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Peace Corps Prep Guide

Peace Corps AND **UCEAP**

UCEAP has partnered with the Peace Corps to offer a program that will prepare you for international development fieldwork and potential Peace Corps service. To meet the goals of the program, 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 and provides specific examples from your campus. **Use this guide to map out your UCEAP 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.** Relevant undergraduate coursework, training, and experiences completed prior to your application can be used to fulfill PC Prep requirements. Be sure to include them in your application.

1. Training and experience in a specific work sector

3 APPROVED COURSES + 50 HOURS RELATED EXPERIENCE + REFLECTIVE ESSAY

Leveraging concrete knowledge and skills is central to on-the-ground international development work. Through this Peace Corps 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.

Detailed below are six sectors in which Peace Corps Volunteers serve. Choose one sector to focus on and complete at least **3 courses** that align with that 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** at home or abroad in that same sector—preferably in a teaching or outreach capacity—and write a **reflection essay** (500 words minimum) about it. While you should include a description of your position and responsibilities, the majority of the essay should focus on how your experience prepared you for your chosen work sector. Your campus Peace Corps recruiter may be able to read it over and provide feedback.

✓ 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, then review the positions' required and desired qualifications and build them up accordingly. In the process, you should fulfill these PC Prep experiential requirements. Please 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.

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:

Education

English or Linguistics

TEFL/TESL

Mathematics

Computer Science

Engineering

Any Physical or Bioglogical Science

APPLICABLE COURSES AT UCD:

EDU 110. Educational Psychology

EDU 142. Introduction to Environmental Education

EDU 180A. Computers in Education

EDU 183. Teaching High School Mathematics

LIN 180. Second Language Learning and Teaching

And **build 50 hours of related field experience** through an activity such as teaching in a classroom, with a community outreach organization, or in a formal tutoring capacity. Teaching subjects may include English as a Foreign/Second Language, special education, drama, or a STEM subject.

EXAMPLES OF APPLICABLE ACTIVITIES AT YOUR CAMPUS AND WITH UCEAP:

Volunteering as a CSRC tutor and mentor K-12 students at the Davis School for Independent Study

Teaching English to Thai school children as part of an internship when you study abroad at [Thammasat University](#) in Bangkok, Thailand

Volunteering to teach English to Russian school children in St. Petersburg as part of the [Russian Area Studies](#) program

♥ 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 FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Nursing

Nutrition or Dietetics

Health Education

Health Sciences

Biological Sciences

Environmental or Sanitary Engineering

APPLICABLE COURSES AT UCD:

NUT 118. Community Nutrition

PSC 126. Health Psychology

SPH 162. Health Advocates Peer Educator Training

STS 129. Health and Medicine in the Global Context

And **build 50 hours of related field experience** through an activity such as volunteering or working 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. Other activities include health-related counseling or teaching.

EXAMPLES OF APPLICABLE ACTIVITIES AT YOUR CAMPUS AND WITH UCEAP:

Working as a resident advisor in a dormitory, as a peer nutritionist, or as a sexually transmitted infections counselor

Volunteering with the UC Davis Medical Center Trauma Prevention and Outreach Program

Participating in service learning in Oaxaca as part of the [Family and Community Health program](#) in Mexico

Interning with a public health NGO as part of the [Community Public Health program](#) at the University of Botswana

✓ 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.

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 COURSES FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Environmental Science

Natural Resources Conservation

Wildlife Biology

Natural Resources or Wildlife Management

Forestry

Biology, Botany, or Ecology

Earth Sciences

APPLICABLE COURSES AT UCD:

ANT 103. Indigenous Peoples and Natural Resource Conservation

EBS 144. Groundwater Hydrology

ECI 143. Green Engineering Design and Sustainability

ENH 160. Restoration Ecology

ESM 108. Environmental Monitoring

ESP 101. Ecology, Nature, and Society

And **build 50 hours of related field experience** through an activity such as educating the public on environmental or conservation issues, working on environmental campaigns, or providing technical assistance and training in natural resource management. Other activities include conducting biological surveys of plants or animals, gardening, farming, nursery management, organic or low-input vegetable production, or landscaping.

EXAMPLES OF APPLICABLE ACTIVITIES AT YOUR CAMPUS AND WITH UCEAP:

Providing technical assistance and training in natural resource management

Interning with the Sacramento Tree Foundation as an Urban Ecology Intern

Completing a capstone research project as part of the Pacific Island Environmental & Community Health program in the Solomon Islands

Conducting tropical biology research as part of the Tropical Biology and Conservation program in Costa Rica

🌱 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 3 COURSES FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Agronomy

Horticulture

Botany

Entomology

Agricultural Science

Agribusiness

Agricultural Economics

Environmental Science

Biology

APPLICABLE COURSES AT UCD:

EBS 145. Irrigation and Drainage Systems

ENH 102. Physiological Principles in Environmental Horticulture

IAD 142. Equipment and Technology for Small Farms

PLS 101. Agriculture and the Environment

PLS 150. Sustainability and Agroecosystem Management

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. Other activities include teaching or tutoring the public in environmental or agricultural issues/activities and working on the business management or marketing side of a commercial farm.

EXAMPLES OF APPLICABLE ACTIVITIES AT YOUR CAMPUS AND WITH UCEAP:

Volunteering at the Davis Farm to School's gardens and help with lessons, activities, and maintenance

Interning with an agriculture-focused NGO in Accra while studying abroad at the University of Ghana

✋ 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 information technology.

IF YOU CHOOSE YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT, TAKE 3 COURSES FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Social Work

Counseling

Community Development

Family Studies

Human Development

Development Psychology

APPLICABLE COURSES AT UCD:

CRD 147. Community Youth Development

EDU 163. Guidance and Counseling

HDE 100B. Middle Childhood and Adolescence

HDE 103. Cross-Cultural Study of Children

SPH 161. Campus Alcohol/Drug Abuse Prevention Program Peer Educator Training

And **build 50 hours of related field experience** through an activity such as teaching or counseling in at-risk youth programs. Other activities include planning, organizing, assessing community needs, counseling, and leadership, in areas such as education, youth development, health and HIV/AIDS, the environment, and/or business.

EXAMPLES OF APPLICABLE ACTIVITIES AT YOUR CAMPUS AND WITH UCEAP:

Volunteering as a counselor at Cal Aggie Camp for underprivileged youth in the Davis and Sacramento communities

Interning full-time at a community development or children's rights organization as part of the [Semester in Mumbai with Internship program](#)

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 DEVELOPMENT, TAKE 3 COURSES FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Business or Public Administration

Nonprofit Management

Accounting, Banking or Finance

Computer Science and related majors

Graphic Design

Mass Communications

International Business

ANT 126A. Anthropology of Development

CRD 156. Community Economic Development

CRD 180. Transnational Community Development

DES 148. Visual Communication: Graphic Design Studies

MGT 100. Introduction to Financial Accounting

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 (including website design and online marketing). Other activities include starting and running your own business or other entrepreneurial activity, founding or leading a community- or school-based organization, and training others in computer literacy, maintenance, and repair.

EXAMPLES OF APPLICABLE ACTIVITIES AT YOUR CAMPUS AND WITH UCEAP:

Volunteering in the Technology Lab at the Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services to assist clients in building their literacy and computer skills

Assisting an NGO with graphic design as part of an internship when you study abroad at Fudan University

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 Peace Corps Prep curriculum.

Peace Corps Prep minimum language course requirements align with those needed by applicants to the Peace Corps itself, which vary by linguistic region. This requirement can also be fulfilled by a letter of proficiency from a professor or a score of intermediate or higher on a placement test.

LATIN AMERICA: Individuals wanting to serve in Spanish-speaking countries must apply with strong intermediate proficiency. This typically means completing **one year of college-level Spanish**

WEST AFRICA: Individuals wanting to serve in French-speaking African countries should be proficient in French or Portuguese, usually through **one intermediate or higher 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 helpful to have taken at least **one foreign language class**.

3. Intercultural competence

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 introspective courses and a term studying abroad 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.

Study abroad can be a beneficial precursor to service abroad in many ways. It can foster resilience, self-sufficiency, and global awareness and prepares you for the intercultural realities inherent to Peace Corps service. **Study abroad with UCEAP** for at least one term and write a **reflection essay** (500 words minimum) on how living in and interacting with another culture has prepared you to build relationships and integrate yourself into a new community. Your campus Peace Corps recruiter may be able to read it over and provide feedback.

Take at least **one diversity and inclusion course** to help you increase cultural self- and other-understanding, building your 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).

APPLICABLE COURSES AT UCD:

- CMN 123: Intercultural Communication
- WMS 170. Queer Studies
- WMS 175. Gender and Experience of Race
- SOC 128. Interracial Interpersonal Dynamics

Take at least **two global or area studies courses** such as international development, area studies (i.e., Black studies, Chican@ studies, Middle East studies, etc.), the economics of poverty, peace studies, cultural anthropology, world literature, etc. Global/area studies course 2 can also be fulfilled by studying abroad for a term on a UCEAP program in a [country](#) that has at some point hosted Peace Corps Volunteers.

APPLICABLE COURSES AT UCD:

- SAS 121. Global Poverty: Critical Thinking and Taking Action
- WMS 182. Globalization, Gender and Culture
- ANT Contemporary Societies and Cultures of Latin America
- AAS 110. West African Social Organization

✓ PEACE CORPS TIP

Prolonged intercultural experiences—such as 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 + ONLINE PRESENCE

Peace Corps service and similar international development work opportunities are highly professional and selective. PC Prep requires **four specific activities** that will strengthen your candidacy for the Peace Corps (or any other professional endeavor).

Have your **resume** critiqued by an advisor at the Internship and Career Center.

Attend an **Interview Basics workshop** at the Internship and Career Center.

Complete at least one significant **leadership experience** (such as organizing a campus event, leading a work or volunteer project, or serving on the executive board of a student organization) and write a **reflection essay** (500 words minimum). While you should include a description of your leadership activity, the majority of the essay should focus on how your experience has prepared you to partner with communities to make a difference. Your campus Peace Corps recruiter may be able to read it over and provide feedback.

Using your reflection essays and resume, develop an **e-portfolio** or **LinkedIn profile** to highlight your experience, skills, and qualifications in your chosen work sector.

Alumni Mentoring

Although not required, you are strongly encouraged to sign up for the UCEAP alumni mentoring program. You will be paired with an alum that is currently serving in Peace Corps or who is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer. This is a wonderful opportunity to hear about their Peace Corps experience, ask for advice, and learn how they transitioned from Peace Corps to career.

If you are considering applying to Peace Corps, we suggest that you meet with UCD's Peace Corps recruiter before you apply to discuss your application and any questions you might have.