Readiness Review Guide and Materials
for Candidates for Accreditation in Public Relations

Functioning as part of the Public Relations Society of America

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Readiness Review Guide and Materials for Candidates

Welcome to the Readiness Review Process

As a candidate for Accreditation in Public Relations, you have taken an important step in advancing your career in public relations. Upon successful completion of the Readiness Review and computer-based Examination, you will enter a select group of professionals worldwide who are recognized for their knowledge, skills and abilities in the field of public relations.

The Readiness Review is the first of two steps you will take to achieve Accreditation. The materials contained in this document describe: 1) how the Readiness Review process works; 2) policies and procedures for conducting a Readiness Review; and 3) how to ensure that your Readiness Review Presentation is a professional display of your public relations talents. The document is divided into five sections:

I. Purpose of Readiness Review. The Readiness Review is the system that evaluates a candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities in 16 specific areas of competency that cannot be effectively judged in the computer-based Examination.

II. Procedures for Readiness Review. This section offers policies, procedures and how-to's for the Readiness Review and its two components: 1) the completion of a Readiness Review Questionnaire in which the candidate provides a public relations plan and other responses to demonstrate public relations acumen; and 2) the Readiness Review Presentation in which the candidate meets with a panel of Accredited professionals to orally present the questionnaire components and to answer the panelists' questions on public relations.

III. Readiness Review Questionnaire. In this section, candidates will find tips on preparing responses to most effectively demonstrate public relations expertise.

IV. Preparing for Readiness Review Presentation. Information in this section will help the candidate learn how the portfolio, public relations plan and responses required in the Readiness Review Questionnaire come together to become the platform for the Readiness Review Presentation.

V. Appendices. This section contains resources candidates need to prepare for Readiness Review, including the Questionnaire and lists of knowledge, skills and abilities assessed in the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.

Readiness Review at-a-Glance

*Typical Timeframe**	*Candidate*	*Chair / Panelists***
Before Readiness Review	Notifies local Accreditation chair of intent to enter Accreditation process. Reads this document thoroughly and assesses their public relations experience and ability to respond effectively to the Readiness Review Questionnaire before completing the application.	Provides candidate with local resources and overview on process.
Before Application Submittal	Begin collecting and preparing materials for Readiness Review.	
Month 1	Submits Application for Accreditation to Universal Accreditation Board.	
14 days following receipt of application	Receives notification from UAB of application approval and eligibility for the Examination process. If not approved, UAB provides reasons for ineligibility. Completes Readiness Review and sits for Examination within one year of application approval.	Receives notification from UAB of application approval.
Months 1, 2, 3	Prepares for Readiness Review and computer-based Examination.	Conducts study groups, assists candidate in preparation. Recruits three Accredited professionals to serve as panelists for Readiness Review Presentation.
Month 1 (30 days prior to Readiness Review)	Requests Readiness Review Presentation. Prepares written responses to Readiness Review Questionnaire, portfolio and presentation.	Organizes panelists, identifies date, time and location.
Month 2 (15 days prior to Readiness Review Presentation)	Submits Readiness Review Questionnaire.	*Reviews candidate's written responses to Readiness Review Questionnaire.*
Month 2	Finalizes portfolio and presentation.	
Month 2, 3	Participates in Readiness Review Presentation.	*Conducts Readiness Review Presentation.*
Immediately following Readiness Review Presentation		*Conducts voting for Advance or Not Advance recommendation.*
Within five business days following Readiness Review		*Submits required documentation and recommendation to UAB panel chair*
Within two weeks of receipt of panel's recommendation	Receives notification via regular mail of Advance or Not Advance status from UAB.	Receives notification via e-mail of candidate's Advance or Not Advance status from UAB.
Post Readiness Review	If Advanced, prepares for computer-based Examination. Must sit for Examination within one year of notice of approval and eligibility. If Not Advanced, may repeat Readiness Review process after a 90-day waiting period. Must sit for computer-based Examination within one year of notice of approval and eligibility.	*Provides mentoring and preparation support to candidate, as needed.*

*Each candidate progresses through this process at his or her own pace. This timeframe reflects an average time period but may be shortened or lengthened per candidate's needs.
**Panelists' roles are highlighted in italics.

I. PURPOSE OF READINESS REVIEW

The Readiness Review marks the beginning of the process to earn Accreditation in Public Relations. It is a gateway to the computer-based Examination.

According to the Universal Accreditation Board Policies and Procedures, the intent and purpose of the Readiness Review is:

- "to determine whether or not each candidate for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations is sufficiently prepared to be a viable candidate for the computer-based Examination"
- "to help each candidate determine an appropriate course of study to prepare for the computer-based Examination."

"The intended result of the Readiness Review is that each candidate will earn an Advance or Not Advance assessment that will recommend the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) either accept or decline the candidate's request for admission to the computer-based Examination at this time."*

*The final decision on whether or not to advance a candidate rests with the Universal Accreditation Board.

The Readiness Review is an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate competence in 16 specific areas of public relations knowledge, skills and abilities that cannot be effectively judged in the computer-based Examination:

1. Creative conceptualization/creativity
2. Initiative
3. Interpersonal skills
4. Management skills
5. Client/Employer/Organizational focus
6. Multi-tasking
7. Flexibility
8. Teaches others
9. Time management
10. Uses multiple delivery mechanisms
11. Control analysis
12. Communication skills/Speaking
13. Communication skills/Interviewing
14. Communication skills/Writing and Editing
15. Communication skills/Listening
16. Presentation skills

Tip 1
The complete list of knowledge, skills and abilities tested by the Examination for Accreditation can be found in Appendix C.

Details for each of these areas can be found in Appendix A: Sixteen Areas of Competency Assessed by the Readiness Review.

Once the candidate earns an Advance decision from the UAB, he or she may sit for the computer-based Examination. Candidates who are Not Advanced may be mentored by one of the panelists or other Accredited members in their area, repeat the Readiness Review process after a 90-day waiting period, and, when Advanced, schedule the computer-based Examination. A candidate may retake the Readiness Review as many times as needed within one year of notification of eligibility for the Examination process. More information on Advance or Not Advance can be found in Section II: Procedures for the Readiness Review.

II. Procedures for Readiness Review

As noted earlier, the Readiness Review has two components: The Readiness Review Questionnaire and the Readiness Review Presentation. Detailed instructions for both appear in Section III and IV. This section provides information about how the Readiness Review process works.

For the Candidate

Public relations professionals interested in entering the Accreditation process will first submit an application to the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB). The application confirms the potential candidate's work in public relations and that the candidate meets the required minimum qualifications to be considered for the Accreditation process. See Appendix B: Application for Accreditation. From the date of the application's approval, the candidate has one calendar year to complete the Readiness Review and computer-based Examination.

Once notified of application approval, the prospective candidate should contact the Accreditation chair in his or her local region or Chapter to determine timing for the Readiness Review and to seek other resources. Often, a candidate will participate in local study groups or join the Online Study Course to prepare for both Readiness Review and the computer-based Examination.

> ***Timing for the Readiness Review.*** The Readiness Review Presentation will take place during a time mutually agreed upon between candidate and Accreditation chair. In some cases, however, partner organizations and their Chapters may hold Readiness Review panels at annual meetings or conferences. Candidates are notified about the opportunity and may schedule their Readiness Review Presentations during these venues.
>
> ***Location.*** The Accreditation chair arranges the meeting location, typically a professional setting (e.g., conference room of local agency/organization), free of distractions (phones, etc.). Other than a table and chairs for the panelists and candidate, no other equipment is required for the meeting room.
>
> ***Pre-Presentation.*** As explained later in this document, the candidate completes and submits the Readiness Review Questionnaire no fewer than 15 days prior to the Readiness Review Presentation.

About the Panelists

The Readiness Review process employs a volunteer panel to assess the candidate's competence in 16 areas of skills as noted in Appendix A. For each candidate, the Accreditation Chair identifies and recruits three Accredited public relations professionals. The panelists serve as judges or evaluators to determine an Advance or Not Advance recommendation of the candidate. The panelists also may volunteer to serve as mentors to guide the candidate to prepare for the computer-based Examination. Specific responsibilities of each panelist include:

> **Tip 2**
>
> The panelists for your Readiness Review Presentation will be selected by your group's Accreditation chair. Panelists must be Accredited in Public Relations, have a demonstrated interest in the Accreditation process, and a reputation for providing fair, unbiased, objective assessments of problems and situations.

Steps Panelists Take Before the Readiness Review Presentation

- Reviews the Readiness Review Questionnaire, which includes a public relations plan, submitted by the candidate.
- Develops list of questions or concerns based on the Readiness Review Questionnaire responses to review with the candidate during the Readiness Review Presentation.

Panelists' Responsibilities During the Readiness Review Presentation

- Discusses each portion of the Readiness Review Questionnaire with the candidate.
- Reviews and evaluates the candidate's presentation of the public relations plan and portfolio to determine if competencies in the 16 specific areas (see Appendix A) are demonstrated.
- Rates the candidate's performance by assigning a score of 0-3 for each of the 16 specific areas.
- Collaborates and reaches agreement with other panelists on the Advance/Not Advance recommendation.

Panelist's Responsibilities After the Readiness Review Presentation (once candidate has been notified by UAB about its decision)

- Provides advice and counsel for the candidate's preparation for the computer-based Examination (for those earning "Advance" recommendation).
- Becomes a mentor for the candidate and, depending on candidate status:
    - Provides advice and counsel for the candidate earning a "Not Advance" recommendation.
    - Directs candidate to appropriate resources to address weaknesses. (Appendix C: Resources for Accreditation for Public Relations).

How Does Readiness Review Work?

Step 1. The Readiness Review Questionnaire

The Readiness Review Questionnaire (Section III) is a three-part survey that allows candidates to develop a written response for questions in these areas: 1) candidate's organization and role; 2) candidate's work experience and sample public relations plan; 3) candidate's assessment of readiness for the computer-based Examination.

Tip 3
Within your responses to the Questionnaire, you will provide a complete public relations plan.
See Section III for details.

Candidates, on average, budget eight to 10 hours to complete the Readiness Review Questionnaire. Since the candidate's Questionnaire may be the panel's only opportunity to evaluate a candidate's writing ability, the Questionnaire should represent the candidate's best public relations writing.

The candidate's completed questionnaire is submitted to the Accreditation chair and panelists no fewer than 15 business days before the Readiness Review Presentation (Step 2) is scheduled. Panelists study the candidate's responses carefully and prepare a list of questions or concerns to review with the candidate during the Readiness Review Presentation.

Step 2. The Readiness Review Presentation

Prior to the Readiness Review Presentation, the candidate prepares a portfolio of materials demonstrating a public relations plan and other public relations activities. The portfolio is **not** submitted before the Readiness Review Presentation; the candidate brings the portfolio on the day of the presentation.

During the Readiness Review Presentation, three panelists meet with the candidate to:

- Listen to the candidate's presentation of the portfolio materials supporting the public relations plan outlined in the questionnaire.
- Ask questions about the candidate's responses to the three-part Readiness Review Questionnaire.
- Assess candidate's preparation and readiness to sit for the computer-based Examination.

Voting Policies

To determine a candidate's Advance or Not Advance recommendation and using a scale of "0" to "3," each panelist completes a voting form ranking each of the 16 areas of competence:

0 = the candidate was unable to demonstrate any knowledge, skills or abilities in the rated areas;
1 = the candidate demonstrates a very weak level of knowledge, skills and abilities in the rated area;
2 = the candidate shows acceptable knowledge, skills and abilities in the rated area;
3 = the candidate demonstrates exceptional knowledge, skills and abilities in the rated area.

First Vote

The candidate who achieves a total of at least 32 points and has no

Tip 4
Candidates must receive a score of "1" or better in each of the 16 KSAs evaluated to receive an Advance. It is in the candidate's best interest to plan in advance what evidence will be presented for each of the 16 KSAs. Evidence may be presented during the presentation or during the question and answer portion of the Readiness Review.

zero assessments in any single KSA category from any panelist will receive an Advance recommendation.

If a candidate does not achieve a total of at least 32 points, or has a zero assessment in any single KSA category as determined by any one panelist, the candidate will receive a tentative Not Advance recommendation. Panelists(s) scoring the candidate as Not Advance must complete a document that describes reasons for a Not Advance recommendation and submit(s) the document to the panel chair. Discussion among the panelists will take place based on the scores and the information provided in the document.

Second Vote, If Needed
After the panel chair leads a discussion about the candidate's performance, he or she distributes a second voting form.

Earning an "Advance" recommendation on second vote. A candidate who achieves a total of at least 32 points ***and*** has *no* zero assessment in any single KSA category from each panelist, receives an "Advance" recommendation.

*Earning a "Not Advance" recommendation on second vote***.** If a candidate, in the opinion of any **one** panelist, still does not achieve a minimum of 32 total points *or* has an assessment of zero in any single knowledge, skills and abilities category, a "Not Advance" recommendation is assigned to the candidate. Reasons for Not Advance Recommendation are submitted to the Universal Accreditation Board.

Within five business days, the panel chair returns voting sheets, a clean copy of the candidate's completed Readiness Review Questionnaire and the Readiness Review Summary of Candidate Performance to the Universal Accreditation Board (c/o PRSA). The candidate is notified about an Advance or Not Advance status within two weeks of receipt of these materials. Notification is typically delivered by regular mail. Accreditation chairs receive notification via e–mail, unless the candidate notifies the UAB not to notify anyone.

Appeal Process

A candidate for Accreditation who has been deemed not ready to Advance to the computer-based Examination after two separate Readiness Review sessions may make a formal appeal in writing to UAB in the New York office. According to policies and procedures of the UAB, the Eligibility and Appeals Work Group will investigate the appeal and make a recommendation to the UAB Chair and Executive Committee. The chair of the work group may contact the candidate, Readiness Review panelists or local accreditation chair, as appropriate. The final ruling will be made as determined by the UAB Chair.

A candidate who receives a Not Advance status for Readiness Review and whose Participating Organization (or Chapter) is not able to accommodate a second Readiness Review within the one-year time frame may apply to UAB for an extension.

III. THE READINESS REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

How to Submit

Contact your Accreditation chair at least 30 days before you would like to schedule your Readiness Review Presentation. Your Accreditation chair will give you the submittal information for your questionnaire.

The questionnaire can be downloaded as a Microsoft Word document. As directed by your Accreditation chair, you will submit four printed copies of the completed Questionnaire or will send your Questionnaire via e–mail to an address provided by the Accreditation chair.

When to Submit

The completed Readiness Review Questionnaire must be submitted no fewer than 15 business days prior to your scheduled Readiness Review Presentation.

Completing the Questionnaire

The Readiness Review Questionnaire can be found in Appendix D. Tips for completing each of the three sections appear below. In addition to completing the Questionnaire, the candidate also compiles a portfolio of materials that were prepared in the execution of the public relations plan described in the Questionnaire. The portfolio is not submitted beforehand but is presented by the candidate during the Readiness Review Presentation.

Section One: Your Organization and Your Role

In this section, you provide information about your current employment in public relations. There is no word limit but responses should be succinct. Responses to each question should reflect your work situation.

Section Two: Your Experience

This is the heart of the Readiness Review. You will present a public relations plan that you have planned and implemented using the Research, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation (RPIE) four-step process. As you write the four-step plan, you will begin to assemble the materials produced in the execution of the plan. These items will be the core of the portfolio. Using the RPIE process in your Questionnaire is a good way to become even more comfortable and familiar with this planning process — it accounts for 30 percent of the computer-based Examination.

If you contributed to, but were not solely responsible for, the creation of a four-step plan, describe how members of your public relations team developed and executed the plan. Discuss what best practices were used or could have been used to develop the plan into a full spectrum of public relations programming to meet the goals and objectives of the plan. Clearly identify your role(s) with the plan and roles taken by other members of the team.

For examples of well-written sketches of comprehensive public relations plans, visit the Silver Anvil award recipients' submittals at www.prsa.org/awards/index.html.

Section Three: Your Assessment of Your Readiness for the Computer-Based Examination

You should be familiar with the complete set of KSAs that are tested in the computer-based Examination (Appendix E). Once you have reviewed the KSAs, use this section to discuss your competency in these areas.

IV. PREPARING FOR READINESS REVIEW PRESENTATION

After your Readiness Review Questionnaire has been submitted, you have 15 days to finalize your portfolio and presentation. Use these tips to prepare wisely.

The Portfolio

The portfolio you present should furnish the fullest possible evidence of your use of public relations research, planning, implementation and evaluation. Presentation of a vast collection of tactical tools without demonstration of situation appraisal, program planning and evaluation will be inadequate evidence of your mastery of the complete spectrum of the public relations practice — regardless of the quality and quantity of work products shown.

> **Tip 5**
> The portfolio contains materials illustrating the public relations plan you have described in the Questionnaire. It is **not** submitted with the Questionnaire; bring the portfolio with you to the Presentation.

Focus your portfolio materials on the public relations campaign described in your Readiness Review Questionnaire. You may add materials from other public relations campaigns if you believe it helps to demonstrate your public relations strengths. Your portfolio materials should support all elements of the plan from the Readiness Review Questionnaire, including the following:

- An initial statement of the problem or opportunity.
- Primary and/or secondary research to validate the problem or opportunity and translate it into a situation appraisal that drives one or more specific program objectives.

> **Tip 6**
> Make sure you know the difference between primary and secondary research.

- Identification of goals, objectives, strategies and program elements/tactics directed to targeted audiences that will accomplish your stated program objectives.
- Evaluation activities that were used to assess the program objectives and situation appraisal to demonstrate program effectiveness.

Many candidates prepare their portfolio in a three-ring binder. Consider organizing your materials with tabs to reflect research, planning, implementation and evaluation products. A fifth tab for materials from other campaigns could complete the portfolio. Remember, the key point in your portfolio should be the demonstration of a single program, from inception to completion, with an emphasis on the full cycle of conceptualization, research, program development, implementation and assessment. Only one copy of the portfolio needs to be compiled.

Your Readiness Review Panel understands that you may not have been directly or solely involved with all aspects of the program you choose to present. However, you should be prepared to describe activities conducted by other team members that contributed to the creation of the complete program. If you have no knowledge of certain aspects of the program, you should be equally prepared to provide a clear statement of the best practices that would be appropriate to create a full continuum of programming.

If you have not held a professional position in which creation, development, implementation and assessment of one or more campaigns were within the realm of your assigned duties, you may want to volunteer for a nonprofit organization to provide pro-bono services and thus, create a source of materials for your portfolio. Your local Accreditation chair also may be able to offer suggestions for rounding out your portfolio presentation.

The Presentation

Organizing Your Readiness Review Presentation

Your goal is to relate a story to the panelists — your professional story — told through your selected public relations plan and perhaps a few other portfolio items. Like a case study, the best approach to organizing your presentation is to start at the beginning of the process and take the panelists through the program.

Pay Attention to the Details

Make sure that all materials in your portfolio are in good order, that these elements adequately and accurately represent the quality of your work, and that you are able to provide a clear indication of the role you played in the creation of each item. You should be able to provide the rationale and facts behind creation of each element or tactic presented, and to respond to any questions that the panelists may ask. The focus of your remarks should always be on the connection between the elements being presented, the objectives and the outcomes of the program.

Keep the Readiness Review Presentation Manageable

In a world rich in technological capabilities, you may be tempted to use an array of presentation support tools and resources. While panelists want to see the full scope of your work, you are cautioned to carefully choose the scope and scale of presentation items you incorporate. Keep in mind that you are solely responsible for securing and operating any equipment needed for your presentation, and that you have a limited amount of time to set up any equipment you choose to use. The more different presentation elements you include, the more time is required to shift from item to item – i.e., spoken word to video to PowerPoint to audio to flip charts, etc. – and these added transitions could jeopardize your ability to complete the presentation in the allotted time (minimum of one hour, maximum of two hours).

> **Tip 7**
> The Universal Accreditation Board prohibits the use of LCD or other types of computer projectors in Readiness Review Presentations.

Be aware that the Universal Accreditation Board has prohibited the use of LCD or other types of computer projectors in Readiness Review Presentations. As with any presentation, failure of your presentation support apparatus may result in your inability to adequately demonstrate your readiness to the panel.

Final Rehearsal for Your Readiness Review Presentation

The Readiness Review Presentation lasts between one and two hours. Count on between 30 and 60 minutes to present your portfolio; the remaining time will be used by the panelists for questions about your written responses to the Readiness Review Questionnaire. Be mindful of time, both in planning *and* in delivering your portfolio to the Readiness Review panelists.

Choose your presentation style and be prepared to carry it out. Will you accept questions from the panelists "on the fly," or do you want to deliver your entire presentation before opening the floor? It's your call, based on what makes you comfortable and what reflects the approach you use in making presentations as a part of your professional approach.

Be aware that the panelists reserve the right to limit the amount of time they will spend reviewing video tapes or other support materials within your presentation. In the interest of time, you may want to edit video materials to present the most salient excerpts of the larger presentation.

Giving the Readiness Review Presentation

Like any other presentation, you should take advantage of every opportunity to set yourself up for success:

- Be sure to pace the preparation of your portfolio against a backdrop of other professional and personal responsibilities.
- Allow yourself plenty of rest in advance of your Readiness Review Presentation.
- Dress is business casual — pick clothing in which you look and feel good.
- Come with adequate time to set up and to mentally prepare for the experience.
- Be yourself and be as comfortable as you can.

The members of the Readiness Review Panel are advocates for you and for your attainment of Accreditation in Public Relations. The individuals chosen for your panel will lead you through the process and do everything possible to make the experience productive and forward-looking. As part of the session, Readiness Review panelists will offer suggestions that may further assist you in preparing for the computer-based Examination.

After the Readiness Review Presentation

Once the panel has completed its review of your readiness, as evidenced by your responses to the Readiness Review Questionnaire, information secured from your portfolio and your answers to specific questions asked during the Readiness Review Presentation, their recommendation to Advance or Not Advance you through Readiness Review will be forwarded to the Universal Accreditation Board. The UAB will notify you of your status in the process. Neither panel members nor local Accreditation volunteers can provide information on the outcome of your review.

In the event that the Readiness Review process reveals one or more areas in which you need additional work in one of the 16 KSAs tested in the Readiness Review before being Advanced to the computer-based Examination, feedback from the panelists will be available upon your request. This information will provide guidance on steps you can take to strengthen your portfolio as you make adjustments in your presentation for subsequent review. Candidates who would like to pursue panelists' feedback should contact their local Accreditation chair or panel chair.

Readiness Review panelists serve both as *evaluators* of your preparedness for the Examination and *mentors* who can assist you in the experience. Whether you are Advanced to the examination process or given recommendations for further preparation that must be successfully completed before you are Advanced, your Readiness Review panelists are additional professional resources who are prepared to provide further mentoring to you as you move through the Accreditation process. Be sure to ask you panel chair or Accreditation chair who will be assigned as your mentor.

Questions?

For more information on Readiness Review or about Accreditation in Public Relations, please visit the Universal Accreditation Board at www.praccreditation.org.

Or, contact the Universal Accreditation Board administrator:

Kathy Mulvihill; Public Relations Society of America; 33 Maiden Lane, 11th Fl.; New York, NY 10038-5150
Phone: (212) 460-1400; Fax: (212) 995-0757; kathy.mulvihill@prsa.org; Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

Appendices

Appendix A.	Sixteen Areas of Competency Assessed by the Readiness Review
Appendix B.	Application for Examination in Public Relations
Appendix C.	Resources for the Preparation for Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations
Appendix D.	Readiness Review Questionnaire
Appendix E.	Detailed List of Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Assessed in Computer-based Examination

Appendix A. Sixteen Areas of Competency Assessed by the Readiness Review

The Readiness Review panel will be responsible for evaluating candidates' readiness in 16 specific areas of competence that cannot effectively be judged in the computer-based Examination environment:

1. **Creative conceptualization/creativity:** Uses imagination to develop new insights into or responses to a public relations issue. Develops innovative solutions to the issue or problems posed. Devises new methods/processes or adapts existing ones when the standard methods and processes are not applicable.

2. **Initiative**: Displays courage in suggesting new ideas and justifying them to clients/employers.

3. **Interpersonal skills:** Relates empathetically to other individuals in order to understand their concerns or needs. Influences another's decision or behavior. Displays confidence when interacting with others.

4. **Management skills:** Develops expertise in planning, organizing, budgeting, communicating, coordinating, scheduling, monitoring and evaluating.

5. **Client/Employer/Organizational focus:** Holds service to and interest in his or her employer or cause as a top priority. Considers long-term client needs, as well as short-term demands. Makes and delivers on commitments to clients.

6. **Multi-tasking:** Effectively and efficiently manages numerous projects and responsibilities simultaneously. Applies prioritization and tracks progress toward completion of tasks.

7. **Flexibility:** Responds to the changing business, social and cultural landscape.

8. **Teaches others**: Identifies learning needs of staff. Coaches others on how to perform tasks. Serves as a mentor. Leads by example.

9. **Time management:** Prioritizes and sequences tasks to meet goals and deadlines.

10. **Uses multiple delivery mechanisms:** Uses advertising, direct mail, Web and other delivery mechanisms and promotional tools effectively.

11. **Control analysis:** For selected media, determines who the owners are, their aims, their political allegiances, their influence on the content and editorial policies, and their legal constraints.

12. **Communication skills/Speaking**: Demonstrates logical thinking when describing client issues and framing approaches to solving public relations problems.

13. **Communication skills/Interviewing**: Asks relevant, insightful and probing questions while interacting with employers/clients and target audiences (priority publics).

14. **Communication skills/Writing and Editing**: Communicates relevant information (including technical material) in a concise, organized fashion. Writes content that is factual and grammatically accurate, and at a reading level that is appropriate to the target audience. Authors persuasive communication material for public relations programs. Demonstrates the ability to examine and alter a document and correct for format, organization, completeness, factual accuracy, style, tone and grammar.

15. **Communication skills/Listening:** Receives, interprets, verifies, and responds to verbal and non-verbal messages and other cues in the context of client, teammate and audience concerns.

16. **Presentation skills:** Uses visual aids (charts, slides, transparencies, etc.) effectively. Maintains eye contact with audience. Uses appropriate language, gestures, tone of voice and volume to convey information.

Appendix B: Application for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations

See www.praccreditation.org for most recent application for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.

Appendix C: Resources for the Preparation for Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations

The Accreditation in Public Relations Online Study Course
One-year subscription:
$195 for members of UAB Participating Organizations
$295 for nonmembers

This interactive online multimedia course helps candidates prepare for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations (APR). Course content, geared toward the knowledge, skills and abilities measured during the Examination, is presented through a variety of interactive methods, including multimedia module introductions, asynchronous activities, case study analysis, projects, directed discussions, self-correcting quizzes and simulations. It provides opportunities for self-study, collaboration and teamwork — all situations that public relations professionals encounter in their day-to-day work.

The Online Course is easy to use, with course managers available to help with any technological questions. Candidates can proceed through the course at their own pace, and monthly optional Web conferences allow candidates to ask questions and meet other course participants. This Online Study Course is helpful to those who can't participate in the study programs offered by local Chapters and member organizations because of distance or other constraints. It also is valuable to candidates who want to take advantage of additional preparation tools for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.

APR Study Guide
The First Edition APR Study Guide is a key tool in preparation for Accreditation in Public Relations and a tremendous resource for all APR candidates. Produced by the Universal Accreditation Board, the Guide is the product of many hours of research and evaluation. It contains exercises, case studies and insight into modern public relations practices. And, it's available at no cost to those pursuing Accreditation.

The Short Bookshelf of Texts Recommended to Candidates for Accreditation in Public Relations
The Universal Accreditation Board recommends that candidates review selected contents of at least one general text from the Short Bookshelf of Texts Recommended for Preparation, and one or more specialized texts that provide in-depth material on KSA-related subjects, such as planning, research or law.

The basis for every question on the computer-based Examination can be traced to one or several of these texts.

Each text is listed with the Competencies or KSA groupings covered by its content to help candidates select those most appropriate for their individual preparation. Each candidate should select the text or texts best suited for his or her own preparation and professional development. Book titles link to sources for text purchases. URLs link to texts' home pages, some with Q&A and additional preparation tools.

NOTE: Based on feedback from Accreditation chairs, coaches and successful candidates, the Short Bookshelf now reflects those texts cited as the most widely used preparation resources.

You do NOT need to buy or study every text on the Short Bookshelf.

Short Bookshelf of Texts Recommended to Candidates for Accreditation in Public Relations

The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law
Fully Revised and Updated. 2009 ed.
Goldstein, Norm, ed.
New York: Basic Books, 2009
www.apstylebook.com (Note: this is an online version of the book.)

KSAs/Competencies Covered: Business Literacy; Ethics and Law; Media Relations.

Cutlip and Center's Effective Public Relations. 10th ed.
Glen M. Broom
Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 2008.

KSAs/Competencies Covered: All

Primer of Public Relations Research.
Stacks, Don W.
New York: Guilford Press, 2002.

http://tinyurl.com/2824o8
(Note: this offers a brief overview of the book.)

KSAs/Competencies Covered: Researching, Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Campaigns; Management Skills and Issues.

Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics. 9th ed.
Wilcox, Dennis L., and Glen T. Cameron.
Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2008.

http://wps.ablongman.com/ab_wilcox_pubrelat_8 (Note: this is an online study guide for the 8th edition text.)

KSAs/Competencies Covered: All

Strategic Planning for Public Relations. 3rd ed.
Smith, Ronald D.
Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2009.

http://tinyurl.com/36j2rn
(Note: this offers a brief overview of the book.)

KSAs/Competencies Covered: Communication Models and Theories; Researching, Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Campaigns; Management Skills and Issues.

For the Longer Bookshelf of Texts Recommended to Candidates for Accreditation in Public Relations, visit www.praccreditation.org/Preparation%20Sources/index.html**.**

Appendix D: Readiness Review Questionnaire for Candidates

Instructions

This document is also available in Microsoft Word and can be downloaded at www.praccreditation.org/becomeAPR/index.html.

You will submit four printed copies of your typewritten responses to the Readiness Review Questionnaire no fewer than **15 business days** prior to your scheduled Readiness Review Presentation. Submit your completed document to your local or organizational Accreditation chair.

Section One: Your Organization and Your Role

This section asks for your response to questions about your current employment in public relations, be it corporate, nonprofit, agency or academic organization. Answer all questions completely and succinctly. There are no right or wrong answers for this section, but only truthful and accurate statements.

1. Describe how your public relations firm, department or other operation is organized. Describe the reporting structure, personnel and the key relevant roles of each person.

2. Given the current economic climate and present social situations, what is/are the major problem(s)/opportunity (-ies) facing your department, firm or other public relations operation at this time? What about in the next three to five years? Pick and briefly articulate the most significant solution or approach you would recommend to address this opportunity or challenge.

3. Describe the changes, if any, you believe are needed in the structure/function of your public relations firm, department or operation. Describe the steps you would recommend to implement these changes

4. If you were starting a public relations department, academic department or public relations firm today (or starting over again in your organization, institution or firm), what would be your top three concerns or considerations in doing so and what would you plan for addressing them?

5. Describe what you do each day to contribute to helping your organization achieve its objectives.

6. In what ways can you improve your productivity?

7. Provide an example of when and how you have provided training or mentoring to others, either as a public relations professional or other organizational advisor.

8. Describe a situation where you had to deal specifically with the issue of time management in completing a major assignment.

Section Two: Your Experience

1. Describe how you planned or participated in the planning of a specific public relations program for your organization or a client. Clearly state the problem or opportunity the program was created to address, the research, the objective(s) of the program and all of the other components of a complete public relations plan. Include specific information to describe your role. If you have never written or participated in the development of a formal public relations plan, develop a program for an organization in which you are or have been involved. Work samples from the plan you describe in this section must be included in the portfolio you will present during the Readiness Review Presentation.

2. Describe the research you conducted to develop the plan presented in the first question in this section. If no research was conducted, explain why not. In *specific* terms, how did the research guide the development of the plan?

3. Describe how you obtained or participated in obtaining approval for the plan described in the first question in this section.

4. Describe in detail the process you used to evaluate the outcome of the program described in the first question in this section. Describe the outcomes. (Do *not* attach work product samples to this submission, but do include them in your portfolio review.)

5. Describe how you would, if given unlimited resources and authority, improve the process by which public relations programs in your organization are developed, approved and measured.

Section Three: Your Assessment of Your Readiness for the Computer-based Examination

1. Why have you chosen to become Accredited at this time?

2. Describe what you have done and what you plan to do to prepare for the computer-based Examination.

3. Describe your strengths and weaknesses in terms of your experience and examination preparation in each of the major areas of the Examination listed below. (For an expanded list, go to www.praccreditation.org/becomeAPR/KSAs_Competencies.html.) Use the expanded list to identify the specific knowledge, skills and abilities that will be evaluated within each of these major categories. Do not respond to each sub-item on the expanded list.)

   - Research, planning, implementing & evaluating communication programs
   - Ethics & Law
   - Communication models & theories
   - Business literacy
   - Crisis communication management
   - Management skills & issues
   - Media relations
   - History of and current issues in public relations
   - Using information technology
   - Advanced communication skills

Appendix E. Detailed Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) Tested in the Computer-based Examination

RESEARCHING, PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING PROGRAMS (30%)

Analytical skills
Distinguishes between objectives and goals. Recognizes the difference between strategies and tactics. Objectively interprets data. Thinks logically.

Audience identification and communication
Identifies appropriate audiences (publics) and the concerns of each, including employees, investors, suppliers, community, industry analysts and government and non-government. Prioritizes and properly sequences communications to the different audiences (publics). Tailors messages to various audiences (publics).

Evaluation of programs
Determines if goals and objectives of public relations program were met. Determines if, and the extent to which, the results or outcomes of public relations programs have been accomplished. Develops, states and tests a public relations program's informational, motivational and behavioral objectives using qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

Financial management
Prepares, justifies, and/or controls the budget for public relations programs/departments/agencies. Plans, administers and monitors expenditures to ensure cost-effective support of public relations program. Maintains thorough and accurate records of expenditures. Bills clients accurately. Keeps accounts payables and receivables current.

Planning ability
Develops a comprehensive public relations plan that reflects the organization's needs including appropriate sequencing of plan elements.

Research (Applied)
Gathers information about the client, company or organization for which the practitioner is working. Gathers information on issues to help develop objectives, strategies and target audiences (priority publics) using a variety of research tools (the Internet, interviews, library, focus groups). Plans and interprets research activities from the public relations activity at hand (projects, crisis management). Takes into account message recipients' understanding of the product, company, candidate and issue when conducting research.

Research (Basic)
Develops a premise. Develops the research plan. Determines appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods. Decides on the population and sampling techniques to use with that population. Designs instruments (questionnaire, interview, etc.). Uses the acceptable techniques to collect data. Codes and analyzes results and presents findings.

Stakeholder management
Identifies institutions, groups or individuals who have an interest in or are affected by some part of the program. Assesses interest of influential institutions, groups and individuals. Mobilizes key stakeholders to help ensure the success of a program.

Strategic thinking
Synthesizes relevant information to determine what is needed to position the client/organization/issue appropriately in its market/environment, especially with regard to changing business, political or cultural climates.

Methodology
Develops public relations programs using research methodology or approaches that address the following components: Research, Goals, Planning, Execution, Monitoring and Evaluation.

ETHICS AND LAW (15%)

Ethical behavior
Conducts professional activities in a principled manner and adheres to commonly accepted standards for professional behavior.

Integrity
Recognizes and deals professionally with ethical and legal issues.

Knowledge of legal issues
Upholds applicable international, national, state and local laws regarding libel, corporate governance, disclosure, copyright, trademarks, fair use, First Amendment issues, slander, privacy, regulations on commercial speech, corporate political expression, Foreign Agents Registration Act, lobbying and grassroots lobbying. Uses laws regarding media access, due process, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or Sarbanes-Oxley, Regulation Disclosure or Sunshine Act to meet the needs of clients.

COMMUNICATION MODELS AND THEORIES (15%)

Communication models
Is familiar with, understands the implications of and can apply to practice the theoretical and research-based foundation of public relations practice. Demonstrates familiarity with current theory and research, as well as older established models that should guide such practical communication program decisions as selecting and prioritizing target audiences, developing messages, selecting spokespeople, establishing credibility, the foundations of trust, how issues are formed and developed, how opinion can be changed, the effectiveness of public information programs and so forth. Is familiar with fundamental social science research that affects communication practice such as the Hawthorne Effect, co-orientation, cognitive dissonance, diffusion theory and others.

Understands barriers to communication
Is familiar with, understands the implications of and can apply to practice the body of knowledge, drawn from public relations and social science disciplines that address the processes by which messages are interpreted by different audiences and how audiences are or are not moved to take action based upon those messages. Understands how factors such as semantics, cultural norms, timing, context, interference, competing messages and others may have an impact on the effectiveness of communication activities.

BUSINESS LITERACY (10%)

Business literacy
Understands and explains how employers/clients generate revenue and how their operations are conducted. Identifies relevant business drivers and how they impact the business.

Environmental scanning
Continuously analyzes the business environment that includes the client stakeholders and employer.

Industry knowledge
Understands and explains the nature of the employer or client industry or industries. Discusses current issues, opportunities and threats to those industry or industries.

Knowledge of current organizational issues
Takes into consideration the client's or employer's current internal and external business drivers. Performs strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats (SWOT) analyses.

Knowledge of business technology and trends
Understands technology trends and how they apply to the business of the client field.

Understands all levels of management

Recognizes chain of command including senior leadership, middle management, direct line supervisor to the line worker and the distinctions. Analyzes stakeholder needs for purpose of crafting tailored programs. Knows how organizations are horizontally and vertically structured, (e.g., pyramid, flat), and how that affects organizational behavior. Comprehends how organizational structure affects organizational culture and programs.

Uses organization's resources

Identifies other divisions within an organization that need to be involved in any communication program (e.g., legal in the case of product liability).

MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND ISSUES (10%)

Diversity

Identifies and respects a wide range of differences among target audiences (publics). Crafts messages that will help achieve objectives within diverse audiences (publics). Researches the cultural preferences of target audiences (publics) as necessary.

Decision-making abilities

Makes sound, well-informed and objective decisions in a timely manner. Assesses the impact and implications of these decisions.

Leadership skills

Influences others to achieve desired goals. Motivates others. Builds coalitions. Inspires and motivates. Communicates vision.

Looking beyond prejudices/mind-set

Considers and accommodates alternative views to obtain alternative views on an issue or crisis, and factors this information into a communication strategy and into message construction.

Organizational skills

Manages the efficient sequencing and execution of work. Integrates multiple dimensions of a public relations campaign. Integrates internal and external components so that there is a synergy between the messages. Staggers a campaign to ensure timely rollout of different tasks for maximum effectiveness. Adjusts the planned rollout of events as necessary to account for success or failures of previous campaign activity. Identifies bottlenecks in a campaign and develops workarounds. Prioritizes tasks and selects those most appropriate.

Problem-solving skills

Distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical judgments. Identifies the sources of problems, evaluates opportunities for resolution and devises appropriate course of action based on situational context and factual information. Uses sound reasoning to arrive at conclusions. Finds alternative solutions to complex problems.

Sensitivity to cultural concerns

Conducts research to determine cultural concerns of affected audiences (publics). Understands how to develop strategies and messages that are relevant and meaningful to different groups.

Team building

Builds and maintains positive work environment. Recognizes and optimizes talents of others. Involves others in planning and decision-making. Celebrates success of individual contributors and the team as a whole.

CRISIS COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT (10%)

Understands different phases of a crisis

Understands the roles and responsibilities of public relations at the pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis phases. Communicates the implications of each of these phases and understands the messaging needs of each.

Risk management capabilities
Identifies potential risks. Analyzes probability and potential impact of risk. Develops and deploys appropriate responses and controls for risk events.

MEDIA RELATIONS (5%)

Media relations
Understands the relationships between public relations professionals, journalists and media organizations. Builds effective relations with mass and specialized media based on mutual respect and trust.

News sensibility
Relates current events and trends to employers/clients and markets. Analyzes current events and trends for opportunities and threats.

Understands media
Considers strengths and weaknesses of various media (e.g., radio, print, Web sites, blogs, television). Identifies and uses appropriate media for communicating with external audiences (all publics). Identifies influencers of different media. Selects appropriate media outlets for delivering message. Distinguishes lead times for different media. Identifies major changes resulting from the widespread use of new communications technology. Understands the roles of current and emerging technologies.

Understands distribution systems
Understands information distribution systems including: publicity, advertising, special events, face-to-face communication, third-party communication, promotion and other distribution techniques between sender and receiver.

USING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EFFICIENTLY (2%)

Information management
Identifies the types of information needed to be collected, evaluated and retained. Knows how to obtain the information and store it, using information technology, so that it can be retrieved easily for future use.

Knowledge of distribution channels
Selects appropriate traditional and non-traditional media, themes and strategies to disseminate message. Deploys public relations tools (media kits, news releases, media alerts, backgrounders, biographies, media contact lists, news conferences/briefings/tours) appropriately.

Technology literacy
Understands the power, as well as the limitations of the Internet and other technology that can be applied to public relations, as both a tool for clients and a weapon against clients. Properly analyzes Internet usage data and its meaning for the public relations campaign. Uses current technology, as appropriate, to plan, manage and evaluate public relations programs. Investigates emerging technologies as possible public relations tools.

HISTORY OF AND CURRENT ISSUES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS (2%)

Knowledge of the field of public relations
Identifies key figures in the history of public relations (George Creel, Edward Bernays, Arthur W. Page, etc.) and their contributions to the field. Identifies and describes major trends in the development of public relations as it is practiced today. Identifies key forces that influenced the field of public relations and describes their impact. Is familiar with the origins of earlier and outmoded stereotypes of the public relations profession.

Defines and differentiates among related concepts, including publicity, advertising, marketing, press agentry, public affairs, issues management, lobbying, investor relations.

ADVANCED COMMUNICATION SKILLS (1%)

Consensus-building

Uses consensus-building strategies and techniques to persuade key stakeholders to support a decision. Ensures that key stakeholders have an opportunity to express their opinions.

Consulting skills

Identifies a problem or opportunity, analyzes its causes and its implications and impacts on affected parties and other stakeholders. Manages conflict, generates alternatives, makes sound recommendations and assists in implementing them.

Negotiating skills

Conducts discussions with affected parties and other stakeholders to find a mutually acceptable solution to problems.

For Readiness Review / KSAs Tested, see Appendix A.