



SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY 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!**

For advising, contact the Co-Directors of Peace Corps Prep Program, Dr. Jonathan Skaff and Ms. Victoria Kerr. Their contact information is on the final page of this guide.

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 that will serve as your concentration in your International Development 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 ensure that you will be a strong candidate is to explore Peace Corps' openings and identify the type of assignments (<https://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/volunteer-openings/>) 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!

There are six sectors (<https://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 50 hours of *related field experience* in that sector. The field experience can take the form of volunteering, an internship, student teaching or paid employment. We recommend locating volunteer opportunities through the Career, Mentoring, and Professional Development Center CMPDC (CUB 108). Student teaching and for-credit internships are tracked in Degree Audit. Hours spent volunteering, being a paid employee, or pursuing a non-credit internship should be logged at the CMPDC.

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 largest program area in the Peace Corps. 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 sub-options that earn credit toward your International Development minor:

- Early Childhood/Elem Ed (restricted to majors)
- English Secondary Ed (restricted to majors)
- Special Education
- Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)
- Elementary/Middle Level Ed (restricted to majors)
- Mathematics Education
- Science/Math Education

Required courses (9 credit hours): See the International Development Minor Requirements Sheet for list of courses for each sub-option.

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 any of the fields listed above.
- Some examples of opportunities in the Shippensburg region are:
 - The Learning Center, provides tutoring for Shippensburg undergraduates
 - Reach Out Service-Learning at Pathways to Learning School in Santo Domingo, DR
 - HIRE ME program: undergraduate volunteers supervise high school students with disabilities in practice work settings around Shippensburg campus
 - PASOS Program: undergraduate volunteers tutor migrant students
 - Chambersburg Hispanic American Center (CHAC)
 - Employment Skills Center in Carlisle, has ESL, Adult literacy, GED programs
 - The Vista School, Hershey
 - Hilltop Academy, Mechanicsburg, Capital Area Intermediate Unit
 - Yellow Breeches Educational Center, various locations
 - Boys and Girls Club of Shippensburg and Chambersburg
 - Franklin County Head Start, Inc.
 - Student teaching or volunteer tutoring in local public schools (*Placements in local public schools need to be coordinated through the Office of Field Experience and*

Partnerships. Prior to the first field placement, students must obtain teaching clearances, including a criminal background check, costing approximately \$125)

#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 sub-options:

- Biology/Pre-Med
- Disability Studies
- Exercise Science

Required courses (9 credit hours): See the International Development Minor Requirements Sheet for list of courses for each sub-option.

*And build 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as:*

- Volunteer or work experience in 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
- Some examples of opportunities at or near Shippensburg are:
 - Shadowing in regional hospitals and medical clinics (Dr. Marcie Lehman and Dr. Alison Fedrow, health professions coordinators, can provide advice to Peace Corps Prep students as they seek out shadowing opportunities)
 - Chambersburg Hospital

#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 sub-options:

- Biology, Botany, or Ecology
- Environmental Science/Geology
- Natural Resources Conservation/Sustainability

Required courses (9 credit hours): See the International Development Minor Requirements Sheet for list of courses for each sub-option.

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
- Some examples of opportunities at or near Shippensburg are:
 - Shippensburg Community Farm
 - King's Gap State Park
 - Geography Earth Science Organization (GESO): engaged in environmental clean-ups and other projects related to sustainability
 - PA Association of State Forests
 - Appalachian Trail Association in Boiling Springs
 - South Mountain Partnership
 - County Conservation Offices in PA
 - Harpers Ferry National Historic Park
 - Middle Spring Watershed Association
 - Volunteering, internships and service-learning at Chincoteague Bay Field Station in Wallops Island, VA, in summers

#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 in this option.

Required courses (9 credit hours): See the International Development Minor Requirements Sheet for list of courses in this option.

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
- Some examples of opportunities at or near Shippensburg are:
 - Shippensburg Community Farm
 - USDA Office in Carlisle
 - Geography Earth Science Organization (GESO)
 - Cumberland or Franklin County Conservation Office

#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 sub-options:

- Family Studies
- Human/Community Development
- Social Work

Required courses (9 credit hours): See the International Development Minor Requirements Sheet for list of courses for each sub-option.

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
- Some examples of opportunities at or near Shippensburg are:
 - Reach Out Service Learning Project at Pathways of Learning School in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
 - Chambersburg Hispanic American Center (CHAC)
 - Shippensburg Parks and Recreation
 - Chambersburg Memorial YMCA
 - Boys and Girls Club of Shippensburg and Chambersburg
 - Girls on the Run
 - Chambersburg Youth Soccer Association
 - Franklin County Head Start, Inc.

#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 Development, take three courses from one of the following sub-options:

- Business
- Accounting, Banking or Finance
- International Business
- Mass Communications
- Public Administration
- Graphic Design
- Computer Science

Required courses (9 credit hours): See the International Development Minor Requirements Sheet for list of courses for each sub-option.

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
- Some examples of opportunities at or near Shippensburg are:
 - Reach Out Service-Learning Project at Pathways of Learning School in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (fundraising committee)
 - VITA – Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (Accounting Club)
 - Enactus Club (annual project, past projects include financial literacy for high school and college students, consulting services for local businesses, and resume writing and interviewing workshops for the homeless and unemployed)
 - Employment Skills Center in Carlisle, has workplace readiness and computer training
 - YWCA of Greater Harrisburg
 - American Red Cross
 - Carlisle CARES
 - The Salvation Army of Carlisle and Chambersburg
 - Women in Need (WIN)
 - Goodwill Keystone Area
 - Drew Michael Taylor Foundation
 - Habitat for Humanity in Franklin County

***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 placement region

International Development Minor Requirement (3 crs.):

- 1 foreign language class at any level (May earn general-education credit)

The International Development Minor's foreign language requirement is meant to show that you have the willingness and ability to learn a foreign language. If you are confident that you can learn a foreign language, you will be willing to pursue a Peace Corps placement that requires a less commonly taught language, such as Khmer (Cambodia) or Wolof (West Africa).

Additional Peace Corps Prep Foreign Language Requirements and Recommendations:

Students seeking to serve in Latin America, West Africa or China should follow these requirements and recommendations to make you a stronger applicant:

- Latin America:** Two 200-level courses of Spanish is the minimum required. A Spanish certificate (12 crs. at 200-level or higher) or Spanish minor (18 crs. at 200-level or higher) is recommended.

- ❑ West Africa: One 200-level course of French is the minimum required. A French certificate (12 crs. at 200-level or higher) or French minor (18 crs. at 200-level or higher) is recommended.

3. Intercultural competence (9 crs.)

3 courses: INT 200 (3 crs) + Global Perspectives (3 crs) + Area Studies (3 crs)

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. Take the required core course plus one global perspectives course and one area studies course:

Required Core Course (3 crs.):

INT 200 Introduction to International Studies

Global Perspectives Elective (3 crs.)

See the International Development Minor Requirements Sheet for list of courses.

Area Studies Elective (3 crs.) *Choose one course in the world area where you would like to serve in the Peace Corps. See the International Development Minor Requirements Sheet for list of courses.*

African & Middle Eastern Studies
Asian Studies
Eastern Europe
Latin American & Caribbean Studies

Is there another course in the catalog or one taken while studying abroad that you feel meets this requirement? Please discuss it with the Director of International Studies. Approved courses require an Exception Form signed by Director of International Studies.

Peace Corps Tip! *Prolonged intercultural experiences—such as studying or volunteering abroad, helping 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 **four specific activities** that will strengthen your candidacy for the Peace Corps (or any other professional endeavor):

1. **Resume:** Set up an appointment with the Career, Mentoring, and Professional Development Center (CMPDC) to review Peace Corps resume guidelines. Have your resume critiqued during a CMPDC one-on-one resume review. Please note all appointments are tracked and logged through SHIP Career Connection (see link below).
2. **Essay:** Set up an appointment with the CMPDC to review Peace Corps essay guidelines. Have your essay critiqued during a CMPDC one-on-one essay document review. Please note all appointments are tracked and logged through SHIP Career Connection.
3. **Interview skills:** Set up an appointment with the CMPDC to review Peace Corps interview guidelines. Perform an online mock interview through Big Interview (see link below) and obtain feedback on interview during a CMPDC one-on-one interview review. Optionally, engage in a professional interview with a Peace Corps Representative at a Career or Study Abroad Fair or local Returned Peace Corps Veteran. Please note all appointments are tracked and logged through SHIP Career Connection.
1. **Leadership Experience:** Commit to at least one significant leadership experience. We recommend serving as one of the following: Officer of Ship Peace Corps Prep Club or another student club/organization, Shippensburg International Studies Ambassador or Study Abroad Ambassador; Admissions office tour guide; New Student Orientation Leader; Resident Assistant or Peer Mentor for a Living /Learning Community within Housing and Residence Life.

HELPFUL WEBSITES:

Career Center Website: <http://career.ship.edu/>

Big Interview: <https://ship.biginterview.com/>

Ship Career Connection: <https://ship.joinhandshake.com/>

For more information or advising, contact the co-directors of the Peace Corps Prep Program:

Dr. Jonathan Skaff, Director of International Studies

Email: ism@ship.edu, Phone: 717-477-1907, Office: Mowrey 246

Ms. Victoria Kerr, Senior Director of Career, Mentoring, and Professional Development Center (CMPDC)

Email: VMBuchbauer@ship.edu, Phone: 717-477-1484, Office: CUB 108