



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](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:

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> [Elementary, Secondary or Special Education] | <input type="radio"/> [TEFL/TESL] | <input type="radio"/> [Engineering] |
| <input type="radio"/> [English or Linguistics] | <input type="radio"/> [Math] | <input type="radio"/> [Any Physical or Biological Science] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Computer Science] | | |

Sample recommended Austin College courses (others may count with prior approval of the PCPP Coordinator):

- Education 115 American Education: A Changing Landscape
- Education 225 Schools and Society
- Education 351 The Learner-Teacher Interaction
- Education 475 The Learner, The Teacher, and The Curriculum
- ENG 121 Interpreting Literature
- ENG courses numbered 250, 251, 252, or 253
- ENG courses numbered in the 300s
- COGS 120 Cognitive Science
- MATH 251 Linear Algebra
- MATH 151, 152, 252 Calculus I, II, III
- MATH 120 Elementary Statistics
- CS 201 Discrete Mathematics
- CS 211 Core Fundamentals I
- CS 221 Core Fundamentals II
- PHY 111 Physics for Scientists and Engineers I
- PHY 112 Physics for Scientists and Engineers II
- PHY 281 Statics and Engineering Design

- BIOL 115 Evolution, Behavior, and Ecology
- BIOL 116 Introductory Cell Biology
- BIOL courses numbered 200+ or 300+
- CHEM 112, CHEM 211, CHEM 221, CHEM 222

Education Sector

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 through a GO Fellowship in an underserved area of the world. Subjects can be English, Math, Social Studies, etc. Minimum 3 weeks to 10 weeks
 - Tutoring as part of the Service Station or the Math Lab

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:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| ○ [Public Health] | ○ [Biology] | |
| ○ [Nutrition or Dietetics] | ○ [Technical Education] | ○ [Health Care Administration] |
| ○ [Health Education] | ○ [Environmental or Sanitary Engineering] | |
| ○ [Pre-med] | | |

Sample recommended Austin College courses (others may count with prior approval of the PCPP Coordinator):

- PUBH 235 Fundamentals of Public Health
- PUBH 332 Epidemiology
- PUBH 345 Global Health

Health Sector

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
- Work as an Austin College Health & Wellness Peer Educator
- Do one or more CSOCs (Career Study Off-Campus) working with the Callie Clinic

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:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <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] |

Sample recommended Austin College courses (others may count with prior approval of the PCPP Coordinator):

- ENVS 135 Fundamentals of Environmental Studies
- ENVS 270 Environmental Science
- ENVS 245 Food Systems

Environment Sector

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
- Volunteering to work at Sneed Prairie on controlled burns and on Educational Tours
- Be a part of Austin College's THINK program
- Do one or more CSOCs (Career Study Off-Campus) with a land management organization, a local City Manager's office doing environmental research 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:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> [Agronomy] | <input type="radio"/> [Entomology] | <input type="radio"/> [Agricultural Economics] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Horticulture] | <input type="radio"/> [Agricultural Science] | <input type="radio"/> [Business or economics] |
| <input type="radio"/> [Botany] | <input type="radio"/> [Agribusiness] | <input type="radio"/> [Biology] |

Sample recommended Austin College courses (others may count with prior approval of the PCPP Coordinator):

- BIOL 223 Entomology
- EAS 265 Environmental Issues in East Asia
- ENVS 245 Food Systems

Agriculture Sector

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
- Work with Austin College's Community Garden
- Do one or more CSOCs (Career Study Off-Campus) with alumni owned sustainable farming

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:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <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:

- PSY 296 Life Span Psychology
- PSY 282 Psychotherapy & Assessment
- ANTH 123 Introduction to Socio-Cultural Anthropology

Youth Development Sector

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
- Do one or more CSOCs with The Boys and Girls Club, North Texas Youth Connection, Great Day of Service Leadership Academy, and Scouting

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:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <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:

- MEDA 121 Introduction to Media Studies
- LEAD 252 Leading Ethical Organizations
- ACCT 371 Non-Profit Accounting

Community Economic Development

*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
- Do a GO Fellowship in an underserved area of the world focusing on Micro-finance programs, writing grants for non-profits
- Participate as a summer SEPA Intern (Social Entrepreneurship for Poverty Alleviation)

**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 (or another approved course):

- ANTH 123 Socio-Cultural Anthropology
- EAS 110 A Origins of East Asian Civilization
- SPAN 254 A Mesoamerican Mythology
- Any course that satisfies the Austin College Global Diversity Competency

And choose 2 additional approved electives from these disciplines:

- Religion
- French
- Spanish
- EAS
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Anthropology
- Any course that satisfies the Austin College Power, Privilege and Inequality Competency
- Study abroad during JanTerm or MayTerm (equivalent to one required course), or the long semester (equivalent to two required courses)

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.

4. Professional and leadership development

Résumé 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 **résumé** critiqued by someone in Career Services Center, Wright Campus Center #263
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at Career Services Center, Wright Campus Center #263.
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.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM

With your approval, the Austin College 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, Austin College will not release records related to your performance in the PC Prep program, other than those enumerated in this disclosure agreement.

I hereby permit Austin College to disclose personally identifiable information to Peace Corps regarding my participation in the PC Prep 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, Austin College may report post-graduation career information to the extent that Austin College has that information.

Student Name (printed) _____

Student Signature _____

Date _____