

# 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:

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|---|--|
| 1. Training and experience in a work sector | 3. Intercultural competence                |
| 2. Foreign language skills                  | 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'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 ([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 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:

- The Holistic Child
- Middle Grades Education
- TEFL/TESL
- Math
- Professional & Pedagogical Studies
- Student Teaching Practicum
- Social Studies
- Health & Development

Recommended courses:

- EDUC 101. The Holistic Child I // EDUC 102. The Holistic Child II
- EDUC 256. Adolescent Health & Development
- EDUC 317. Social and Cultural Studies
- EDUC 357. Psychology of Learning
- EDUC 403. The Home, School, and Community Connection
- CLA CSL 210. Teaching English as a Second Language

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
- Teaching 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
- Participate in Mercer On Mission in the Dominican Republic: The program's servicelearning project will involve collaborating with teachers and administrators at our host school, Juan Pablo Duarte, and collaborating higher education partner, Universidad Central de Este, to engage in professional learning and host an AgSTEM Camp for students who attend the Juan Pablo Duarte. Additionally, Mercer students will participate in community outreach activities facilitated by the Andrew J. Young Foundation and HATponics, Inc. to ensure that the food that will be produced by the aquaponics unit will be integrated into the local community in a sustainable manner.
- Participate in Mercer On Mission in Greece: The program's service-learning project will involve helping the children in the Roma village near Hexamilia. Students will participate in an on-going program to assist the Roma, or Gypsy, population of Greece sponsored by Children's Ark Roma Education.
- Participate in Mercer On Mission in South Korea: In South Korea today, the ability to speak English, even at a rudimentary level, is crucial to an individual's economic viability.

## 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
- Public Health
- Health Education
- Pre-med
- Biology
- Engineering for Development
- Global Health Studies

*Recommended courses:*

- EGR 410 Engineering for Development
- EVE 412 Green Engineering
- GHS 101. Nutrition (3 hours)
- GHS 200 (3 hours)/GHS 200R (4 hours). Introduction to Global Health
- GHS 300. Global Health Challenges (3 hours)
- GHS 310. Medical Anthropology (3 hours)
- GHS 320. Environmental Health (3 hours)
- GHS 330. Epidemiology (3 hours)
- GHS 345. Health and Gender (3 hours)
- GHS 350. Global Health Policy (3 hours)
- GHS 355. Medical Geography (3 hours)
- GHS 365. International Public Health Interventions (3 hours)
- GHS 370. Health in Africa (3 hours)
- GHS 375. Maternal and Child Health (3 hours)
- PBH 101 Systems and Services of Public Health (3 hours)
- PBH 105 Population Health and the Environment (3 hours)
- PBH 202 Biostatistics (3 hours)
- PBH 301 Dissemination of Public Health Information (3 hours)
- PBH 307 Health Behavior (3 hours)
- PBH 402 Public Health Across the Life Span (3 hours)
- PBH 404 Population Health and Diversity (3 hours)
- PBH 405 Health Programming (3 hours)
- PBH 407 Public Health Research Methods (3 hours)
- PBH 490 Public Health Capstone (3 hours)

*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
- Volunteer at health clinics in Cape Town through Mercer's South Africa Internship Program (offered in the summer, fall, and spring).
- Participate in Mercer On Mission in Peru: Focusing on the community healthcare needs of miners in Peru, students will learn principles of conducting needs assessments and field research in

public health and then actively engage in the research process by conducting capacity and service assessments of local institutions and organizations involved in healthcare.

- Participate in Mercer On Mission in South Africa: Pre-health students volunteer in and work on creating health information videos for township health clinics.

### 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 Biology
- Environmental Engineering
- Botany
- Ecology
- Biology
- Astronomy

*Recommended courses:*

- CHM 111 General Chemistry I
- ENB 150. Introduction to Environmental Science
- BIO 205. Introduction to Biology for Engineers
- BIO 211. Introduction to Biology I
- CHM 221. Organic Chemistry I // CHM 222. Organic Chemistry II
- EVE 290. Introduction to Environmental Engineering
- GDS 303. Resources, Climate Change and Development: (3 hours)
- GDS 306. NGOs, Aid and Advocacy in Action (3 hours)
- GHS 320. Environmental Health (3 hours)
- EGR 410 Engineering for Development
- EVE 384. Hydraulics
- EVE 385. Hydrology
- EVE 412. Green Engineering
- ECN 452. Environmental Economics

*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
- Participate in Mercer On Mission in Peru: A frequented practice of artisanal and small-scale gold miners (ASGM) in underdeveloped countries uses mercury to purify gold from ore; this process is referred to as amalgamation. When mercury is in contact with pure gold, the two elements combine to form a compound termed an amalgam. As the mercury is liberated from the amalgam, miners often inhale toxic vapors and mercury is released into the air, soil, and water. Mercer University students will participate in the design, installation, and testing of three mercury aerosol capture and reuse devices. MOM in Peru is also an interdisciplinary service

projects that serves the many needs of mining communities in Peru – environmental (engineering and chemistry projects), public health, and education.

## 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:

- Botany
- Global Development
- Business or Economics
- Biology

Recommended courses:

- BIO 302. Botany
- BIO 370. Ecology
- CHM 111. General Chemistry I
- CHM 112. General Chemistry II
- CHM 221. Organic Chemistry I
- CHM 222. Organic Chemistry II
- ENB 150. Introduction to Environmental Science
- BIO 211. Introduction to Biology I
- BIO 480. Conservation Biology

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
- Participate in Mercer On Mission in the Dominican Republic: The Consuelo community, which is located in a rural region of the Dominican Republic adjacent to the city of San Pedro is an area of the country with high rates of poverty. Many of the students who attend Juan Pablo Duarte are faced with food insecurity. The advent of the aquaponics system at our host school will increase access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and highquality protein for the residents of this community. The aquaponics system installed by HATponics, Inc. allows communities to produce environmentally sustainable agriculture by cycling the nutrients and wastes within the system so that the system does not create any negative environmental impacts on the surrounding ecosystem. This is especially important on islands such as the Dominican Republic where space for agriculture is limited and preserving natural habitat to protect native species is of great importance.

## 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
- Global Development
- Community Development
- Developmental Psychology
- Human Development
- Sociology
- Family Studies

*Recommended courses:*

- SOC 101. Introductory Sociology
- SOC 295. Sociology of Race & Ethnicity
- SOC 310. Social Work
- ANT 101 Introduction to Anthropology or GEO 111 Human Geography
- GDS 200. Introduction to Development Theory and Practice.
- GDS 305. Sustainable Development
- GDS 390 Community Assets and Needs Assessment
- MIL 201. Leadership I
- MIL 202. Leadership II
- PSY 205. Psychology of Learning
- PSY 250. Child & Adolescent Psychology
- PSY 270. Psychology of Gender
- PSY 414. Hormones & Behavior

*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 Mercer’s “Lights on Afterschool” program through the Center for Community Engagement
- Participate in Mercer On Mission in Tanzania: Building on our previous Mercer on Mission in 2016, we will again be working with Upendo Daima, a Tanzanian organization that houses and works toward restoring the lives of children who have lived on the streets. Our team will build culturally appropriate health modules, which the Upendo staff has identified as needed. We design the health modules with the aim of providing the staff with necessary and creative approaches to educating the children at Upendo about health and wellness. Our 2016 program produced modules ranging from alcohol/drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, schistosomiasis, first aid, and yoga.

## 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:*

- Business or Public Administration
- Accounting, Banking or Finance
- Graphic Design
- Nonprofit Management
- Computer Science and related majors
- Mass Communications
- International Business

*Recommended courses:*

- ACC 204. Introductory Financial Accounting
- ACC 411. Governmental and Not-For-Profit Accounting
- BUS 413. Business Studies Abroad
- ECN 150. Principles of Microeconomics
- ECN 151. Principles of Macroeconomics
- ECN 432. Urban and Regional Economics
- ECN 441. International Economics
- ECN 445. Industrial Organization
- ECN 450. The Economic and Moral Foundations of Capitalism
- FIN 451. International Finance
- MGT 472. International Management and Marketing

*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
- Participate in Mercer On Mission in Rwanda: In 1995, AVEGA-Agahozo was born in order to restore hope and life to the widows of the genocide and to help them to reintegrate into society. The mission of AVEGA is to work for the progress, empowerment and improving economic conditions of genocide widows. Socio-economic empowerment is identified as one of 4 major activities for the organization, and our mission is to provide tools to assist the organization in achieving their goals in this area. Part of our mission is to identify specific areas of need that could be filled by our business students. Marketing and business plans are dynamic concepts which change in response to an organization's strengths and weaknesses and to opportunities and threats in the external environment.

**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.
- ❑ 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 + 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'll take at least 1 of these core courses:

- INT 101. Understanding Self and Others
- INT 201. Building Community
- INT 301. Engaging the World
- AFR 295. Sociology of Race and Ethnicity
- COM 230. Intercultural Communication
- GBK 101. Understanding Self and Others
- EXP 405. Global Service through Mercer on Mission

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



- Select two electives from the list of Mercer courses that meet the PCPrep Program’s Intercultural Competency requirements from the course list in appendix H

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

### **Optional: Intercultural experience in place of elective(s).**

You may substitute one or both of your electives with an intercultural experience. Here are the guidelines:

- **Studying or volunteering abroad** may count if the student is in a country that has at some point hosted Peace Corps Volunteers (see the list of current and past countries here [[www.peacecorps.gov/countries](http://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.

## **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 Mercer’s Center for Career and Professional Development.
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at Mercer’s Center for Career and Professional Development.
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. The following student leadership opportunities are available at Mercer:
    1. Minority Mentors
    2. Residence Life:
      - a. Senior Resident Assistants
      - b. Resident Assistants
    3. Quadworks (Student Programming Board)
    4. Student Government Association (SGA)
    5. AWARE Student Wellness Group (Mercer Peer Educators)

6. Greek Life:
  - a. NPHC Council
  - b. Panhellenic Council
  - c. IFC Council
  - d. Individual Chapter Officers
7. Student Judicial Education:
  - a. Chief Student Justice
  - b. Associate Chief Student Justice
  - c. Student Justices
8. SHAPE Student Board Members
9. Academic Leadership Opportunities
  - a. Honor Council
  - b. Mercer Service Scholars
  - c. Supplemental Instruction
  - d. Orientation Leadership Team
  - e. Peer Advisors
  - f. Mercer Ambassadors
  - g. Admission Leadership Staff
10. Athletic Leadership Opportunities
  - a. Athletic Advisory Board
  - b. Intramural Sports Leadership (Referees, Managers, etc.)
  - c. Club Sport Officers
  - d. University Center Bear Force Student Leadership

If you are interested in any of these positions and would like to be directed to the office that oversees them, please email Kendra Murphy at [Kendra.Noel.Murphy@live.mercer.edu](mailto:Kendra.Noel.Murphy@live.mercer.edu).