



Peace Corps PREP

Western Illinois University | Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

CORE REQUIREMENTS

Peace Corps Prep is a program that will prepare you for international development fieldwork and potential Peace Corps service. Through PC Prep, you'll integrate coursework, hands-on service and leadership experience, and professional development to build the following four core competencies:

1. Training and experience in a specific work sector

Leveraging concrete knowledge and skills is central to on-the-ground international and community development work. You will need to take at least **3 courses** that build your capacity to work in one of the following six sectors. Additionally, you'll need to accumulate **50 hours of volunteer or work experience in that same sector**, preferably in a teaching or outreach capacity.

- [Education](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Youth in Development](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Agriculture](#)
- [Community Economic Development](#)

2. Foreign language skills

Working across cultures requires verbal and nonverbal languages distinct from your own—skills that are critical to build. PC Prep minimum course requirements vary by desired placement 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 another 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, though it is pointedly helpful to have done so.

3. Intercultural awareness

Cultural sensitivity and agility are tremendously valuable skills in international and community development. In this program, you'll bolster your global awareness through at least **three courses** in such areas as:

- Int'l Development
- African/Asian/Latin or Native American Studies
- Intercultural Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- World Literature

Note: Prolonged intercultural experiences—such as studying/volunteering abroad, supporting new immigrants, or volunteering in diverse schools—also strengthen a candidacy significantly.

4. Professional and leadership development

International and community development is a highly professional sector. It is difficult to break into and demands great initiative and leadership once someone is in it. Students will benefit from such activities as:

1. Consulting with Career Services on **resume writing, interviewing skills, goal setting**.
2. Attending a **workshop** or **seminar** on community development, volunteer recruitment/management, or leadership development.
3. Developing at least one **significant service or leadership experience** and being prepared to discuss it thoughtfully (i.e., serving on an executive board, organizing an event, or leading a project).