

APR+M Frequently Asked Questions

www.praccreditation.org/apr_m/



1. What is APR?

Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) is a voluntary certification program for public relations professionals. It is administered by the Universal Accreditation Board.

2. What is APR+M?

The Accreditation in Public Relations + Military Communication (APR+M) is an enhanced certification from the well-established APR. The APR+M signifies that an individual meets all the qualifications of Accreditation in Public Relations (APR), PLUS a rigorous knowledge surrounding military public affairs. The mark is awarded to candidates who master APR tested areas

(http://www.praccreditation.org/becomeAPR/KSAs_Compencies.html) plus military public affairs relevant topics.

3. What is the Universal Accreditation Board?

The Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) oversees the Accreditation program and its membership provides a balanced blend of backgrounds in a number of public relations specialties. This group of senior-level Accredited members meets several times a year. Day-to-day operations are administered at PRSA Headquarters. The UAB is a consortium of nine leading industry organizations, including PRSA.

4. What is PRSA?

Chartered in 1947, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is the world's largest and foremost organization of public relations professionals. PRSA provides professional development, sets standards of excellence and upholds principles of ethics for its members and, more broadly, the multi-billion dollar global public relations profession. PRSA also advocates for greater understanding and adoption of public relations services, and acts as one of the industry's leading voices on the important business and professional issues of our time.

5. What is the Joint Public Affairs Support Element and how does it relate to the APR+M program?

The Joint Public Affairs Support Element (JPASE), part of U.S. Joint Forces Command, is committed to the development of the Joint Public Affairs career field. While JFCOM has been targeted for closure according to new developments from the Department of Defense, JPASE activities will continue, perhaps in a different division and will provide training, contingency response, concept development, and other such public affairs support activities. As it relates to the APR+M initiative, JPASE partners with the UAB in the administration of the APR+M program for candidates in conjunction with PRSA.

6. What is the purpose of Accreditation?

Accreditation unifies and advances the public relations profession by identifying those who have demonstrated broad knowledge, experience and professional judgment in the field of public relations. The APR signifies a high professional level of experience and competence. The APR+M indicates a professional level of experience and competence of the knowledge, skills and abilities commensurate with leading military public affairs activities. Those achieving the APR+M credential have demonstrated a unique and critical set of skills for enhanced and effective communication in military public affairs environments. The APR+M is designed to improve the profession of military public affairs, encourage ongoing professional development, and establish a standard of knowledge consistency within the public affairs community.

7. Is the APR+M credential required for military public affairs professionals?

No. This program, like the APR, is voluntary. The APR+M is designed for those professionals who desire to enhance and expand their service as military public affairs professionals to the United States and its allies, and the public affairs/public relations industry as a whole.

8. Who is eligible to pursue APR+M credential?

APR+M candidates must meet one of the two following requirements:

- Military PERSONNEL (active or reserve) and DoD civilian employees whose primary responsibilities are in military communication-related fields
- DoD military contractors whose primary responsibilities are in military communication-related fields.

9. Are reservists and retired military eligible for the APR+M?

Yes. Reservists and National Guard members are eligible if they are serving in a military public affairs capacity. Retired military public affairs professionals have the option of obtaining the designation of APR+M, providing they meet designation maintenance requirements and maintain membership in a participating organization.

10. How will I benefit from earning this credential?

Those achieving the APR+M demonstrate to other communications professionals, and most importantly to military leaders, that they have achieved high proficiency in areas critical to military communication activities; the designation is "transportable" and beneficial to professionals within numerous branches of military service. APR is the oldest, most recognized communications credential, valued by public, private and government sectors in the selection of trusted counsel to military and business leaders. Finally, research conducted by the UAB has found that those achieving certification on average have higher salaries than those without it.

11. How does this credential benefit the military?

It will establish a cadre of public affairs professionals with a broad knowledge base in PR, who can think and plan strategically, as well as deploy and adapt to joint operations.

12. Many associations require membership in their organizations in order to qualify for their credentialing programs. Do I have to be a member of a professional association to qualify for APR+M?

No. For active duty military affairs professionals, membership is not a requirement in order to obtain the APR+M credential. However, you must be currently working in a military public affairs capacity and also meet other minimum requirements established by the UAB. The requirements for eligibility are listed on www.praccreditation.org. Military personnel and DoD civilians are *not* required to maintain a membership with any of the UAB's participating organizations; however, defense contractors working in a military public affairs capacity must still maintain a membership in a participating organization to qualify for APR+M.

13. What if I'm already a member of a professional association, just not PRSA or one of the other eight public relations organizations of the UAB?

Membership in professional organizations for military personnel and DoD civilians has no impact on whether you may sit for the APR+M Readiness Review process.

14. What if I change jobs and am not working in military public affairs anymore?

If you do not work in a military public affairs capacity, you may drop the “M” from your designation and become an APR as long as you meet eligibility requirements, such as maintenance of Accreditation and membership in an UAB participating organization. This should be communicated to the APR+M administrator. You may renew your status if you re-enter a military public affairs position.

15. I’m not a graduate of the Defense Information School (DINFOS). Can I still be a candidate for APR+M?

Yes. Graduation from a DINFOS course is not a requirement to be eligible for the APR+M credential.

16. Can I automatically become Accredited when I graduate from DINFOS?

No. There is no program in place to allow for automatic Accreditation upon graduation from DINFOS.

17. Can I discuss classified information in my questionnaire and readiness review panels?

Candidates should keep their questionnaire and portfolio at an unclassified level. We recognize that many public affairs activities are developed and implemented in classified environments. If a candidate cannot adequately present the questionnaire, portfolio, or readiness review discussion without discussing sensitive information, the readiness review panelists will make every effort to provide for the proper secure environment. If a candidate feels classified information may need to be discussed, he or she should notify JPASE and make appropriate arrangements prior to submitting any materials. The panelists will have appropriate clearances when/if necessary. At no time should the classification level exceed Secret.

18. What if I’m stationed overseas and prepared for the Readiness Review Panel and/or the computer-based Examination (CBE)?

For candidates outside the continental United States, we assess the conditions and if all matters align, attempt to set up an appropriate Readiness Review Panel environment. For the computer-based Examination, we do not administer it outside the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. However, we are tracking candidate preferences to determine international locations for future examination administrations. If you would have preferred an international location, there is space on the application to do so.

19. Where can I find information to study for the APR and the APR+M?

Visit www.praccreditation.org and www.praccreditation.org/apr_m/index.html to begin the process. The site contains the application, frequently asked questions, a sample examination, study resources and other guidelines. The APR+M council and the UAB are developing a study guide as another tool and resource for all APR+M candidates. The APR study guide is already available at no cost to candidates. Some exam prep courses are available through local chapters or online. JPASE plans to conduct APR+M preparation courses in the near future.

20. Do I have to get the APR+M or can I just pursue the APR?

You may pursue the APR only; or if you meet all eligibility requirements, you also may pursue the APR+M. There is a defined process for both. Visit www.praccreditation.org/apr_m/ for details.

21. Is there a cost to obtain the APR+M?

Yes. To pursue the APR, the combined testing fee is \$385, plus a \$25 application fee. If you have already achieved your APR credential, the cost to obtain the APR+M, is \$75. Visit www.praccreditation.org/apr_m/index.html for a detailed breakdown of processes and application requirements. Several of UAB's participating organizations offer rebates to members, rebating a portion of Examination fees.

22. Can I get reimbursed by the military for the cost of the Examination?

The Department of Veterans Affairs pays the cost of a license or certification test for eligible veterans. You may receive reimbursement for the examination if you qualify for:

- Montgomery GI Bill
- Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reserves
- Reserve Education Assistance Program
- Veterans Educational Assistance Program
- Dependents Educational Assistance Program

- Additionally, Navy and Army **Credentialing Opportunities On Line (COOL)** programs offer funding and *may* offer promotion points for Accreditation for enlisted members. Also, the APR program has been specifically evaluated to match its testing areas with those tested at the Defense Information School. Because the areas overlap by at least 80 percent, those services generally will reimburse candidates for Accreditation. Each military Service is different, so military candidates must check with their education counselors to determine what funding options are available. For DOD civilians, reimbursement may be available through civilian training and education funds. Many defense contract employers may offer their own education and reimbursement incentives for professional develop. Some helpful web sites:
 - <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>
 - http://www.dantes.doded.mil/Dantes_web/certification/index.htm
 - <https://www.cool.army.mil/>
 - <https://www.cool.navy.mil/>

23. What is the process if I'm already Accredited and want to pursue the military-specific Accreditation?

Those already Accredited and committed to professional development may pursue the APR+M program upon completion of the application, submittal of fees, and completing the Readiness Review requirement. Maintenance requirements still apply.

24. Once awarded the APR+M, what are the other requirements?

All Accredited members are required to certify their continuing professional development every three years. The cost is currently \$50.

25. What if I don't have the military operational experience?

Candidates who are lacking in experience in some areas are required to demonstrate an understanding of that area, but do not need to show direct personal experience.

26. More Information

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- For more FAQs and additional guidance, visit www.praccreditation.org/apr_m/ and www.praccreditation.org.