



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 Peace Corps 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.**

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 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 identify the type of assignments in which you would like to serve through this [interactive tool](#), then review the positions' desired qualifications and build them up accordingly. In the process, you should fulfill these PC Prep experimental requirements!*

There are six sectors in which Peace Corps Volunteers serve – detailed below. **Choose one sector to focus on**, then complete at least 3 courses and 50 hours of related experience in that sector. Sector-specific suggestions for fulfilling your 50-hour work or volunteer experience can be found below. These opportunities are simply suggestions. Students are welcome to identify other opportunities. UWEC Career Services and Service-Learning can also assist you in identifying volunteer or internship opportunities that may fulfill your 50 hours.

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** (<https://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/#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:

- Education Studies: Elementary, Secondary
- Special Education
- English or Linguistics
- ESL
- Math
- Computer Science
- Any Physical or Biological Science

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.
- The following opportunities exist for students to gain the necessary experience:
 - Education Studies (ES) and Special Education (SPED) majors.** You will fulfill the 50-hour requirement through your student teaching experience.
 - **Non-ES and SPED majors.** The following campus and community opportunities have been identified as possibilities for fulfilling your 50-hour experience requirement.
 - [Early Childhood Literacy Intervention Program Services and Evaluation \(ECLIPSE\)](#) program.
 - Elementary, middle school, or high school mentor opportunities with the [Blugold Beginnings Pre-College Program](#).
 - Tutoring at [Academic Skills Center](#).
 - Tutoring through [Literacy Chippewa Valley](#).
- Many UW-Eau Claire study abroad programs offer volunteer opportunities in Education. To learn more, please contact a study abroad adviser at studyabroad@uwec.edu or research options online: <https://studyabroad.apps.uwec.edu/>.



#2 **HEALTH** (<https://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/#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:

- Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Nursing
- Nutrition, found in Nursing or Kinesiology
- Kinesiology
- Biology
- Environmental Public 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
- The following opportunities exist for students to gain the necessary experience:
 - **Nursing majors.** You may fulfill this requirement through your clinical experience.
 - **Kinesiology majors.** This can be fulfilled through one of the many outreach programs in the Department, including the Cancer Recovery Fitness Program, Community Fitness Program, Home School Physical Education, K-5 Exercise Program and Physical Activity and Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities in the Eau Claire are (PRIDE) Programs for both youth and adults.
 - **All other majors.** The following campus and community programs have been identified as resources for fulfilling your field experience requirements.
 - Peer Educator with [Student Wellness Advocacy Team](#) (SWAT)
 - Volunteer at [Chippewa Valley Free Clinic](#)
 - Volunteer at [St. Croix Hospice](#)
- Many UW-Eau Claire study abroad programs offer volunteer opportunities in Health. To learn more, please contact a study abroad adviser at studyabroad@uwec.edu or research options online: <https://studyabroad.apps.uwec.edu/>.



#3 **ENVIRONMENT** (<https://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/#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 or Environmental Public Health
- Biology-Botany, Conservation, Zoology
- Geology
- Geography

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
- UWEC [Career Services](#) and [Service-Learning](#) can assist you in identifying volunteer or internship opportunities in the U.S. or abroad that may fulfill your 50 hours.
- Some UW-Eau Claire study abroad programs offer volunteer opportunities in Environment. To learn more, please contact a study abroad adviser at studyabroad@uwec.edu or research options online: <https://studyabroad.apps.uwec.edu/>.



#4 **AGRICULTURE** (<https://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/#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
- Entomology
- Business or Economics
- Biology
- Physical Geography

And build 50 hours of related 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, 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
- UWEC [Career Services](#) and [Service-Learning](#) can assist you in identifying volunteer or internship opportunities in the U.S. or abroad that may fulfill your 50 hours.



#5 **YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT** (<https://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/#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
- Counseling and Family Studies
- Developmental Psychology and Human Development

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
- The following opportunities exist for students to gain the necessary experience:
 - **Social Work.** You will fulfill the 50-hour requirement through your social work internship. NOTE: UW-Eau Claire Social Work also offers an internship placement in South Africa and Mexico.
 - **Non-Social Work majors.** The following campus and community opportunities have been identified as possibilities for fulfilling your 50-hour experience requirement.
 - Elementary, middle school, or high school mentor opportunities with the [Blugold Beginnings Pre-College Program](#).
 - Volunteer at the [Boys and Girls Club of the Greater Chippewa Valley](#)
 - Work/Volunteer at [Easter Seals Wisconsin Camps](#)
 - [Child Advocacy Volunteer at Bolton Refuge House](#)
 - [Volunteer at Girls on the Run of the Chippewa Valley](#)
 - [Volunteer at Eau Claire County Restorative Justice Program](#)
- Many UW-Eau Claire study abroad programs offer volunteer opportunities in Youth in Development. To learn more, please contact a study abroad adviser at studyabroad@uwec.edu or research options online: <https://studyabroad.apps.uwec.edu/>.



#6 **COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** (<https://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/#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 and International Business
- Nonprofit Management
- Accounting or Finance
- Computer Science
- Graphic Design
- Mass Communications
- Political Science and Public Administration
- Information Systems and Geography

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
- UWEC [Career Services](#) and [Service-Learning](#) can assist you in identifying volunteer or internship opportunities in the U.S. or abroad that may fulfill your 50 hours.
- Some UW-Eau Claire study abroad programs offer volunteer opportunities in Community Economic Development. To learn more, please contact a study abroad adviser at studyabroad@uwec.edu or research options online: <https://studyabroad.apps.uwec.edu/>.

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.



Foreign Language Skills (requirements vary by language)

Working across cultures often entails verbal and nonverbal language distinct from your own. Building foreign language skills is thus a secondary 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 helpful to have taken at least one foreign language class.

UW-Eau Claire's [Department of Languages](#) offers instruction in the following languages currently used by Peace Corps Volunteers: Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish.

In addition, the [Center for International Education](#) offers a number of study abroad programs where students can pursue languages currently used in Peace Corps countries, but not offered at UWEC.

- Ghana: Twi
- South Africa: Afrikaans and Xhosa
- Thailand: Thai

Note: If you are a strong native speaker and want to serve in a country that speaks your same language, you can skip this requirement!



Intercultural Competence (3 approved courses)

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 yourself in relation to others. The goal is for you to build your capacity to shift perspective and behavior around relevant cultural differences.

You will take at least 1 of these courses:

- CJ 301, Intercultural Communication
- ES 385, Social Foundations: Human Relations
- GEOG 111, Human Geography
- RELS 100, Introduction to the Religions of the World
- ANTH 161, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
- ANTH 351, Cross-Cultural Dynamics
- POLS 390, Culture and Politics

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

- LAS 150, Introduction to Latin American Studies; LAS 356, Economic Development of Latin America
- ES 405, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
- GEOG 308, Geography of Russia and Eastern Europe; GEOG 319, Geography of the Middle East and North Africa; GEOG 321, Geography of Latin America; and GEOG 322, Native Geographies
- ANTH 313, Culture and Transnational Dynamics; ANTH 315, Language in Culture and Society; ANTH 356, Women in Cross-Cultural Perspectives; and ANTH 463, Religion and Culture
- RELS 203, Women and World Religions; RELS 309, Islam; RELS 312, Buddhism: Past and Present; RELS 314, Hinduism; and RELS 330, Indigenous Religions of the Americas
- SOC 360, Sociology of Culture; and SOC 419, Sociology of Women
- WGSS 335, Transnational Feminism; WGSS 352, Gender and Politics in Global Perspective; WGSS 356, Women in Cross-Cultural Perspective; WGSS 357, Women and Economic Development
- ECON 337, Women and the Labor Market; ECON 355, Economic Development; ECON 356, Economic Development of Latin America; and ECON 357, Women and Economic Development
- POLS 122, Introduction to World Politics; POLS 260, Introduction to Comparative Politics; POLS 321, Politics of the Middle East; and POLS 322, Politics of Russia
- ENGL 314, Cultural Rhetorics
- ENPH 115, Global Environmental and Public Health
- ENV 378, International Environmental Problems
- GEOL 304, Global Environmental Change
- FLG 150, Foreign Civilization and Culture
- HIST 152, Modern East and Southeast Asia; HIST 292, Origins of Current World Conflicts; HIST 311, Latin America Since Independence; HIST 366, History of the Middle East Since Muhammad; HIST 381, Comparative Genocide; HIST 382, Imperialism Since 1800; HIST 383, Modern Africa
- INTB 361, International Experience in India; INTB 362, International Experience in China
- LANG 170, Language and Intercultural Competence
- SW 290, Human Rights and Global Justice
- NRSB 389, Cross Cultural Health



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

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. Please see your department programs, the UW-Eau Claire Intercultural Immersion Programs, and the UW-Eau Claire Center for International Education’s study abroad opportunities for a range of learning abroad experiences.*

Professional and Leadership Development (resume and interview support + leadership experience)

International development is a highly professional sector. It is difficult to break into and demands great initiative and leadership to advance professionally within the field. PC Prep requires **three specific activities** that will strengthen your candidacy for the Peace Corps (and most any other professional endeavors):

- Have your **resume** critiqued by an advisor, an academic/professional mentor, or someone in Career Services. Stop in at Vicki Lord Larson (Old Library) 2100, call (715) 836-3487, or see <https://www.uwec.edu/career-services/>.
- Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** through Career Services.
- 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. Again, Career Services can help you develop and refine how you present yourself and your accomplishments. Possible opportunities include:
 - [Undergraduate Research](#) via the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
 - [Residence Life](#): Peer Diversity Educators, Resident Assistants, Residence Halls Association
 - [Student Organizations](#)
 - [Student Senate](#)
 - [TV10](#) - student run television station
 - [The Spectator](#) - student newspaper/website
 - [University Administrative Committees](#)