



PREP

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.

UMass Boston offers a wide range of volunteer and internship options, and we've only highlighted a few of them here. For more ideas, visit the Office of Career Services & Internships (https://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/career_services/students) in the Campus Center, First Floor, Suite 1300, call them at 617-287-5519, or email them at careers@umb.edu.

If you've already done volunteering or paid work related to one of the six work sectors (see below), you are welcome to create your own paid or unpaid opportunity in that sector. For example, if you interned with a community-based organization while you were in high

school, and would like to continue working with them to fulfill your Peace Corps Prep work requirement, explain that below.

You can also talk to the Peace Corps Prep Coordinator, Kaitlyn Siner-Cappas, about options.

***Peace
Corps
Tip!***

If you intend to apply to the Peace Corps, the best way to ensure 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:

<http://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](http://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/) (www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/) in which Peace Corps Volunteers serve—detailed below. **Choose one sector to focus on**, and then complete at least 3 courses + 50 hours of related experience in that sector.

For each sector, we have listed some examples of organizations in Boston where you could choose to do your 50 hours of service. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but gives concrete examples of the kinds of work you could do around your sector of choice. We also encourage you to research other organizations and to contact those that feel especially aligned with your interests and goals.

You are not limited to the courses we list below. Those are intended as a guide, but there are many additional UMass Boston courses that may fulfill the Peace Corps Prep requirements. In fact, we found 188 undergraduate courses that have relevance to these six sectors—and there may be more. We've listed only our top recommendations here. The Peace Corps Prep coordinator, and your academic advisor, can weigh in on your course choices, so be sure to consult with them.

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:

- Elementary, Secondary or Special Education
- English
- Math
- Computer Science
- Engineering
- Physics or Biology

Recommended courses:

- **Elementary, Secondary or Special Education:**
 ECHD101T, Foundations of Early Intervention and Education for All Young Children
 EDCU230, Inclusion K-12
 EDCU246/346, Reading Development and Instruction in the Elementary Classroom I/II
 EDCU403, Creation of Effective Learning Environments G1-6
 EDCU406, Sociocultural Perspectives: Building School, Family, and Community Relationships
 EDCU419, Designing Science Methods for Children
 EDCU425, Curriculum Development for Elementary Classrooms
- **English:** Any three English courses numbered 200 or above.
- **Math:** Any three Math courses.
- **Computer Science:** Any three Computer Science courses.
- **Engineering:** Any three Engineering courses.
- **Physics and Biology:** Any three Physics or Biology courses.

*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.
 - You may gain experience teaching English as a Second Language through organizations such as the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center or United South End Settlements. Other local options include 826 Boston, a nonprofit youth writing and publishing organization; and the Community-University Project for Literacy, through which UMass Boston students tutor in community-based learning centers while attending a credit-bearing seminar on campus.

#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 across the following areas:

- [Nursing](#)
- [Community Development](#)
- [Nutrition or Dietetics](#)
- Global Affairs

Recommended courses:

- **Nursing**

NURSNG212, Health Promotion and Teaching

- **Nutrition**

EHS150, Introduction to Nutrition

- **Community Development**

CDVCTR210, Community Health & Environment

CDVCTR310, Social Determinants of Health

CDVCRT410, Socioeconomic Inequalities in Health

- **Global Affairs**

GLBAFF311, Global Health Issues

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
- Examples: 1) The Louis D. Brown Peace Institute supports families and communities impacted by murder, trauma, grief, and loss. You might help to organize their annual Mother's Day Walk for Peace, or work with families to connect them with resources and to deliver program supports. 2) Samaritans is a nonprofit focused on reducing the incidence of suicide. You could choose to provide crisis services or grief support through their 24-hour hotline, or help organize an event to raise awareness around suicide prevention.

#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 across the following areas:

- Environmental Science
- Management
- Community Development

Recommended courses:

- **Environmental Science**

ENVSCI101, The Global Environment

ENVSCI109, Cultural Geography

ENVSCI115, Introduction to Environmental Science

ENVSCI122, Introduction to Environmental Policy and Management

ENVSCI187S/188S, First Year Seminar in Environmental Science I-II

ENVSCI225, Weather and Climate

ENVSCI226, Introduction to Oceanography

- **Management**

MGT481I, Introduction to Environmental Management and Clean Energy

- **Community Development**

CDVCTR210, Community Health and Environment

CDVCTR355, Global Community Economic Development

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
- Examples: 1) Clean Water Action is a nonprofit that organizes strong grassroots groups and coalitions to protect public health, economic well-being, and community quality of life. You could become a community field organizer and neighborhood canvasser, plan an event to raise funds or awareness, or conduct research and advocacy on the organization's behalf. 2) The National Park Service Boston Harbor Islands Program runs an internship program related to ecosystem protection, management, and restoration. If

you become an intern, you will conduct a specific project and produce a product such as a technical report, GIS data set, or associated maps. You can also assist with a range of projects to explore a potential career with the National Park Service. If you're interested in this option, contact Elizabeth Boyle in the School for the Environment: elizabeth.boyle@umb.edu.

#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.

UMass Boston does not offer a major or minor in agriculture, so we recommend choosing one of the other sectors instead. However, if you have a strong interest in agriculture, we can work with you to incorporate that into your Peace Corps Prep program.

We have listed classes below from several departments that are relevant to a career in agriculture. If you have access to a car, you may instead choose to take three classes from the UMass Amherst Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment (<https://ag.umass.edu>).

Please discuss options with the Peace Corps Prep coordinator if you want agriculture to be your sector of focus.

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

- Anthropology
- Biology
- Community Development
- Environmental Science

Recommended courses:

- **Anthropology**

ANTH113G, Food and Society

- **Biology**

BIOL108, Introduction to Nutrition

- **Community Development**

CDVCTR210, Community Health and Environment

CDVCTR355, Global Community Economic Development

- **Environmental Science**

ENVSCI101, The Global Environment

ENVSCI115, Introduction to Environmental Science

ENVSCI122, Introduction to Environmental Policy and 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
- Teaching or tutoring the public in environmental or agricultural issues/activities
- Working on the business management or marketing side of a commercial farm
- You may also wish to get involved with one of the many food justice organizations in Boston. Examples: 1) Fresh Truck is a mobile fruit and vegetable market that brings fruits and vegetables to Boston communities that do not have consistent access to healthy food. In addition to its produce sales, Fresh Truck also conducts education in these communities, demonstrating easy and low-cost ways to cook healthy meals. 2) The Food Project engages youth and families in accessing nutritious food through ventures such as building raised-bed gardens at local schools and providing support to run the gardens.

#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
- Psychology
- Youth Work Center

Recommended courses:

- **Sociology**

SOCIOL101, Introduction to Sociology

SOCIOL281, Society and the Individual

- **Psychology**

PSYCH100/101, Introduction to Psychology

PSYCH230, Social Psychology

o **Youth Work Center**

YTHCTR220, Understanding Youth: Youth Identity, Growth, Development

YTHCTR320, Models of Practice in Youth Work: Models of Practice with Urban Youth

YTHCTR340, Analyzing a Youth Issue

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
- Examples: 1) Strong Women Strong Girls is a curriculum-based mentoring organization supporting girls in under-resourced communities. You could become a mentor, running a weekly group mentoring session for girls in grades 3-5. If you're interested in this option, contact the Office of Student Leadership and Community Engagement: oslce@umb.edu, 617-287-6077. 2) The3PointFoundation provides teaching, mentoring, and inspiration to boys, using the lessons learned from basketball to empower the boys to reach their full potential. You could facilitate a weekly middle-school group, or work with the youth to design an anti-violence summit. You have the option to take part in a service-learning course related to this organization. For more information, contact Joan Arches in the College of Education and Human Development: Joan.Arch@umb.edu.

#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:

- o Computer Science
- o Accounting and Finance
- o Community Development
- o Community Studies Center
- o Management

Recommended courses:

- o **Computer Science**

Any three Computer Science courses.

- o **Accounting and Finance**

Any three Accounting and Finance courses.

- **Community Development**

CDVCTR201, History and Theory of Community Development

CDVCTR210, Community Health and Environment

CDVCTR355, Global Community Economic Development

CDVCTR410, Socioeconomic Inequalities in Health

- **Community Studies Center**

CSTCTR250, Social Organization of Communities

CSTCTR400, Communities in Global Context

CSTCTR430, Economic Issues and Strategies in Contemporary Communities

- **Management (Note that students enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts or the College of Sciences and Mathematics are not usually allowed to enroll in courses in the College of Management. Please talk to the Peace Corps Prep coordinator if this applies to you.)**

MGT130, Introduction to Business

MGT303, Managing Organizations

MGT330, Business Environments and Public Policy

MGT331, Managerial Ethics and Social Issues

MGT401, Introduction to Human Resources Management

MGT402, Labor Relations

MGT421, Management Practices

MGT431, The Legal Environment of Business

MGT434, Managing in the Global Environment

MGT470, Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Organizations

MGT481I, Introduction to Environmental Management and Clean Energy

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
- Examples: 1) Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative is a community-based planning and organizing entity based in Boston's Roxbury and Dorchester neighborhoods. Their mission is neighborhood revitalization through economic, human, physical, and environmental growth. You could support the development of a youth organizing institute, help research and create a community credit union, or assist with developing and conducting a community survey. 2) Catholic Charities of Boston works "to build a just and compassionate society rooted in the dignity of all people." You could contribute by being a volunteer case manager, pre-screening clients for services. You could also serve as a refugee mentor, organize women's workshops for refugee and immigrant communities, mentor or coach youth in the GRE program, or assist adults with computer literacy. 3) St. Mary's Center for Women & Children supports 600 women and children annually with shelter and housing, clinical and education services, job training, and employment placement. You could organize a drive for needed items, plan a fundraising event, provide administrative/office support, or support youth and adult learning programs through tutoring and mentoring.

***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 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 200-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 200-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 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:

- COMM230, Intercultural Communication
- WGS295L/ANTH295L, Introduction to Human Rights
- AFRSTY350L/AMST350L, Race, Class, and Gender: Issues in US Diversity
- ANTH106, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
- WGS110, Gender in Global Context
- WGS150, Women, Culture, and Identity
- WGS290, Legal Rights of Women
- WGS350, Beyond Heterosexuality
- WGS355L, Gender, Development, and Globalization
- WGS360, Gender, Culture, and Power
- WGS376L, Women of Color
- WGS411, Transnational Feminisms
- ASIAN115L, Survey of Contemporary Asia
- ASIAN359L/WGS359L, Women in Modern China
- ANTH272, People and Cultures of Africa
- ANTH273, Peoples and Cultures of Mesoamerica

- ANTH274, Peoples and Cultures of the Caribbean
- AFRSTY113, Islam and the African World
- AFRSTY116, African Civilizations: Historical Perspectives
- AFRSTY117, Modern African Historical Perspectives
- AFRSTY300L, Women in African Cultures
- LATAM100, Native Peoples of South America
- LATAM101, Latin America: Contemporary Society and Culture
- LATAM255L, Gods and Slaves: Latin America before 1800
- LATAM256L, Skyscrapers and Shantytowns: Latin America Since 1800
- LATAM270, Human Rights in Latin America
- LATAM290, Central America: Society and Culture
- LATAM303, Reform and Revolution in Central America
- LATAM340, Latin America in the Age of Globalization
- PCSCOR220, Concepts of Social Justice

Is there another course in the catalog that you feel meets this requirement? Please discuss it with your PC Prep Coordinator.

There are also **16 centers and institutes at UMass Boston that have an intercultural focus**. You can choose to engage in their activities on campus and in the community. If you do this for 40 hours total, your involvement can take the place of one of the electives listed above. Again, discuss with your PC Prep Coordinator if you're interested in this option.

We can give you a full list of these centers upon request. A few examples are the Mauricio Gaston Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, the William Joiner Institute for the Study of War and Social Consequences, and the William Monroe Trotter Center for the Study of Black Culture.

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 Office of Career Services & Internships.
2. Attend a workshop or class on **interview skills** at the Office of Career Services & Internships.

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.