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, or “learning objectives,” 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 identify the type of assignments in which you’d like to serve at www.peacecorps.gov/openings/, then review the positions’ desired qualifications and build them up accordingly. In the process, you should fulfill these PC Prep experiential 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 + 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!*

**NOTE:** For any of the six sectors below, check out the URI Clearinghouse for Volunteers for a list of over 80 locations that offer opportunities for students to get experience.

http://web.uri.edu/experience/volunteer/serve/

Or look at the specific list of internship opportunities listed under your major of interest.

http://web.uri.edu/experience/internship-credit-by-major/

#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
- English or Linguistics
- TESOL
- Math
- Computer Science
- Engineering
- 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.
Tutoring opportunities are available in the ACE English Language Institute on the URI campus.
The URI Child Development Center on campus offers opportunities for URI students to work with pre-kindergarten aged children.
The URI Mentor-Tutor Internship Program has placements as ESL tutors.

#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 Studies
- Environmental or Biomedical Engineering
- Nutrition or Dietetics
- Pharmacy
- Biology

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

#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
- Natural Resources or Wildlife Management
- Geology or Oceanography or Marine Sciences
- Natural Resources Conservation
- Forestry
- Biology, Botany, or Ecology
- Wildlife Biology

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
- URI’s Coastal Fellowship Program provides undergraduates opportunities to get involved in research and applied outreach efforts focusing on solving current coastal problems

#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:
- Agronomy
- Horticulture
- Botany
- Entomology
- Agricultural Science
- Business or economics
- Biology

And build 50 hours of related field experience through an activity such as:
- Working with a large-scale or family-run business involving vegetable gardening, farming, nursery work, tree planting or care, urban forestry, 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

#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:
- International Development
- Developmental Psychology
- Human Development
- Family Studies
- Health Studies

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

#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
- Entrepreneurial or Global Business Management
- Accounting, Banking or Finance
- Computer Science and related majors
- Graphic Design
- Mass Communications
- International Business

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

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 language

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

*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!

3. **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 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.
You'll take this core course:

- NRS 300 Introduction to Global Issues in Sustainable Development

And choose 2 additional electives from these below:

- AAF 399: Introduction to Multicultural Psychology
- AAF 336: Social Inequality
- AAF 410: Issues in African Development
- AAF 408: African Governments and Politics
- APG 200: Language and Culture
- APG 220: Introduction to the Study of Language
- APG 301: The Anthropology of Nutrition
- APG 309: Anthropology of Religion
- APG 320: Sociolinguistics
- APG 400: Evolution, Culture, and Human Disease
- APG 413: Peoples of the Sea
- ARH 565: Seminar in Cultural Heritage
- AVS 132: Animal Agriculture, Food Policy, and Society
- AVS 390: Wildlife and Human Disease
- BUS 317: International Business Communications Exchange
- BUS 428: Multinational Finance
- BUS 429: Global Investment Management
- BUS 441: Leadership Skills Development
• BUS 448: International Dimensions of Business
• BUS 468: Global Marketing
• COM 322: Gender and Communication
• COM 361: Intercultural Communication
• COM 402: Leadership and Motivation
• COM 461: Managing Cultural Differences in Organizations
• COM 462: Communication and Global Society
• ECN 338: International Economics
• ECN 344: Political Economy of Global Finance
• ECN 386: The Economics of Race, Gender, and Class
• ENG 160: Literatures of the World
• ENG 247: Introduction to Literature of the African Diaspora
• ENG 360: Africana Folk Life
• ENG 364: Contemporary African Literature
• GEO 305: Global Climate Change
• GWS 150: Introduction to Gender and Women's Studies
• GWS 305: Current Issues in Women's Studies
• GWS 310: Race, Class, and Sexuality in Women's Lives
• GWS 325: International Women's Issues
• GWS 386: The Economics of Race, Gender, and Class
• GWS 430: Women and Human Rights Policy
• HDF 203: Introduction to Work with Children
• HDF 357: Family and Community Health
• HDF 412: Historical, Multi-Ethnic, and Alternative Leadership
• HDF 414: Leadership for Activism and Social Change
• HDF 416: Personal and Organizational Leadership
• HDF 434: Children and Families in Poverty
• HPR XXX: Honors Programs courses (list updated each semester, many with global themes)
• NVP 200: Nonviolence and Peace Studies Colloquium
• NVP 500: Theory and Research on Nonviolence and Peace
• VP 425: Peace Psychology
• PHL 210: Women and Moral Rights
• PHL 217: Social Philosophy
• PHL 346: Existential Problems in Human Life
• PHP 143: Sustainable Solutions for Global Health Problems
• PSC 116: Introduction to International Politics
• PSC 403: Global Ecopolitics
• PSC 410: Issues in African Development
• PSC 422: International Political Economy
• PSC 435: Theories of International Conflict
• PSC 431: International Relations
• PSY 103: Towards Self-Understanding
• PSY 384: Cognitive Psychology
• PSY 480: Psychology of Women
• SOC 212: Families in Society
• SOC 214: Urban Sociology
• SOC 240: Race and Ethnic Relations
• SOC 242: Sex and Gender
• SOC 336: Social Inequality
• SOC 413: Gender Inequality
• SOC 444: The Sociology Of Religion
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.

URI provides you with the opportunity to study in more than **200 affiliated study abroad programs in over 60 different countries** that include exchange opportunities with other universities in the USA and its territories. Short-term, semester and year-long programs provide you with a range of exciting options. And you can take classes in almost any area of study for your major, your minor or your general education electives, with offerings in English OR in a foreign language. URI also has over **30 faculty-led programs** during spring, summer and the J-term (January 2 week class), which provide opportunities to immerse yourself in a different culture and get credit towards your degree.

URI students have won prestigious external scholarships and fellowships to support their study abroad experiences. Deadlines are often a full year or more before your departure, so be sure to connect with the URI Office of National Fellowships, located in Lippitt Hall, early in your planning.

### 4. 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 (or any other professional endeavor):

1. Have your **resume** critiqued by someone in URI’s **Center for Career and Experiential Education** web.uri.edu/career/http://web.uri.edu/career/
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at URI’s **Center for Career and Experiential Education.** http://web.uri.edu/career/
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. URI’s **Center for Student Leadership Development** provides guidance about opportunities. A Leadership Studies minor is also offered.