linguistically Diverse K-12 Students
- **LING 338. Language and English Education**
- **GS 100IH. Intro to World Cultures**
- TE 250CS. Technology and Society

*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 teaching may be English as a Foreign/Second Language, special education, or a STEM subject
- Volunteer with the English Language Learners program through the Bozeman Adult Learning Center
- Volunteering with the After School Partnership – a collaborative project between MSU, the Bozeman School District, and the Greater Gallatin United Way
- Volunteer with MSU's America Reads*America Counts program

- Becoming a member of the Bridges and Dams outreach program providing workshops for elementary aged children to increase interest in math, science, and engineering, specifically among girls and minorities
- Participate in the annual “Engineerathon” with local sixth grade students to celebrate National Engineering Week and encourage interest in engineering fields
- Volunteer with “Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day” hosting local Girl Scouts
- Volunteer with MSU Science Saturdays

#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 and Nutrition](#)
- [Health Education](#)
- [Pre-med](#)
- [Biology](#)
- [Environmental Engineering](#)

Recommended courses

- **CHTH 210. Foundations in Community Health**
- **CHTH 443. Program Evaluation for Community Health**
- **NRSG 377. Intro to Community Based Nursing**
- **NRSG 418. Health Policy/Health Care Economics**
- **NRSG 477. Population Based Nursing Care in Community**
- **NRSG 479. Population Health & Leadership**
- NUTR 351. Nutrition and Society
- BIOH303. Global Disease and Health Disparities
- LS 104. Intro to Global Health

*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
- Volunteer with Montana HOSA
- Volunteer at the Community Café assisting with nutrition and dietary needs

- Complete the Montana Dietetic Internship

#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 & Rangeland Ecology](#)
- Biological Sciences (Ecology)
- [Wildlife Habitat Ecology & Management](#)
- [Environmental Horticulture](#)
- Plant Science
- Earth Sciences; Geology

Recommended courses:

- **BIOE 375. Ecological Responses to Climate Change**
- **ENSC 110. Land Resource Environmental Sciences**
- **EENV 441. Natural Treatment Systems**
- **ENSC 407. Environmental Risk Assessment**
- **ENSC 461. Restoration Ecology**
- **NRSM 240. Natural Resource Ecology**
- **AGBE 315. Ag in a Global Context**
- **GRPHY 329. Water and Society**

*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 Gallatin Valley Land Trust to promote the conservation of working farms, ranches, healthy rivers and wildlife habitats
- Volunteer with the Greater Gallatin Watershed Council
- Serve as a Montana Conservation Corps intern

#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:

- Environmental Horticulture
- Plant Science
- [Biotechnology](#)
- Agricultural Science
- [Sustainable Food & Bioenergy Systems](#)
- Agricultural Business
- Business or economics
- Biology
- [Pre-Vet](#)
- [Entomology](#)

Recommended courses:

- **AGED 140US. Leadership Development for Agriculture**
- **AGBE 210IS. Economics of Agricultural Business**
- **AGED 482. Non-Formal Teaching Methods in Agriculture**
- **AGSC 428. Sustainable Cropping Systems**
- **ANSC 222. Livestock in Sustainable Systems**
- **AGBE 315. Ag in Global Context**
- **AGSH 465. Health, Agriculture, Poverty**
- **PSCI 436. Politics of Food and Hunger**
- **SFBS 451. Sustainable 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 Montana 4-H via MSU Extension
- Volunteer with the Gallatin Valley Food Bank garden
- Complete a Montana Agricultural Experimental Station Summer Internship

#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:

- Community Health
- Psychology
- Human Development
- Family and Consumer Sciences

Recommended courses:

- **ANTY 225IS. Culture, Language, and Society**

- **EDEC 362. Development, Education, and Well-Being of Children at Risk**
- **EDEC 430. Social and Emotional Development in the Young Child**
- **FCS 359. Theories and Skills for the Human Services**
- **FCS 464. Gender, Race, Class, and Family Diversity**
- **EDU 223IS. Educ Psych & Adolescent Development**
- **PSYX 230. Developmental Psychology**

*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 with Thrive in their CAP (Child Advancement Project) Mentor program or Girls for a Change program
- Volunteer with the kidsLINK Afterschool Program through the Greater Gallatin United Way
- Volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Gallatin County
- Volunteer with the Gallatin Valley YMCA
- Become a mentor with Big Sky Youth Empowerment

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

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| ○ Business Administration | ○ International Business |
| ○ Accounting or Finance | ○ Marketing |
| ○ Computer Science | ○ Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management |
| ○ Computer Engineering | |
| ○ Graphic Design | |

Recommended courses:

- **BGEN 245D. Cultural Dimensions of International Business**
- **BMGT 410. Sustainable Business Practices**
- **BMGT 420. Leadership and Motivation**
- **BMGT 469. Community Entrepreneurship & Nonprofit Management**
- **BMKT 446. Marketing for Entrepreneurs.**
- **BFIN 452. International Finance**

- **BFIN 456. Entrepreneurial Finance**
- **CSCI 215CS. Social & Ethical Issues in Computer Science**
- **AGBE 345. Ag Finance & Credit Analysis**

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
- Volunteer with “Entrepreneur Day” for local high school students
- Volunteer with Hopa Mountain to help provide economic development opportunities for rural and tribal communities
- Complete the Starzen Internship in Tokyo, Japan
- Work with the Family Business Program outreach program offered through the Jake Jabs College of Business and Entrepreneurship

***Peace
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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

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 establish elementary proficiency, having completed two 100-level courses or learned Spanish through another medium.
- ❑ West Africa: Students indicating an intention to serve in French-speaking African countries would benefit from proficiency in French or another Romance language.
- ❑ 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 self-reflective courses focused on global perspectives** in which you will learn about others while reflecting upon your own self in relation to others. Prolonged intercultural experiences—such as studying, volunteering, and/or teaching abroad or in the United States (including U.S. territories)—may partially fulfill this requirement. 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:

- **ANTY 101D. Anthropology and the Human Experience**
- **ANTY 225IS. Culture, Language, and Society**
- **HSTA 416. Race and Class in America**
- **GS 100IH. Intro to World Cultures**
- **PHL 354. Philosophy of Race**
- **SOCI 344. Sociology of Race & Ethnicity**
- **SOCI 370. Sociology of Globalization**

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

- **AGBE 315. Agriculture in a Global Context**
- **AGSC 465R. Health, Agriculture, Poverty**
- **ARTH 200IZ. Art of World Civilization**
- **BGEN 245D. Cultural Dimensions of International Business**
- **BMKT 441. International Marketing**
- **ECNS 314. International Economics**
- **ECNS 317. Economic Development**
- **EDU 211D. Multicultural Education**
- **GPHY 141D. Geography of World Regions**
- **GPHY 121D. Human Geography**
- **GPHY 325. Cultural Geography**
- **HSTR 135D. The Modern Middle East**
- **HSTR 160D. Modern World History**
- **HSTR 366. Middle East/20th Century**
- **HSTR 484. World Environmental History**
- **LIT 308. Multicultural Literature**
- **LIT 440. Studies in World Literature**
- **PHL 255D. Philosophy and Culture**

- PHL 308. Language and the World
- PSCI 230D. Introduction to International Relations
- PSCI 423. Politics of Development.
- PSCI 436. Politics of Food & Hunger
- PSCI 439. International Human Rights
- RLST 110D. Religion, Conflict & Politics
- SOCI 373. Sociology of Indigenous People
- SPNS 300/400 elective (non-language acquisition)
- FRCH 300/400 elective (non-language acquisition)

Or use intercultural experiences to fulfill additional electives requirement:

- **Studying or volunteering abroad** can count towards the additional electives requirement if the experience is in 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**
 - Engineers Without Borders: participation in the organization and completing a trip to Kenya can satisfy one additional elective course. *This experience may simultaneously count for that hands-on experiential requirement listed under the “Training and Experience” section.*
 - Lead or participate in a BreaksAway service trip.
 - Participate in a [Faculty Led study abroad trip](#). Visit www.montana.edu/International/studyabroad/short_term_programs/ for annual opportunities.

Is there another course in the catalog or experience you will participate in that you feel meets this requirement? Meet with Dr. Patricia Catoira, MSU's Peace Corps Prep Coordinator, to discuss.

4. Professional and leadership development

Resume and interview support + Leadership

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 Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success.
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at the Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success.
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.
 - a. Ideas include leading a BreaskAway Spring Break Trip, serving on the ASMSU Student Government, becoming involved in the planning of the annual "Can the Griz" food drive, leading Service Saturday projects, and many more. If you're looking for ideas stop by the Office of Student Engagement or meet with a SEGA advisor.