



Channel Islands
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY



Peace
Corps

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 (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:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ○ Education | ○ Liberal Studies | ○ Computer Science |
| ○ Liberal Studies | ○ Math | ○ Any Physical or Biological Science |
| ○ Spanish | ○ Early Childhood Education | |

Recommended courses

- EDUC 101: Introduction to Elementary Schooling (Service Learning—SL)
- ECS 101: Introduction to Early Childhood Education
- EDUC/CHS 445: Chicano Child and Adolescent (SL)
- MATH 318: Mathematics for Secondary School Teachers (SL)
- LS 300: Liberal Studies Service Learning
- ECS 310: Science Technology Engineering Art and Math in Early Childhood
- SPAN 425: Spanish Language Teaching and Learning

*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.
- Information about community organizations in need of tutors is available through CI's Center for Community Engagement. You can find the CCE in Ojai Hall or at <https://www.csuci.edu/servicelearning/index.htm>
- Participation in the annual CI Science Carnival hosted for elementary-age children
- Participation in the [HLI Internship program](#) in a related area.
- A resource for finding opportunities is **UNITED WAY VOLUNTEER DATABASE**. Volunteer today using the [easy-to-search online database](#) provided by United Way of Ventura County. This resource and others are available through CI's Center for Community Engagement.
- CI's Career Services website offers several searchable databases for internships: <https://www.csuci.edu/careerdevelopment/services/studentjobs.htm>

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 Sciences
- Communication
- Biology
- Environmental Science and Resource Management

Recommended courses:

- HLTH 102: Community Health Organizations and Their Functions
- HLTH 301: Introduction to Public Health Administration
- BIOL 333: Emerging Public Health Issues
- CHS/COMM/HLTH/NRS 343: Health Issues in the Latina/o Community (Service Learning—SL)
- COMM 355 Cross Cultural Communication in Health
- COMM/NRS 441: Health Communication (SL)
- HLTH/NRS 331: Nutrition and Culture
- ESRM 328: Introduction to Geographic Information Systems
- BIOL 432: Principles of Epidemiology and Environmental Health

*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
- Participation in the HLI internship program in a related area
- Working as a resident advisor in a dormitory, as a peer nutritionist, or as a sexually transmitted infections counselor. For work in Housing at CI, please visit <https://www.csuci.edu/housing/employment-involvement/index.htm>
- Significant experience in mechanical repairs, construction, carpentry, masonry, plumbing, hydrology, or set design; experience with the latter may be available through CI's Performing Arts Program
- A resource for finding opportunities is **UNITED WAY VOLUNTEER DATABASE**. Volunteer today using the easy-to-search online database provided by United Way of Ventura County.

- CI Career Services website offers a searchable database for internships:
<https://www.csuci.edu/careerdevelopment/services/studentjobs.htm>

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 and Resource Management | ○ Biology |
| | ○ Communication |
| | ○ Political Science |

Recommended courses:

- ESRM 100: Introduction to Environmental Science and Resource Management (Service Learning—SL)
- ESRM 200: Principles of Resource Management, Conservation, and Stewardship
- ESRM 205: Principles of Sustainability
- BIOL/ESRM 313: Conservation Biology
- ESRM 329: Environmental Law and Policy
- ESRM/POLS 340: Politics of the Environment
- HIST/ESRM 342: Environmental History
- COMM/ESRM/POLS 450: Environmental Conflict Resolution
- ESRM 463: Water Resources Management
- ESRM 464: Land Use Planning and Open Space Management (SL)
- BIOL 453: Methods in Population and Community Ecology
- COMM/ESRM 443: Environmental Communication

*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
- A resource for finding opportunities is **UNITED WAY VOLUNTEER DATABASE**. Volunteer today using the [easy-to-search online database](#) provided by United Way of Ventura County

- CI's Career Services website has several searchable databases for internship opportunities: <https://www.csuci.edu/careerdevelopment/services/studentjobs.htm>
- For more information about volunteer opportunities related to sustainability on campus, visit the Sustainability Task Force site: <https://www.csuci.edu/sustainability/>

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 | ○ Agricultural Science | *All of the above are offered within Biology at CI |
| ○ Horticulture | ○ Agribusiness | |
| ○ Botany | | |
| ○ Entomology | | |
| | | ○ Business or economics |

Recommended courses:

- BIOL 311: Plant Biology
- BIOL 319: Plant Systematics and Identification
- BIOL 473: Sustainable Agriculture
- BIOL 471: Soil Science
- BIOL 475: Apiculture and Bee Biology
- BIOL 495: Agriculture Internship (focused on pest control)

*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

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:

- Sociology
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Education
- Communication
- Environmental Science and Resource Management
- Health Sciences
- Chicana/o Studies

Recommended courses:

- SOC 201: Social Problems
- COMM/ESRM/POLS 450: Environmental Conflict Resolution
- POLS 334: Peace Studies
- SOC 309: Topics in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies
- ENGL/GEND 433: Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Studies
- EDUC/SOC 333: Education and Social Inequalities
- CHS/PSYCH 383: Chicana/o Latina/o Identity and Empowerment
- ART 102: Multicultural Children's Art
- SOC 410: Sociology of Gender
- FJS 340: Exploring Freedom and Justice
- CHS/NRS 356: Vulnerable Populations
- POLS 426: Politics of Developing Countries

*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
- Participation in the HLI internship program
- CI's Career Services website has several searchable databases for internship opportunities: <https://www.csuci.edu/careerdevelopment/services/studentjobs.htm>

- A resource for finding opportunities is **UNITED WAY VOLUNTEER DATABASE**. Volunteer today using the [easy-to-search online database](#) provided by United Way of Ventura County.

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 | ○ Accounting or Finance | ○ Social Business |
| ○ Public Administration | ○ Computer Science | ○ Political Science |
| ○ Nonprofit Management | ○ Communication | |

Recommended courses:

- BUS/COMM/POLS 333: Nonprofit Management (Service Learning—SL)
- POLS 320: Public Administration
- BUS 320: Business Operations
- BUS 110: Business Law
- POLS/FIN 321: Public Budgeting
- BUS/ECON/SOC 203: Introduction to Social Business
- BUS/ECON/SOC 301: Social Business Planning (SL)
- COMP 102: Web 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
- Participation in the [HLI internship program](#) in a related area
- CI's Career Development website has several searchable databases for internship opportunities: <https://www.csuci.edu/careerdevelopment/services/studentjobs.htm>
- Center for Community Engagement periodic activities to participate in include:
 - FARMWORKER IMMERSION PROJECT teaches students about farmworker rights and immigration issues through a first-hand experience of typical farm work life in Ventura County.

--STREET STORES are a pop-up shopping experience for those in need. Held each semester in the community, clothing donations are collected and distributed with customer service and compassion.

**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!

**CSU Channel Islands currently only offers language through the intermediate level in Spanish. However, students can take introductory courses in French, Arabic, and Chinese, and complete the requirements at local community colleges or during Study Abroad.

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:

- COMM 321: Intercultural Communication
- GLST 200: Introduction to Global Studies

- POLS 306: Politics of Race and Ethnicity
- CHS 200: Diversity in Latina/o Communities

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

- UNIV 392: International Experience
- SOC 360: Race and Ethnicity
- PSY/CHS 383: Chicana/o Latina/o Identity and Empowerment
- POLS 334: Peace Studies
- SOC 309: Topics in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies
- COMM 355: Cross Cultural Communication in Health
- ENG/GEND 433: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual/Transgender Studies
- HIST 451: History of Africa since 1800
- HIST 452: History of Southern Africa since 1600
- HIST 380: History of the Pacific Islands
- HIST 360: History of Colonial Latin America
- HIST 361: History of Modern Latin America

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.

- **Optional: Intercultural experience in place of elective(s).**
 - **Studying or volunteering abroad** may count *if* you visit a country that has at some point hosted Peace Corps Volunteers (see the list of current and past countries [here](http://www.peacecorps.gov/countries) [www.peacecorps.gov/countries]).
 - Studying/volunteering abroad in these countries from one week to a summer may substitute for one course.
 - Experiences that last a full semester or the one-year CSUIP programs may substitute for both electives.

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 Career Development Services: <https://www.csuci.edu/careerdevelopment/services/resume-resources.htm>
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at Career Development Services: <https://www.csuci.edu/careerdevelopment/services/workshops/>
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.

There may be opportunities in your coursework to organize events. For example, for the GLST 499 course, Global Studies Majors have to organize an event on campus or the broader community that serves to raise awareness of a global issue.

There are a number of student leadership programs through Career Development, such as workshops and presentations. Read about them and sign up here: <https://www.csuci.edu/careerdevelopment/studentleadership/>

The Student Clubs and Organizations office on campus provides opportunities and support to students to develop leadership skills. Go to <https://www.csuci.edu/clubs-organizations/>

The Center for Community Engagement has seed grants for students working to "grow" a social action project or program that would benefit or create change on campus or in the community. Creating a project and carrying it out is a great way to hone leadership skills. SEED grants are available up to \$500. For more information visit the [application page](#).