

# Peace Corps Prep Program

Begin your journey to working abroad.



**UAB**  
SPARKMAN CENTER FOR  
GLOBAL HEALTH  
The University of Alabama at Birmingham



## Table of Contents

<b>The Peace Corps Prep Student Guide .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Competency 1: Training and Work Sector Experience .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The Education Sector .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Health Sector .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Environment Sector.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The Agriculture Sector .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The Youth in Development Sector .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The Community Economic Development Sector.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Competency 2: Foreign Language Skills .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The Three Placement Regions .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Competency 3: Intercultural Competence .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Courses .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Intercultural Experience.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Competency 4: Professional and Leadership Development ...</b>	<b>14</b>

# The Peace Corps Prep Student Guide

## Overview

The Peace Corps Prep (PCP) 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.

This document explains each of these requirements in detail. Use this guide to map out your PCP course of study. Refer to this when completing your PCP application, where you'll need to document how you plan to fulfill each requirement. Once you have reviewed this guide and made your plan, complete your application!

## Four Core Competencies

- 1. Training and Work Sector Experience**
  - a. 3 courses
  - b. 50 hours of related experience
- 2. Foreign Language Skills**
  - a. Maximum of 2 courses
  - b. Requirements vary by region
- 3. Intercultural Competence**
  - a. 3 approved courses OR
  - b. 1 – 2 courses and substantive intercultural experience
- 4. Professional and Leadership Development**
  - a. Resume feedback
  - b. Interview prep
  - c. Leadership experience

**Questions?** Contact Camryn Durham, the PCP Coordinator at UAB via [cd014@uab.edu](mailto:cd014@uab.edu).

# Competency 1: Training and Work Sector Experience

## 3 Courses + 50 Hours Related Experience

### Overview

Leveraging concrete knowledge and skills is central to on-the-ground, international development work. Through the PCP program, you will begin to build a professional specialty, which should serve you well in your career – whether or not you become a Peace Corps Volunteer.

You need to complete at least 3 courses that align with a specific work sector. These courses might come from your academic major or minor, but do not have to. You also need to accumulate a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer or work experience in the sector you choose, preferably in a teaching or outreach capacity.

### The Six Sectors

- Education
- Health
- Environment
- Agriculture
- Youth in Development
- Community Economic Development

### 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 openings and identify the type of service assignment you are interested in. Then, review the required or desired qualifications and build on them accordingly. In the process, you should fulfill these PCP experiential requirements! *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!

## The Education Sector

*Teach lessons that last a lifetime.* Education is the largest program area in the Peace Corps. Education Volunteers play an important role in creating links among schools, parents, and communities. They work in various education settings and teach multiple subjects. For example, a volunteer may be placed at a school teaching elementary level science. They may also be responsible for developing libraries or creating technology resource centers for communities.

### Potential Courses Applicable to Education Sector

*Select 3 Courses from a Specific Area*

Area	Course Codes
Education	EDU 100, 200, 210
Elementary, Secondary, or Special Education	ECE, ECY, EDR, EDT, EEC, EHS, EMS
Engineering	ASEM, BME, CE, EGR, ME
English or Linguistics	EH, LING
Communication Studies	CMST 101
Computer Science	CS
Math	MA
Physical or Biological Sciences	AST, BMD, BY, CH, ES, GEO, MESC, PH

### Related Education Field Experience

*Build 50 Hours*

Requirements include gaining 50 hours of related field experience by teaching in a classroom, with a community outreach organization, or in a formal tutoring capacity. The subject of the teaching may be English as a second language, education, drama, or STEM. Education experience may occur in an informal setting such as after school programs, summer camps, and coaching sports activities.

## The Health Sector

*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. They also work in HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs by training youth as peer educators and developing appropriate education strategies. They are also responsible for creating programs that provide emotional and financial support to communities that have been disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS.

### Potential Courses Applicable to Health Sector

*Select 3 Courses from a Specific Area*

Area	Course Codes
Anthropology	ANTH 319, 445
Biology	BY
Community Health & Human Services	CHHS
Nursing	NUR
Nutrition	NTR
Political Science	PSC 358
Psychology	PY 101, 108, 305
Sociology	SOC 135, 280, 282, 395, 480
Women's Studies	WS 100

### Related Health Field Experience

*Build 50 Hours*

Requirements include gaining 50 hours of related field experience by volunteering or working in areas such as maternal health, hospice, family planning, emergency medicine, CPR teaching, RA, peer nutritionist, or HIV/AIDS outreach. Health experience may also be gained by counseling or teaching various health subjects.

## The Environment Sector



*Help forge a global movement to protect our planet.* Environmental 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, youth groups, and community organizations by empowering communities to make their own decisions about how to protect and conserve the local environment. They also address environmental degradation by promoting sustainable use of natural resources.

### Potential Courses Applicable to Environment Sector

*Select 3 Courses from a Specific Area*

Area	Course Codes
Anthropology	ANTH 360
Biology	BY
Civil Engineering	CE 200, 236, 332, 431
Chemistry	CH 115
Earth Sciences	ES 109
Engineering	EGR 110, 197
Environmental Sciences	ENV
Marine Environmental Sciences	MSEC
Public Health	PUH 330, 430

### Related Environmental Field Experience

*Build 50 Hours*

Requirements include gaining 50 hours of related field experience by educating the public on environmental or conservation issues, working on environmental campaigns, conducting biological surveys of plants or animals, or providing technical assistance and training in natural resource management. Other related experiences such as gardening, farming, landscaping, nursery management, or organic/ low-input vegetable production will also qualify.

## The Agriculture Sector



*Lead grassroots efforts to fight hunger in a changing world.* Agricultural Volunteers work with small-scale farmers and families to increase food security, 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 also work alongside farmers on integrated projects that often combine vegetable gardening, livestock management, agroforestry, and nutrition education.

### Potential Courses Applicable to Agriculture Sector

*Select 3 Courses from a Specific Area*

Area	Course Codes
Biology	BY
Business	BUS, IBL
Civil Engineering	CE 200, 236, 332, 431
Economics	EC
Earth Sciences	ES
Nutrition	NTR 222
Physical Science	PHS 101
Public Health	PUH 202, 210, 220, 333, 430

### Related Agricultural Field Experience

*Build 50 Hours*

Requirements include gaining 50 hours of related field experience by 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 related experiences, such as teaching the public on agricultural issues or working with a commercial farm from a business management perspective will also qualify.



## The Youth in Development Sector



*Empower the next generation of changemakers.* Youth in Development Volunteers work with youth in communities on projects that promote engagement and active citizenship – through inclusion of gender awareness, employability, health and HIV/AIDS education, environmental awareness, sporting programs, and information technology.

### Potential Courses Applicable to Youth in Development Sector

*Select 3 Courses from a Specific Area*

Area	Course Codes
Communication Studies	CMST 101
Community Health & Human Services	CHHS
Counseling & Human Services	ECG
Psychology	PY
Public Health	PUH 204, 205
Sociology	SOC
Social Work	SW
Women's Studies	WS 100

### Related Youth in Development Field Experience

*Build 50 Hours*

Requirements include gaining 50 hours of related field experience by teaching or counseling in at-risk youth programs that involve planning, organizing, assessing community needs, counseling, and leadership in the following areas: education, youth development, health, the environment, or business.

## The Community Economic Development Sector



*Harness 21<sup>st</sup> century tools to help communities lift themselves.* Community Economic Development 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. They also teach basic computer skills and help communities take advantage of technologies such as e-commerce, distance learning, and more.

### Potential Courses Applicable to Youth in Development Sector

*Select 3 Courses from a Specific Area*

Area	Course Codes
Communication Studies	CMST 101
Community Health & Human Services	CHHS
Counseling & Human Services	ECG
Psychology	PY
Public Health	PUH 204, 205
Sociology	SOC
Social Work	SW
Women's Studies	WS 100

### Related Community Economic Development Field Experience

*Build 50 Hours*

Requirements include gaining 50 hours of related field experience by working with businesses, organizations, or cooperatives in various fields such as accounting, finance, microfinance, management, project management, budgeting, or marketing. Experience may also involve starting and running your own business or other entrepreneurial activity, training others in computer literacy, website design or online marketing, or founding and leading a community organization.

## Competency 2: Foreign Language Skills

### *Requirements Vary by Placement Region*

#### Overview

Most students must hone their capacity to interact professionally using a non-English language. Minimum course requirements vary by desired placement region. Please review the regions where Peace Corps Volunteers are assigned: [Africa](#), [Asia](#), [Europe](#), [North America](#), [Pacific Islands](#), and [South America](#). *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!

#### The Three Placement Regions

- Latin America
- West Africa
- Other Regions

#### Peace Corps Tip!

Nearly two-thirds of Peace Corps Volunteers serve in Education or Health. Coursework and meaningful experience in one these areas – especially teaching English as a second language – produce some of the strongest candidates.



## The Three Placement Regions

### 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**.

### Other Regions

Students indicating an intention to serve anywhere else **do not have explicit language requirements** to complete the PCP program. However, **you are strongly encouraged to take one** anthropology or foreign language class.

#### Other Regions Courses

Area	Course Codes
Anthropology	ANTH 120
Arabic	ARA
Chinese	CHI
Portuguese	POR

## **Competency 3: Intercultural Competence**

### ***3 Approved Courses or 1-2 Courses + Substantive Intercultural Experience***

#### **Overview**

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 other 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.

*Note:* If there is another course in the catalog that you feel meets the requirement, please discuss it with your PCP coordinator.

#### **Courses and Intercultural Experience**

- Core Courses
- Elective Courses
- Study or Volunteer Abroad
- Other Experiences

#### **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.

## Courses

### Potential Core Courses

*Select at least 1 of these Courses*

Area	Course Codes
Anthropology	ANTH 101, 120
Communication Studies	CMST 105
International Studies	ITS 101
Geography	GEO 121
Political Science	PSC 103
Public Health	PUH 202

### Potential Elective Courses

*Select 2 additional electives from the above or below list*

Area	Course Codes
African American Studies	AAS 200, 235
Anthropology	ANTH 104, 408, 450
Community Health & Human Services	CHHS 305
Communication Studies	CMST 415
Economics	EC 405
English	EH 217, 218
International Business	IB 320
Linguistics	LING 260
Philosophy	PHL 225
Political Science	PSC 335
Public Health	PUH 432
Psychology	PY 213
Sociology	SOC 200, 250, 278, 282
Social Work	SW 207, 313, 314



## Intercultural Experience

### Study or Volunteer Abroad

Studying or volunteering abroad may count if the student is in a country that has at some point hosted Peace Corps Volunteers. See the list of current and past countries here.

Studying or volunteering abroad in these countries from one week to a summer may substitute for one course. Experience that lasts a full semester may substitute for both electives.

### Other Experiences

Other intercultural experiences, such as helping new immigrants or refugees acculturate to the U.S. or volunteering in diverse schools may also count. For example, in the Birmingham area you could volunteer with the Alabama Interfaith Refugee Partnership (ALIRP), the Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama (HICA), or Adelante Alabama. If they also align with one of the six sectors, these experiences may simultaneously count for that hands-on experiential requirement. **Each distinct intercultural experience lasting at least forty hours may substitute for one elective.**

## **Competency 4: Professional and Leadership Development**

### ***Resume and Interview Support + Leadership Experience***

#### **Overview**

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

#### **Resume**

Have your resume critiqued by someone in UAB Career Center. Check out the Resume Assistance page from the UAB Career Center. Students can use drop-in hours with a Peer Career Advisor (PCA), an appointment with a PCA, or UAB Career Center hours to meet this requirement.

#### **Interview Skills**

Attend a workshop or class on interviews skills at UAB Career Center. Visit the Interview Resources page from UAB Career Center. Students can schedule a mock interview or use Interview Stream (via Handshake) to meet this requirement.

#### **Leadership Experience**

Develop at least one significant leadership experience and be prepared to discuss it thoughtfully. To meet this requirement students can: organize a campus event, lead a work or volunteer project, or serve on the executive board of a student organization.