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

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 of 5 to focus on while at Idaho State University, 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 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 as part of an approved education, science, or math major or minor at Idaho State University, such as the following:*

- Elementary, Secondary or Special Education
- English
- Geosciences
- Biological Sciences
- Math and Statistics
- Computer Science
- Engineering
- Math and Statistics
- Geosciences
- Physics
- Geotechnology
- Health Physics

**Recommended courses for non-majors:**

- EDUC 1170 – Tutoring for Reading; EDUC 2210 Peer Tutor Training; EDUC 3330 Elementary Math Methods; EDUC 3331 Elementary Science Methods; SPED 3330 The Exceptional Child; SPED 3340 Principles of Behavior Management; SPED 3350 Creating Inclusive Classrooms
- MATH 2256 Structure of Arithmetic for Elementary School Teachers; MATH 1143 College Algebra; MATH 1144 Trigonometry; MATH 1147
- BIOL 1101 and 1101L Biology 1; BIOL 1102 and 102L Biology 2; BIOL 2221 and BIOL 2221L Introductory Microbiology; BIOL 3301 and 3301L Anatomy and Physiology; CHEM 1101 Intro to General Chemistry; CHEM 1111 and CHEM1111L General Chemistry 1; PHYS 1100 Essentials of Physics; PHYS 1111 General Physics
- Any 3 courses in Engineering

**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
- Serving as a peer tutor in the Writing or Math Center in Student Success
- Classroom experience while studying abroad

#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 3 courses as part of an approved health professions, science, or engineering major or minor at Idaho State University, such as the following:

- Nursing
- Dietetics
- Health Education
- Biological Sciences
- Engineering
- Emergency Management
- Health Science
- Spanish for Health Professions

Recommended courses for non-majors:

- HE 2200 Promoting Wellness; HE 2211 Health Education Methods Elementary; HE 2221 Introduction to Health Education; HE 3340 and HE 3340L Fitness and Wellness Programs;
- NTD 1139 Consumer Nutrition; NTD 2239 Nutrition; NTD 3360 Nutrition Through the Lifecycle; NTD 4407 Principles of Community Nutrition; NTD 4408 Application in Community Nutrition
- BIOL 1101 and 1101L Biology 1; BIOL 1102 and 102L Biology 2; BIOL 2221 and BIOL 2221L Introductory Microbiology; BIOL 3301 and 3301L Anatomy and Physiology
- Any 3 courses in Civil and Environmental Engineering

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
- Participate in faculty led abroad trips focused on public health education and humanitarian relief; any dietetics or public health internships towards the major will work here as well
- Consider joining ISU’s Public Health Student Association for opportunities to join in group service-learning projects focused on community health

#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 3 environment or conservation-related courses as part of an approved science, or engineering major or minor at Idaho State University, such as the following:

- Biological Sciences
- Engineering
- Geology
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
- Urban garden projects with Dr. Jeff Hill
- Work with organizations such as: Utah Conservation Corps, Idaho Conservation Corps, the Student Conservation Association, or an internship with local and state government offices focused on natural resource management

#4 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 taken as part of an approved social work or psychology major or minor at Idaho State University, such as the following:

- Social Work
- Psychology

Recommended courses for non-majors:
- PSYC 1101 Introduction to General Psychology
- PSYC 2200 Child Abuse
- PSYC 2211 Personality and Adjustment
- PSYC 2225 Child Development
- PSYC 3332 Psychology of Adolescence
- SOWK 2271 Introduction to Social Work
- SOWK 2272 Human Behavior and the Social Environment

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
- Interning or volunteering in organizations serving youth or families – YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Bannock Youth Foundation, and Southeastern Idaho Community Action Agency

#5 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 3 courses as part of an approved business major or minor at Idaho State University, such as the following:

- Business
- Economics
- Finance
- Computer Science
- Accounting
- Graphic Design
- Mass Communications
- Computer Science
- Graphic Design

Recommended courses for non-majors:

- BA 1110 The World of Business
- BA 2203 Issues in Business
- ECON 1100 Economic Issues
- ECON 2202 Principles of Microeconomics
- FIN 1115 Personal Finance
- FIN 3303 Financial Concepts
- CMP 2231 Introduction to Graphic Design
- CMP 2241 Introduction to Public Relations

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
- Work with Beta Alpha Psi’s Volunteer Income Tax Assistance
- A project or business plan through CEED

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. Here at ISU, you have the option to study Russian and Arabic, which would be of benefit for placements in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, or North Africa.

  *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:**
- GLBL 2202 The World Today: Intro to Global Issues
- GLBL 3301 Gender and International Politics
- POLS 3350 Minority Politics
- SOC 2201 Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies
- SOC 2248 Critical Analysis of Social Diversity
- GLBL /POLS 3399 Intro to Cultural Geography

**And choose 2 additional electives from the above list or these below:**
- ANTH/ENGL 2212 Introduction to Folklore and Oral Tradition
- ANTH 2258 Native American History
- ANTH 2237 Peoples and Cultures of the Old World
- ANTH 2238 Peoples and Cultures of the New World
- ANTH 2239 Latino Peoples and Cultures
- ANTH 2250 Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology
- CMLT 2207 Contemporary European Culture
- CMLT 2208 Cultures of the Spanish Speaking World
- CMLT 2209 Cultures of East Asia
- CSD 2256 Deaf Culture and Community
- EDUC 2204 Families Community Culture
- GLBL 3300 Travel and Study Abroad
- HIST 2249 World Regional Geography
- HIST 2251 Latin American History
- HIST 2252 East Asian History
- HIST 2254 Middle East History and Culture
- HIST 2255 African History and Culture
- PHIL 2210 Introduction to Asian Philosophies
- SCPY 1001 Psychology of Diversity and Learning in Schools

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

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 Career Center.
2. Participate in a mock interview with a Career Counselor.
3. Develop at least one significant leadership experience: 1) Enroll in IS 3350 International Symposium and help organize the Frank Church Symposium in the Spring; or, 2) lead a work or volunteer project, or serve on the executive board of a student organization.