



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 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 (focusing on one of the relevant six sectors), 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 one of the six specific work sectors (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 community 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!



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#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.

Academic Areas: St. Ambrose University has a Teacher Education Program that produces competent, caring, and qualified teachers who possess the skills to be effective teachers through practical experience, self-monitoring, and encouragement of professional growth. The bachelor of education degree prepares early childhood, elementary, and secondary education professionals. However, you do not have to be an education major to select this sector, if you will obtain degrees and/or complete course in mathematics, English as a second language, engineering, and/or sciences (biology, chemistry, etc.), you could also make a competitive PC application and will be considered for PC Prep if the recommended courses below are completed.

If you choose Education, take 3 courses from one of the following areas:

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

Recommended courses include:

- +Education 205 Introduction to teaching
- Education 284 Child and adolescent development
- Education 302/502 Foundations of ESL/Bilingual education
- Education 311/511 Assessment and testing in ESL
- Education 312 Curriculum development of young children
- Any Early Childhood Education or Early Childhood Special Education course
- Any English, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Engineering, Math, or Physics classes

(+) indicates a course that also serves as a general education course.

And build 50 hours of related field experience through an activity such as:

- Teach in the Children’s Campus, a licensed Iowa facility that provides comprehensive early childhood for children from the ages of 6 weeks to 6-years-old, with or without disabilities, as well as educational experiences and resources for families.

- Participate in an SAU mentoring service project, volunteer to serve as mentors to elementary students and teens at partner schools. Part of the mission of the program is to get students access to a college campus, as studies show just by setting foot on a campus you are more likely to attend college.
- Teach 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.



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#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.

Academic Areas: St. Ambrose University College of Health and Human Services offers many courses and programs that lead to careers in health care, physical fitness, and social services. The College has a focus on community-based service learning that blends well with the PC Prep preparation process.

If you choose Health, take three courses from one the following areas:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| ○ Nursing | ○ Biology | ○ Psychology |
| ○ Health Education | ○ Technical Education | ○ Kinesiology |

Recommended courses include:

- +Biology 106 Human Genetics
- +Biology 112 Humans and Disease
- Biology 205 Essentials of Human Anatomy and Physiology (pre-reqs are BIOL 101, 199, or 112)
- Biology 211 Microbiology (pre-reqs BIOL101 or 199)
- Biology 230 & 232 Human Anatomy and Physiology I and II (pre-reqs are BIOL 101, 199, 112 or CHEM 103, 105)
- Early Childhood Education 381 Health Nutrition and Public Policy
- +Kinesiology 273 Women's Health Issues
- Kinesiology 282 Exercise and Aging
- Nursing 410 Concepts of Population Health (N411 RN to BSN students)
- Nursing 475 Leadership & Contemporary Issues (N476 RN to BSN students)
- Nursing 485 Professional Nursing Capstone (N486 RN to BSN students)
- Psychology 205 Human Sexuality
- Psychology 255 Brain & Behavior
- Psychology 314 Human Motivation
- Psychology 324 Abnormal Psychology

- Psychology 328 Psychology & Treatment of the Victim
- Psychology 342 Theories of Counseling
- Psychology 348 Field Placement
- Psychology 350 Health Psychology
- Psychology 360 Behavioral Pharmacology
- +Sociology 326: Medical Sociology



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(+) indicates a course that also serves as a general education course.

And build 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as:

- Volunteer or work experience in the inter-professional Health Clinic which provides student-led inter-professional healthcare services to the underserved population with a focus on compassionate care, empowerment of the individual, management of health conditions, and overall wellness.
- Design an adaptive toy/tool/etc. to be tested by individuals at Jim's Place. Jim's Place provides the residential space for those interested in helping other persons with disabilities find adaptive solutions that can allow them to remain in their homes with a degree of independence.
- 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.
- Counsel or teach in health subjects.
- Work 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.

#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.

Academic Areas: St. Ambrose University's Departments in Biology, Engineering, Political Science, and Sociology are some examples of areas that offer course related to the environment, community empowerment, and conservation. All Departments have a focus on community-based service learning that blends well with the PC Prep preparation process.

If you choose **Environment**, take three courses from one of the following areas:

- Environmental Science or related field
- Engineering
- Biology
- Botany

- Ecology
- Political Science
- Sociology
- English.



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Recommended courses include:

- +Biology 101 Principles of Biology
- +Biology 109 Environmental Science
- +Biology 123 French Alps
- Biology 307 Ecology
- Biology 321 Marine Biology in Belize
- Biology 321 Tropical Biology in Ecuador
- Economics 335 Environmental Economics
- +English 246 Literature of Place
- Writing Intensive-English 319 Writing about Place
- Writing Intensive-Engineering 251 Design Laboratory
- Engineering 265 Engineering Economy
- +NSCI 205/ Geography G201 Physical Geography
- Philosophy 311/ Theology 311 Environmental Ethics
- Political Science 375 Environmental Politics, Policy & Law
- +Sociology 250 Environmental Sociology
- +Sociology 350 Environmental Justice

(+) indicates a course that also serves as a general education course.

And build 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as:

- Work with Living Lands & Waters, a non-profit launched by Quad City resident Chad Pregracke, whose concern about river pollution sparked him to take action. Since 1998, Living Lands & Water and more than 98,000 volunteers have removed 9.2 million pounds of debris from 23 rivers, including the Mississippi, Illinois and Ohio rivers, according to its website. Pregracke was named CNN's "Hero of the Year" in 2013, exactly a decade after receiving an honorary Doctor of Public Service degree from St. Ambrose.
- Participate in Habitat for Humanity SAU chapter and help build homes in the area and in Oklahoma City, OK and Fairfield, AL.
- Intern at Nahant Marsh or the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center as a field technician or an environmental educator.
- Participate in an extended field investigations of major world biomes. Field trip required.
- Educate the public on environmental or conservation issues, or work on environmental campaigns.
- Conduct biological surveys of plants or animals.
- Participate in gardening, farming, nursery management, organic or low-input vegetable production, or landscaping.
- Provide technical assistance and training in natural resource management.

#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.



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Academic Areas: St. Ambrose University's Departments in Biology, Business, Nursing, and Sociology are some examples of areas that offer course related to the agriculture and nutrition. All Departments have a focus on community-based service learning that blends well with the PC Prep preparation process.

If you choose Agriculture, take three courses from one of the following areas:

- o Botany
- o Agricultural Economics
- o Biology
- o Agribusiness
- o Business or economics

Recommended courses include:

- o +Biology 101 Principles of Biology
 - o +Biology 109 Environmental Science
 - o +Biology 123 French Alps
 - o Biology 307 Ecology
 - o Biology 321 Marine Biology in Belize
 - o Biology 321 Tropical Biology in Ecuador
 - o Kinesiology 340 Nutrition Concepts
 - o +Natural Science 105 Introduction to Physical Science
 - o +Natural Science 106 Energy
 - o +Sociology 250 Environmental Sociology
 - o +Sociology 350 Environmental Justice
- (+) indicates a course that also serves as a general education course.

And build 50 hours of related field experience through an activity such as:

- Work in the garden at Jim's Place, helping to redesign gardens to allow for individuals with immobility options to plant, grow, and harvest their own food.
- Intern at FarmTek in Dyersville, IA with their Greenhouse, Aquaponics, or Hydroponics units.
- Work with Dow Agro Science as a Summer Seasonal Maize Research Assistant.
- Establish an internship with a local organic farmer through the Freight House Farmers' Market.
- Work 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.
- Teach or tutor the public in environmental or agricultural issues/activities.
- Work on the business management or marketing side of a commercial farm.



#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.

Academic Areas: St. Ambrose University's Departments in Education, Kinesiology, Psychology, and Sociology are some examples of areas that offer course related to youth development. All Departments have a focus on community-based service learning that blends well with the PC Prep preparation process.

If you choose Youth in Development, take three courses from one of the following areas:

- o Counseling
- o Community Development
- o Developmental Psychology
- o Youth Sport and Kinesiology
- o Family Studies

Recommended courses include:

- o +Education 284 Child and Adolescent Development
- o Kinesiology 125 Physical Education
- o Kinesiology 190 Introduction to Sport Management
- o Kinesiology 216 Exercise and Sport Psychology
- o +Psychology 212 Life-Span Development
- o Psychology 326 Child and Adolescent Psychopathology
- o Psychology 327 Psychology and Treatment of Juvenile Offenders
- o Psychology 205 Human Sexuality
- o Psychology 342 Theories of Counseling
- o Psychology 343 Family Counseling
- o Psychology 348 Field Placement
- o Psychology 384 Advanced Child & Adolescent Psychology
- o Psychology 421 Internship in Forensic Psychology
- o +Sociology 120 Social Problems
- o +Sociology 323 Marriage and the Family
- o +Sociology 326 Medical Sociology

(+) indicates a course that also serves as a general education course.

And build 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as:



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- Volunteer with The Well of Mercy in Chicago, a nonprofit that offers a home and support to single mothers before and after the birth of a child. Students will stay on-site at The Well of Mercy with the 13 mothers and eight children who live there. They will provide childcare, help with cleaning and painting projects, and listen and learn from the women while sharing meals and spending time together.
- Participate in the Program for Assistive Technologies for Underprivileged (PATU) in Brazil. This program allows engineering and occupational therapy students an opportunity to practice engineering skills while they develop strong communication and teamwork skills, gain global perspective, and learn social responsibility through projects for persons with disabilities that otherwise could not afford assistance.
- Organize and participate in the St. Ambrose Dance Marathon. This student-driven event's central cause, after all, is helping children and families receiving long-term treatment at the world-renowned University of Iowa Children's Hospital.
- Teach or counsel in at-risk youth programs.
- Participate in 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.

#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:

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

Recommended courses include:

- +Communication 232 Media and society
- Communication 326 Communication and technology
- Communication 327 Organizational communication
- Communication 340 Global Communications
- Any Computer and information science courses (+CSCI 101)
- +Economics 201 Principles of Macro-Economics
- +Economics 202 Principles of Micro-Economics
- Economics 329 Economic Development and Growth
- Economics 330 Economic Analysis of Institutions (pre-req ECON 202)
- Economics 331 International Economics (pre-req ECON 202)

- o Marketing 209 Principles in Marketing
- o Marketing 216 Entrepreneurship and innovation
- o Marketing 233 Operations and supply chain management
- o Marketing 318 Social Entrepreneurship
- o Marketing 349/International studies 322-International Marketing



(+) indicates a course that also serves as a general education course.

*And build 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as:*

- Work with local non-profit agencies find ways to strategically enhance their visibility and increase their funding support through the College of Business.
- Participate with the College of Business’s service learning by volunteering in shelters, schools and social work agencies to put concepts of teamwork into practice through the unglamorous tasks community volunteers do daily for the area’s underserved populations.
- Work with businesses, organizations, or cooperatives in accounting, finance, microfinance, management, project management, budgeting, or marketing.
- Start and run your own business or other entrepreneurial activity.
- Train others in computer literacy, maintenance, and repair.
- Website design or online marketing.
- Found or lead a community- or school-based organization.

***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 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!



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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. Please note if you participate in a substantive intercultural experience (e.g. a studying or volunteering abroad or service learning related to welcoming new immigrants/refugees and helping them acculturate to the US, volunteering in diverse schools). Each distinct intercultural experience must last at least 40 hours, which can be substituted for one elective. This decision will be made via discussions with your advisor.

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

- International Studies 101 Cultures of the World
- Philosophy 207 Ethics
- Philosophy 210 Social/Political Philosophy
- Philosophy 302 Peace and Justice Seminar
- Philosophy 343 Ethics of Peace and Nonviolence
- +Political Science 130 Global Issues
- Political Science 319 Comparative Politics
- +Psychology 203 Psychology of Gender
- Psychology 205 Human Sexuality
- Psychology 306 Social Psychology
- +Sociology 120: Social problems
- +Sociology 210: Cultural Anthropology
- +Sociology 220: Self and Society
- Theology 250 Introduction to comparative religion
- Theology 310 Social Justice
- Theology 316 Justice and Peace in Comparative Religions
- Theology 321 Theologies of Liberation

- +Women and Gender Studies
201 Cross-cultural WGS



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(+) indicates a course that also serves as a general education course.+

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| ● Education 300 The Pluralistic Classroom | ● +Sociology 365 Social stratification and inequality |
| ● Kinesiology 335 Sport in Society | ● +Sociology 375 Conflict resolution |
| ● Management 338 Diversity and Gender in the Workplace | ● Theology 304 Reconciliation and Peacebuilding in Northern Ireland |
| ● +Political Science 306 Model UN | ● +Women and Gender Studies 210 Latina Literature and Culture |
| ● +Political Science 313 Foreign Policy of the US | ● +Women and Gender Studies 315 Latin American Women's Issues |
| ● Psychology 342 Theories of counseling | |
| ● +Sociology 325 Sex and Gender | |

(+) indicates a course that also serves as a general education course.

Is there another course in the catalog that you feel meets this requirement? Please discuss it with your advisor and make recommendations to 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



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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 the St. Ambrose University Career Center.
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at the St. Ambrose University Career Center.
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.