

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. *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), 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!

Sector of focus:

1. [Education](#)
2. [Health](#)

3. [Environment](#)
4. [Agriculture](#)
5. [Youth in Development](#)
6. [Community Economic Development](#)

#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 | ○ Early Childhood Education | ○ Engineering |
| ○ English or Linguistics | ○ Math | ○ Any Physical or Biological Science |
| | ○ Computer Science | |

Recommended courses:

- EDF 3253 Learning Mgmt Inclusive Class
- EDF 4112 Child Growth and Development
- RED 4310 Early Literacy Learning
- TSL 3080 Foundations of ESO
- TSL 4520 Sec Lang Acquis Comm& Culture

*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
- Relevant field/volunteer service opportunities
 - [Grace Place for Children and Families](#): Students will provide English tutoring to adults in the community and mentor elementary-high school students.
 - [Guadalupe Center, Inc](#): Students will tutor kids that are in pre-k-K-2.
 - [Life Restoration Community Economic Development Agency](#): Students will help with vocational skills-training for the veterans and low income residents in our community through job readiness, life skills, and reestablishing self-esteem.

#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
- Health Education
- Environmental or Sanitary Engineering
- Exercise Science or Athletic Training
- Pre-med
- Biology

Recommended courses:

- HSC 3243 Teach & Learn in Health Profs
- HSC 4231 Client Ed in Health Care
- NUR 3833 Patient Care Manage in Nursing
- NUR 4169 Evidence-Based Nursing Prac
- NUR 4455 Reproductive Health Nursing
- NUR 3355 Child Health Nursing
- HSC 2577 Nutri Human Health & Wellness
- HSC 3133 Health and Human Sexuality
- HSC 3201 Healthy Communities
- HSC 3131 Health Counseling
- HSC 3624 Global Health Systems & Issues

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
- Relevant field/volunteer service opportunities:
 - [Blue Zones Project SW Florida](#): Blue Zones Project is a community-wide well-being improvement initiative designed to make the healthy choice the easy choice. Students will help in planning and implementing community events and presentations.
 - [Florida Department of Health](#): Students have a variety of options throughout the Florida Department of Health. There are many sections and specialties available when protecting and promoting public health. Clinical and Nutrition Services, Wellness Programs, Community Health Planning and Statistics, Environmental Health and Engineering, Emergency Preparedness, and Infectious Disease Services.

#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
- Environmental Education
- Geology
- Environmental Engineering
- Marine Science
- Earth and Space Science
- Biology
- Community Planning and development
- Climate Change

Recommended courses:

- EVR 5414 Interpreting the Environment
- EVR 5925 Environmental Education
- EVS 5818 Ecological Risk Assessment
- GLY 1000C Physical Geology
- IDS 3920 University Colloquium

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
- Relevant field/volunteer service opportunities:
 - [Collier County Parks and Recreation](#): Students will be able to assist with programs at community center, or with maintenance of landscape at parks
 - [Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary](#): The majority of activities include exotic plant removal, brush or debris clearing, or cleaning and maintenance of our extensive facilities. Students can also arrange for an unpaid internship for a more in-depth experience.
 - [Eco-Voice](#): Students will assist in advising subscribers of the environmental events and issues in South Florida.

#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:

- Biology
- Business or economics
- Community Planning and Development
- Biotechnology
- Management or Entrepreneurship
- Environmental Education
- Climate Change

Recommended courses:

- SYD 4603 Community Development
- IDS 3300 Foundations of Civic Engagement
- BSC 3303 Biogeography
- BOT 2800 Plants and Society
- EVR 3025 Cultural Ecology
- EVR 4026 Human Ecology and Systems
- HUM 2395 Environmental Humanities
- IDS 3332 Issues in Culture and Society
- SPC 3543 Ecological Communication
- IDS 3920 University Colloquium

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
- Relevant field/volunteer service opportunities:
 - [Everglades Wonder Gardens](#): Students will do basic gardening such as raking, watering, clearing large branches and limbs from grounds, cleaning exhibit windows, washing picnic tables.
 - [FGCU Food Forest](#): Students will help with general garden maintenance: pulling weeds, watering plants, trimming, mulching and planting.

#5 Youth in Development



|| **Empower the next generation of change makers.** 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 | ○ Environmental Education |
| ○ Early Childhood Development | ○ Community Health | ○ Community Planning and Development |
| ○ Child and Youth Studies | ○ Psychology | |
| | ○ Health Science | |

Recommended courses:

- EDF 4112 Child Growth and Development
- EEC 3268 Play Development & Assessment
- EEC 4307 Cognitive Exp for Yng Children
- EEX 4201 Young Children with Spec Needs
- TSL 3080 Foundations of ESOL
- TSL 4520 Sec Lang Acquis Comm& Culture
- RED 4344 Methods of Teaching Reading
- IDS 3920 University Colloquium

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
- Relevant field/volunteer service opportunities:
 - [FGCU College Reach Out Program](#): Students may serve as tutors, mentors, and/or guest speakers during after-school programs held at middle and high schools throughout the five-county area.
 - [Blue Crayonz Inc](#): Students will learn more about Autism Spectrum Disorder while helping spread Awareness in our community while building a community support system.
 - [Boys and Girls Clubs of Lee County](#): Students will maintain a fun atmosphere while providing core programs for Academic Success, Health and Life Skills, and Technological Skills to youth in the community.

#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 or Public Administration | ○ Computer Information Systems | ○ Global Studies |
| ○ Accounting, Banking or Finance | ○ Digital Media Design | ○ Supply Chain Management |
| ○ Computer Science | ○ Communications | ○ Entrepreneurship |
| | ○ International Business | |

Recommended courses:

- MAN 3025 Principles of Management
- ECO 3703 International Economics
- ECP 3302 Economics of the Environment
- ECS 4013 Economic Development
- ENT 2000 Intro to Entrepreneurship
- ENT 2010 Principles of Entrepreneurship
- MAN 3781 Sustainable Business
- MAN 4602 Global Business Strategy & Organization
- ENT 3503 Social Entrepreneurship
- ENT 3618 Technology & Innovation

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
- Relevant field/volunteer service opportunities:
 - [Hope for Haiti](#): Students will help with marketing strategies to increase the scope of social business to support economic development in rural Haiti.
 - [Immokalee Foundation](#): TIF is home to programs that enhance the lives of Immokalee’s next generation by emphasizing education, vocation, and life skills that build pathways to success. There are opportunities for Business, Technology, Philanthropic, Graphic Design, Teaching, Counseling, Computer Software/Database Operation, and Special Event Management.

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 placement 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 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:

Note to Universities completing the Invitation to Participate: 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 universities to highlight relevant curricular options as well as

experiential opportunities, such as service learning, study abroad, or alternative spring/fall break programs they have that address the learning objective.

For this competency, we require **that all students take three courses: one core course in Diversity and Inclusion and two relevant electives.** If a PC Prep program would like to, they may give their students the option of engaging in substantive intercultural experiences in place of one or both electives.

- The **core course(s)** should be an introspective Diversity and Inclusion offering that helps students increase cultural self- and other-understanding, building their adaptability around relevant cultural differences. Examples would be Intercultural Communication, Multicultural Counseling, or courses that integrate self-reflection into the study of marginalized groups (i.e., classes focused on race, gender, sexuality, or disabilities). Alternatively, some PC Prep partner universities have created a specialized “Global Service” course to fulfill this requirement.
- **Electives:** 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.
- **Optional: Intercultural experience in place of elective(s).** If you would like to give your students the option of substituting intercultural experiences for one or both electives, 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](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. Feel encouraged to highlight relevant opportunities here. If they also align with one of Peace Corps’ six sectors, these experiences may simultaneously count for that hands-on experiential requirement.
 - Each distinct intercultural experience lasting at least forty hours may substitute for one elective.

Please include here 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 for credits, please include appropriate language below.

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

- INR 2015 Global Studies
- SYG 2012 Global Sociology
- SYD 4020 Global Population
- LIT 4353 Ethnic Studies
- INR 3003 Theories of International Relations
- SYG 2010 Social Problems

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

- AFH 3100 African History to 1850
- ASH 3404 Modern China
- ASH 3550 Post Colonial India
- CPO 3303 Latin Amer. Politics & Society
- CPO 3403 Politics of the Middle East

- CPO 3760 Religion and Politics
- LAH 3200 Modern Latin America
- LAH 3470 History of the Caribbean
- LAH 3724 Race and Latin America
- *Students could count as an elective a study abroad program, or the participation in the Eagle International Ambassador Program.

**Study abroad can only count for intercultural competence if the experience happens in a current or former Peace Corps Country. A list of current/former Peace Corps countries can be found here: <https://www.peacecorps.gov/countries/>*

Is there another course in the catalog 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. [This tip is relevant whether or not you allow students to substitute such experiences for their electives.]*

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 FGCU Career Development Office
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at FGCU Career Development Office
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. Examples: MLD Leadership programs, Resident Assistant roles, Student Government, RSO Officer, Eagle International Ambassador Program, Peer Advisor or Mentor positions.

Student Name: _____

University: _____

PC Prep Coordinator: _____



PEACE CORPS PREP EXIT CHECKLIST

Below are the Peace Corps Prep certification requirements. If you apply to Peace Corps, please *scan and attach this signed form to your application with the name "PC Prep Checklist."* If you apply to Peace Corps before completing a requirement below, write: "[Activity]: planned [month/year]."

1. Training and experience in a specific work sector

Please check the box of the sector in which you have prepared yourself to serve:

- Education Environment Youth in Development
- Health Agriculture Community Economic Development

(1) Coursework. List the 3 highest approved sector-aligned course #s and titles you took:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(2) Hands-on experience in that same sector. Total Hours (must be at least 50): _____

Description of experience:

2. Foreign language skills

Requirements depend upon desired Peace Corps volunteer placement site. (1) *Spanish-speaking countries* → two 200-level courses. (2) *French-speaking countries* → one 200-level courses in any Romance Language. (3) *Everywhere else* → no explicit requirements, but language skills are a plus.

Language: _____ List your 2 highest level course #s and titles:

1. _____ 2. _____

Or describe your alternative learning process (e.g., native speaker): _____

3. Intercultural competence

List your 3 approved courses/experiences that bolstered your intercultural competence:

1. _____ 3. _____
2. _____

4. Professional and leadership development

1. **Professional resume feedback:** Yes No Date: _____ Where: _____
2. **Professional interview prep:** Yes No Date: _____ Where: _____
3. **Demonstrated leadership experiences** (i.e., student orgs, work, volunteer, etc.)
4. **Describe:** _____

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of PC Prep Coordinator

Date

RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM

With your approval, the Florida Gulf Coast University Peace Corps Preparatory (PC Prep) program will release information on a regular basis to the Peace Corps, including details about the participants in this program and other relevant data that help the Peace Corps evaluate the effectiveness of PC Prep. These educational records are subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's educational records. This Act prohibits college officials from disclosing any records, including grade reports, academic standings, transcripts of records, or any other records, which contain information directly related to the student and from which the student can be individually identified without the student's consent. Consistent with FERPA guidelines, Florida Gulf Coast University will not release records related to your performance in the PC Prep program, other than those enumerated in this disclosure agreement.

I hereby permit Florida Gulf Coast University to disclose personally identifiable information to Peace Corps regarding my participation in the Peace Corps Preparatory program for the purposes of evaluating PC Prep. This information will be limited to my name, date of admission to PC Prep, the coursework and other activities I pursued to satisfy PC Prep requirements, date of graduation, and whether I successfully completed the PC Prep upon graduation. If I do not ultimately enter the Peace Corps, Florida Gulf Coast University may report post-graduation career information to the extent that Florida Gulf Coast University has that information.

Student Name (printed) _____

Student Signature _____

Date _____