



Accreditation Chair's Tool Kit



ADVANCING THE PROFESSION
AND THE PROFESSIONAL.

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Welcome from PRSA

Dear Accreditation Chair:

As Accreditation chair for your Chapter, you have the important task of preparing your fellow practitioners for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.

Accreditation is a coveted designation and the hallmark for the public relations profession. We want to ensure that you have the tools to support your candidates. This Accreditation Chair's Tool Kit, provided by Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), is designed to make this job a bit less daunting.

Please take some time to flip through the Tool Kit and begin the process of building your own Accreditation program. As you do, keep in mind that adaptation is the key. We encourage you to customize the program to your members' needs. Every Chapter will use the Tool Kit differently – adjust the materials according to their own unique scenario. The sample timelines, checklists, newsletter stories, letters and other items should be considered a guide and may not always follow the format or parameters of your particular program. Your Chapter may, for example, elect to have a one, all-day workshop instead of five separate sessions.

We hope that this Tool Kit will help free you from having to plot out an entire Accreditation program from scratch. The materials are meant to inspire your creativity, not hinder it.

On behalf of the PRSA Accreditation Marketing Committee members, we thank you for giving your service to the Chapter and Society by serving as Accreditation chair. Remember this, as you endeavor to increase the numbers of the Accredited, you are raising the standard for all public relations practitioners. For more Accreditation information, please visit www.praccreditation.org.

Thank you.

Merrie Meyers-Kershaw, APR, Fellow PRSA
Co-Chair, 2005 PRSA Accreditation
Marketing Committee

Carol Skaff, APR
Co-Chair, 2005 PRSA Accreditation
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Section 2

Your Role as Accreditation Chair

Outline

Section 2: Your Role as Accreditation Chair

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Your Role as Accreditation Chair

Congratulations! You have taken on an essential role with the Accreditation in Public Relations program. As Accreditation chair for your participating organization or local Chapter, you play an important part in improving the practice of public relations. This guide is designed to help you conduct and improve your Accreditation program by familiarizing yourself with the information given to candidates for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations, as well as information you need to know to better perform your role.

Before delving further into this guide, please be sure to notify the manager of Accreditation, Kathy Mulvihill, that you are the Accreditation chair for your participating organization or local Chapter. You can reach her at (212) 460-1436 or kathy.mulvihill@prsa.org. Kathy can sign you up for APRserve, an e-mail forum that is a great place for sharing information with other Accreditation chairs.

What to Expect

Some candidates will look to you to advise them on how to prepare for the Examination and will have a lot of contact with you throughout the process. Others might have very little contact with you, and you might only hear from them when they decide to take the Examination and to schedule their Readiness Review. No matter what assistance candidates might ask of you, this guide gives you everything you need to appropriately advise them.

One of your basic responsibilities is to see that members properly prepare for the Examination. Many participating organizations view Accreditation preparation as an opportunity to help their members assess their skill levels, supplement their knowledge and prove their professional competence. The participating organizations do this by providing review sessions, seminars and structured personal study programs using buddy or mentoring systems. It is also helpful for candidates to team up for study or for an experienced practitioner to lead them in a study course. A word of caution: the practitioner you select to lead the review course must be a competent lecturer/discussion leader who is an expert on the particular topics under discussion. We suggest working closely with local colleges and universities. In some cases, these local institutions can provide, at no cost, facilities where courses may be conducted. A separate guide on how to conduct review courses is available if you wish to offer these sessions to candidates.

But perhaps the most valuable role you play is that of an information source. Make yourself available to candidates and encourage them to ask questions about the process. If there is a question you can't answer, put the candidate in contact with Kathy Mulvihill, manager of Accreditation, who can help.

Your role will be much easier if you take the time to familiarize yourself with the Examination by reviewing the following materials: the Examination process charts; FAQs; list of Readiness Review areas of competence; Readiness Review portfolio preparation instructions for candidates; detailed list of knowledge, skills and abilities tested in the Examination; and the short bookshelf

of texts recommended for study. By reading this information in advance, when asked a question you will readily know where to turn for the answer.

Promoting Accreditation

In addition to advising candidates taking the Examination, your job as Accreditation chair is to promote Accreditation. This should be a year-round activity and may include a number of techniques successfully used by Universal Accreditation Board participating organizations. A list of Accreditation chairs is included in this guide so that you can contact others and share strategies and information.

Some techniques successfully used include publishing testimonials on the value of Accreditation and publicizing the value of Accreditation to prospective employees and recruiters through local media outlets. For example, some participating organizations place ads in local business journals congratulating newly Accredited members to further raise awareness of Accreditation. Speaking at participating organization or local Chapter meetings about the value of Accreditation also helps to promote the program and is encouraged by the UAB. In some cases, public relations practitioners who are not members of a UAB member organization have joined because of the relationships built while studying for the Examination. This has occurred in those instances where Accreditation information meetings, recruitment events and study sessions are announced in local newspapers.

Maintenance of Accreditation

Candidates who pass the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations are required to maintain Accreditation. To maintain Accreditation, a member must demonstrate continuing professional development in the profession. An Accredited practitioner is required to earn 10 points in activities in continuing education, professionalism or service categories every three years. The Maintenance of Accreditation application outlines the activities and acceptable credits. The Accredited practitioner should complete the application and submit it to Kathy Mulvihill, manager of Accreditation, by the due date with a \$50 fee required to cover the processing costs. UAB staff sends several reminders to Accredited practitioners throughout the three-year maintenance cycle. A Maintenance of Accreditation application is available online at www.praccreditation.org.

An Accredited member who is unable to complete the maintenance requirements in a three-year period may be granted a one-year extension, upon application. Letters requesting an extension should be sent to Kathy Mulvihill, manager of Accreditation. If the requirements are not completed after this extension period, the member's Accreditation will be revoked.

Reinstatement will require taking the Examination again. Members who are granted membership retirement status may apply for Accreditation Retirement Status. During the time they hold retirement status, members are exempt from maintenance.

A Final Note

Thank you for taking on the role of Accreditation chair. Your contribution is very important, and we applaud you for your commitment.

The Examination Process for Accreditation Chairs

Accreditation Chair's Process for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations

1. Identify Eligible APR Candidates

- a. Become familiar with the computer-based Examination and support materials
- b. Recruit, identify and invite candidates; promote value and benefits of Accreditation
- c. Identify volunteers to work with you as coaches, mentors and Readiness Review panelists
- d. Guide volunteers to ensure that they are familiar with materials appropriate for their roles
- e. Receive names of candidates approved in your area from UAB

2. Deliver Coaching, Mentoring, Support Services

- a. Secure access code for UAB-provided online Coach's Guide
- b. Use Coach's Guide in combination with online exercises, reference materials and Online Study Course to deliver local prep program
- c. Offer prep support, mentoring and other resources to candidates

3. Schedule Readiness Review

- a. Receive notification of candidate request for Readiness Review from UAB
- b. Receive four copies of Readiness Review Questionnaire from candidate
- c. Distribute candidate's questionnaire and panelists' materials to three Readiness Review panelists at least 10 business days in advance of Readiness Review
- d. Explain what is required and time commitment, i.e., approximately two hours to review each candidate's written submission and develop questions to ask during the session, and one-to-two hours for each Readiness Review (see [Panelist Instructions](#))
- e. Designate Readiness Review panel chair
- f. Schedule candidate(s) for Readiness Review

4. Conduct Readiness Review

- a. Conduct review, vote to Advance/Not Advance candidate to computer-based Examination
- b. Counsel candidate on additional preparation needed for computer-based Examination
- c. Send original copy of Questionnaire and scoring forms to UAB
- d. Receive UAB notification of Advance/Not Advance status unless candidate has requested that it not do so
- e. If candidate is Not Advanced, re-schedule Readiness Review upon candidate's request no sooner than 90 days after first Review
- f. If candidate is Advanced, provide support and encouragement to proceed to the computer-based Examination while preparation is fresh

5. Candidate Takes Examination

- a. Create supportive environment for candidate; encourage additional preparation if he or she does not succeed in taking the computer-based Examination
- b. Receive UAB notification of results unless candidate has requested that it not share the results

6. Schedule Celebration

- a. Schedule APR presentation/celebration at local event

Frequently Asked Questions About Accreditation

Here are the answers to the most-asked questions about the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations:

What is Accreditation?

The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations is a voluntary certification program for public relations professionals, administered by the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB).

What is the Universal Accreditation Board?

The Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) comprises one chair and representatives from each participating organization. Each member serves a three-year term. The UAB oversees the Accreditation program and 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. Responsibilities of the Universal Accreditation Board include the following:

- Developing and implementing policy for the program
- Developing and maintaining the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations
- Reviewing appeal cases
- Granting of Accreditation

What is the purpose of Accreditation?

The purpose is to unify and advance the profession by identifying those who have demonstrated broad knowledge, experience and professional judgment in the field. The program seeks to improve public relations practice. The designation “Accredited in Public Relations” (APR) signifies a high professional level of experience and competence.

Why become Accredited?

Increasingly, job listings are specifying “APR preferred.” Senior public relations professionals have been outspoken in support of Accreditation. “APR is a symbol of professionalism. It demonstrates that individuals have the knowledge, ethics and experience that set them apart. It also demonstrates that they care about their own profession and that they are dedicated to enhancing their own personal abilities.” Joe S. Epley, APR, Fellow PRSA, Chairman and CEO of Counsel, Epley Associates, Charlotte, NC.

How old is the Accreditation Program?

The program originated in 1964 and was administered by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) until 1998, when the Universal Accreditation Board was formed to administer the Examination. Participating organizations include the Agricultural Relations Council, Florida Public Relations Association, Maine Public Relations Council, National School Public Relations Association, Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), Religion Communicators Council, Southern Public Relations Federation, Texas Public Relations Association and Asociación de Relacionistas Profesionales de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico Public Relations Association)

Who is eligible?

The Examination was designed for members of UAB participating organizations who have at least five years of paid experience in the full-time practice or in the teaching of public relations and who have earned a bachelor’s degree in a communication-specific field (e.g., public relations, journalism, mass communication) or have equivalent work experience, which includes public relations principles, public relations writing, public relations campaigns, research, ethics

and law and internship (practical experience under supervision). Also, non-members who belong to member organizations of the North American Public Relations Council (NAPRC) and who meet the same requirements as members are eligible.

What is the fee to take the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations?

The fee is \$385 plus a \$25 application fee (waived for those candidates who pay in full at the time of application). Several of UAB's participating organizations offer their members a rebate for a portion of the examination fee as a member benefit. PRSA offers a \$110 rebate to its members upon completion of the Examination.

How do I apply to take the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations?

If you are eligible to take the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations, you can download an application form (http://www.praccreditation.org/become_an_apr/applications.asp), complete and send it to the contact and address listed on the application.

Is Accreditation good for life?

Yes, with fulfillment of Maintenance of Accreditation requirements and continued membership in a participating organization. Every three years, PRSA members Accredited after January 1, 1993 and participating organization members Accredited after January 1, 1998, and PRSA members Accredited after January 1, 1993 must accumulate the required number of points in continuing education, professionalism or service categories as part of the Maintenance of Accreditation Program. This further strengthens the value of the APR credential and keeps professionals actively involved in the currents of the public relations profession.

Accreditation Chairs' Frequently Asked Questions

Here are the answers to the most-asked questions from Accreditation chairs about the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations:

How is the current Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations different from the previous version?

The computer-based portion of the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations is in a multiple-choice question format and takes three hours and forty-five minutes to complete. It tests what public relations professionals do in the 21st century and maintains a high level of quality, is credible and relevant to today's practitioner, and employs current best practices in professional certification testing.

Candidates can take the Examination at their convenience at more than 300 Prometric Testing Centers in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. Strict confidentiality procedures are enforced, and feedback and results are available quickly. A Readiness Review prior to the candidate taking the computer-based portion includes a portfolio review and assessment of the candidate's readiness to take the Examination. The local Readiness Review panel (comprising Accredited members) coaches each candidate to determine his or her areas of weakness and helps identify specific areas of the body of knowledge in which the candidate should focus further study. The panel provides candidates with a specific set of textbook references related to these areas. Candidates may not take the computer-based Examination until they have advanced from the Readiness Review. See Readiness Review section for more information.

What has remained the same is the high level of confidentiality. All members of the Universal Accreditation Board, all volunteers and fellow study partners are bound to confidentiality about the identity of candidates.

Can a multiple-choice examination accurately test knowledge, skills and abilities?

Yes. Multiple-choice examinations eliminate subjectivity in scoring and achieve consistency with best practices in certification examinations. The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations has been developed according to the best practices in professional certification testing. Content is directly tied to the Professional Practice Analysis conducted in 2000. The Examination is reliable and valid and can differentiate those candidates who have attained professional mastery from those who have not.

According to Educational Testing and Measurement by Kubiszyn & Borich, with the multiple-choice format:

- Higher-level knowledge can be tested with well-written multiple-choice items.
- Since writing is minimized, a substantial amount of material can be evaluated in a short period.
- Scoring is highly objective, which allows for more reliable results.
- Cost of evaluating the examination is significantly reduced.
- Efficiency of evaluating the examination and reporting scores increases.

Are there other organizations that rely on multiple-choice examinations for their certification process?

Yes. Many professional organizations base their certification process on multiple-choice testing, including the Graduate Record Examination, the Graduate Management Admission Test, the American College, American Institute of CPAs, the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists, Institute for Certification of Management Accountants, Project Management Institute, Information Technology Certification Tests, Microsoft, Novell, CompTIA, the Test of English as a Foreign Language and Excemior College.

How does the Examination test what public relations professionals do today?

In developing the Examination, the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) used a complex, multi-year scientific process to ensure that the Examination measures the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities public relations professionals must have today. Following the Professional Practice Analysis in 2000, the UAB recruited subject-matter experts to review the data from the practice analysis and organize it into more refined categories for the public relations profession. As a result, the UAB identified a final list of 60 competencies that a public relations professional must possess to perform his or her work effectively.

Not every public relations practitioner does the same thing on the job. How does the Examination account for that?

The UAB recognized that not all 60 competencies contribute equally to effective job performance. It was important to determine differences in the frequency, criticality, and importance of the competencies to job performance in order to develop an accurate certification examination. This was accomplished with the Practice Analysis and an additional survey of subject matter experts. The Examination only tests competencies that the experts say are required

in the five-to-seven-year range. Following are the 10 areas of professional practice the Examination will cover:

- Research, planning, implementing and evaluating programs - 30 percent
- Ethics and law - 15 percent
- Communication models and theories - 15 percent
- Business literacy - 10 percent
- Management skills and issues - 10 percent
- Crisis communication management - 10 percent
- Media relations - 5 percent
- History of and current issues in public relations - 2 percent
- Using information technology efficiently - 2 percent
- Advanced communication skills - 1 percent



Section 3

Recruitment of Prospects

Outline

Section 3: Recruitment of Prospects

Outreach: Candidates

Sample Newsletter and E-mail Articles and Web postings

- Accreditation Assessment
- Newsletter Call for Candidates
- Process for Accreditation
- Value of Accreditation
- Meeting Announcements/APR Candidates' Orientation
- Sample Script
- Stump Speech (PowerPoint)

Marketing the APR Prep Orientation Sessions

- Sample Flyer
- Outline for APR Q&A
- PowerPoint (Overview)
- Tri-fold brochure

Information for Candidates

- Candidate Frequently Asked Questions

Recruitment of Prospects

Accreditation Assessment

Several members of the CHAPTER NAME are exploring professional Accreditation, and discovering candidates' needs will be critical to designing a preparatory curriculum. To assist, candidates are asked to complete an Accreditation Assessment surveying the candidate's level of knowledge and interest. Whether you are studying for your APR or are simply curious about the process, log onto CHAPTER WEB SITE and find the Assessment for Accreditation Candidates form. (shown below)

If you're pursuing Accreditation, the prep courses will help you gain confidence and feel prepared for the Readiness Review panel and subsequent 4-hour computerized Accreditation Examination. You don't have to be an APR candidate to participate in the Accreditation preparatory process. If you're already Accredited or have elected not to take the Examination, the study process will be an excellent professional development opportunity.

If you plan to become a candidate for professional Accreditation, please complete the Accreditation Assessment no later than DATE and return to NAME/ADDRESS. For more information contact ACCREDITATION CHAIR.
(See next page for Assessment)

Public Relations Society of America Assessment for Accreditation Candidates

Return to NAME/ADDRESS/CITY/STATE/ZIP, no later than DATE.

NAME:

E-mail:

Please complete the questions below to the best of your knowledge at this time. Your answers will not obligate you in any way, but will help guide the design and creation of our Accreditation program.

Are you interested in taking the Accreditation exam in 2006?

(Circle one) Yes No Maybe

If yes, what is your motivation for pursuing Accreditation at this time?

If no, what timeframe were you considering for the test? _____

Have you submitted your Accreditation application to PRSA National and paid the application fee?

(Circle one) Yes No

Have you purchased any of the suggested textbooks? If so, which ones?

Please rate your level of knowledge/skill in these areas:

	<u>Lowest</u>					<u>Highest</u>
History and Current Issues	1	2	3	4	5	5
Definitions of Public Relations Functions	1	2	3	4	5	5
Communication Models & Theories	1	2	3	4	5	5
Business Literacy	1	2	3	4	5	5
Ethics and Law	1	2	3	4	5	5
Research/Planning/Evaluation	1	2	3	4	5	5
Campaign Development	1	2	3	4	5	5
Management Skills/Issues	1	2	3	4	5	5
Crisis Communications	1	2	3	4	5	5
Information Technology	1	2	3	4	5	5
Media Relations	1	2	3	4	5	5
Consensus Building/Negotiating	1	2	3	4	5	5

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Are you interested in taking Accreditation preparatory/ professional development courses?
(Circle one) Yes No Maybe

Would you prefer an instructor who is: (Check one only)
_____ A Practitioner from our PRSA Chapter
_____ An Educator from an area University
_____ A Regional/National Presenter

Are you willing to pay for the class(es)?
(Circle one) Yes No Maybe

If yes, what value would you place on the preparatory course? (Check one only)
_____ \$20-\$35/session
_____ \$35-\$50/session
_____ \$150/comprehensive course
_____ Other: \$ _____

Would you be more interested in the online Study Course being offered by PRSA National at \$195?
(Circle one) Yes No Maybe

Do you currently have a portfolio of work to present at your Readiness Review?
(Circle one) Yes No In Process

Would you like to be assigned a mentor?
(Circle one) Yes No Maybe

If yes, did you have a specific person in mind? _____

Do you have any other specific needs or questions with regard to the Accreditation process?

Thank you!

Newsletter Call for Candidates

Accreditation is an ideal way to enrich your industry knowledge, achieve a standard of education and distinguish yourself in an increasingly competitive industry. If you have a desire to advance, consider pursuing the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations. Society guidelines suggest that candidates have between five and seven years experience. However, if you feel ready before that time, you can apply.

The Accreditation process includes:

- Application and fee payment online at www.praccreditation.org;
- Candidate preparation, which may be self-study, local classes or the Online Study Course offered by PRSA;
- Candidate portfolio development in preparation for the Readiness Review;
- Readiness Review, where the candidate presents his/her portfolio to a panel of Accredited professionals;
- Computer-based Examination, which can be scheduled at any time at a local Prometric Testing Center. A multiple-choice test is administered and results are available within two to four weeks.

Study aids and recommended readings are available online. Organized workshops, informal study sessions and assigned mentors are available locally. If you're interested in learning more about Accreditation, contact APR CHAIR'S NAME at PHONE/E-MAIL.

Are You Considering Professional Accreditation?

Accreditation was first introduced in 1965 as a standard for PRSA membership and at one time, up to 35% of PRSA members had achieved their APR. Today, with only 21% Accredited, a re-engineered process is designed to cater to the realities of life, work, professional development and our everyday practice. The Examination, launched in 2003, is multiple-choice, computer-delivered and scored, and may be scheduled at the candidate's convenience. With a more streamlined process, the Examination focuses on knowledge, skills and abilities critical to our profession.

A minimum of five years' experience is recommended to take the Examination. If you're interested in pursuing professional Accreditation, you may begin by completing the application form located at www.praccreditationboard.org and submitting it with payment to Kathy Mulvihill, PRSA Accreditation manager. A study guide and recommended texts are available online.

Candidates may prepare according to their own needs, accessing either the PRSA Online Study Course available for \$195 or local classes including INSERT INFO HERE.

Following the preparatory phase, each candidate participates in a Readiness Review in which Accredited professionals determine the candidate's readiness to take the Examination. Once recommended studies are fulfilled, candidates are free to schedule the Examination at a Prometric Testing Center at his/her convenience.

A single payment of \$385 covers the full process cost and those who elect to pay the total up front will not be required to pay the \$25 application fee. As an alternative, candidates may make two equal payments of \$205 each – one at the time of application and one upon successful completion of the Readiness Review, in anticipation of the computer-based Examination. (The \$410 total includes a \$25 application fee.) With either payment schedule, PRSA members will receive a \$110 rebate upon completion of the Examination.

Chapter APRs also have an important role in the Accreditation process. By serving on the Readiness Review panels, mentoring candidates and serving as instructors, Accredited members have an opportunity to refresh their knowledge and provide valued support to fellow practitioners.

If you have the recommended five years' experience in the teaching or practice of public relations and are interested in learning more, please contact LOCAL APR CHAIR.

Value of Accreditation

Looking for an Edge?

Try adding three initials after your name: APR

Accountants have their CPA. Architects have their AIA. Formal credentialing processes exist throughout the medical, real estate, financial and other industries. As a public relations professional, you have the opportunity to sharpen your craft and distinguish yourself by achieving the Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) credential.

The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations process is designed to raise the bar for public relations professionals and advance our profession among employers, clients and the media. By growing the ranks of APRs among us, we can promote excellence, a standard of knowledge and our code of professional ethics.

Accreditation was first introduced in 1965 as a standard for PRSA membership and at one time, up to 35% of PRSA members had achieved their APR. Today, with only 22% accredited, a re-engineered process is designed to cater to the realities of life, work, professional development and our everyday practice. Introduced in July 2003, the Accreditation Examination is 100% multiple choice, computer-delivered and scored, and may be scheduled at the candidate's convenience. With a more streamlined process, the exam focuses on critical knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs).

A minimum of five years' experience is recommended and candidates may begin the process by completing the application form at www.praccreditationboard.org and submitting it with payment to Kathy Mulvihill, Accreditation manager, Public Relations Society of America, 33 Maiden Lane, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10038. For more information contact LOCAL ACCREDITATION CHAIR/PHONE/E-MAIL.

Meeting Announcements/APR Candidates' Orientation

If you're committed to pursuing professional Accreditation or simply contemplating it for the future, you probably have questions. Accreditation Chair NAME is planning an orientation session for TIME/DAY/DATE/PLACE. Among the topics will be:

- Review of Accreditation Process
- Review of Knowledge, Skills & Abilities to be tested
- Review of reference texts
- Discussion of Readiness Review
- Examination fee and other costs
- APR candidate's checklist & schedule

Please come prepared to share your questions and insights. Readiness Review panelists and other interested parties are also welcome.

A minimum of five years' experience in public relations and related fields is recommended. If you plan to attend the orientation, or would like to but can't make this date, please notify NAME/PHONE/E-MAIL. Information on the Accreditation process may also be found at www.praccreditation.org.

Sample Script

Public Relations Accreditation: A Competitive Advantage

What is Accreditation?

What exactly is Accreditation? Accreditation is a formal credentialing process for the public relations professional. Public Relations Accreditation is designed to provide a standard of knowledge and an ideal model for achieving optimum success in our profession. Accreditation has been available to public relations practitioners for nearly 50 years. During this time, the Accreditation process has essentially remained unchanged. In July 2003, recognizing the need to keep pace with today's realities, a new program was launched that is tailored to the needs of business, life and our everyday practice.

Accreditation: A Brief History

- Introduced in 1965 by PRSA.
- At one time, up to 35% of PRSA members Accredited.
- Today, closer to 22% are Accredited.
- Examination process was not tailored for today's professional.
- Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) formed in 1998 to re-engineer examination.

To understand how the process was arrived at, we'll cover a brief history. PRSA Accreditation began in 1965 and was originally intended as a minimum standard for joining the Society. Over the years, the exam consisted roughly of a day-long written essay test conducted at limited, set times throughout the year. The written test was coupled with a panel discussion between the candidate and Accredited professionals who evaluated the candidate's oral skills and theory application. Test results were not available for several months after the exam period. With an

increasing number of corporate crises and the incorporation of the Internet which has created 24/7 news cycles, new pressures have been placed on public relations professionals, increasing the need for critical knowledge and skills. To help address these needs and modernize the process, the Universal Accreditation Board – which includes PRSA and other allied groups – was formed in 1998. By tailoring the Examination to the realities of today’s professional, the hope was that Accreditation would increase, thus reinforcing a higher standard for our profession.

What Does Accreditation Accomplish?

- Emphasizes the science of public relations.
- Legitimizes and lends credibility.
- Standardizes our knowledge.
- Holds practitioners accountable.

How Does Accreditation Benefit Us As Individuals?

- Enhances reputation.
- Increases industry knowledge.
- Enhances self-esteem.
- Increases value and marketability to clients/employers/media.
- Accredited professionals earn nearly 20% more than non-Accredited professionals, according to a PR Week 2005 survey.

So how does Accreditation benefit us as individuals? As an Accredited professional, I am often asked what the APR initials after my name mean. Each time I have the opportunity to explain the rigors of the coursework and the Examination; it gives me a competitive edge in the minds of employers, clients and colleagues. It increases my own industry knowledge which, regardless of my education or when I last studied, gives me confidence in my practice and increases my value to clients, employers and the media. In fact, according to PR Week’s 2005 salary survey, Accredited professionals earn nearly 20% more than non-Accredited professionals. Ultimately, the value of Accreditation is determined by each individual and the value you place on achieving a higher standard of knowledge, skills and abilities.

How Does Accreditation Benefit the Chapter/Society?

- Raises the industry standard.
- Creates a source of pride.
- Challenges and motivates junior members.
- Offers upper-level, seasoned APRs the opportunity to engage in mentoring and teaching roles.

As beneficial as Accreditation is for the individual, it holds critical advantages for the Chapter and the Society as a whole by creating higher ideals and raising the overall esteem of the profession. Increasing the ranks of APRs raises the caliber of our profession and creates a source of pride. On a Chapter level, it provides a higher standard to which less experienced members can aspire, and provides an opportunity to re-enlist more senior members whose interest and involvement may have waned.

Why Aren't More PRSA Members Accredited?

- Currently 21% of PRSA members are Accredited.
- Approximately 50% are eligible.
- Lack of time is an issue.
- So is perceived lack of value.

With all the advantages Accreditation offers to the individual and to our profession, why aren't more of us compelled to seek our Accreditation? Currently, approximately 21% of PRSA members are Accredited; approximately 50% are eligible to seek Accreditation. Many professionals cite a lack of time as a major factor in their decision not to seek Accreditation. Ultimately, we know that many professionals simply do not see the benefits of being Accredited. In a moment we'll talk more about how the examination process has been streamlined. Right now I'd like to ask a couple of our own APRs to come forward and share how Accreditation has benefited them professionally. (Introduce members. Allow 3-5 minutes of testimonials from local APRs.)

What's New About the Accreditation Process?

- Examination – Computer-delivered and scored, 100% multiple-choice, three-hour, forty-five minute examination, scheduled at the candidate's convenience.
- Readiness Review Panel – Candidates' readiness to take examination is evaluated by local APRs.
- Examination results within two to four weeks.

We believe that as public relations professionals understand the advantage of becoming Accredited, interest in the Examination will increase. With a newly re-engineered process launched in July 2003, we are confident that candidates will truly increase their professional value. Let's examine how the process compares with its predecessor. Under the former process, candidates were required to take an all-day, hand-written essay examination which was only available once or twice a year in their area. The Examination is now computer-delivered and scored, multiple-choice, lasts three-hours, forty-five minutes and is scheduled at the candidates' convenience at a Prometric Testing Center. Secondly, the former process included an oral presentation at which candidates would sit with a panel of local APRs. With today's Examination, the oral presentation has been converted to a Readiness Review and is designed to determine the candidate's "readiness" to take the Examination. Finally, since the Examination is administered and scored by computer, results are available within two to four weeks.

What Is the Focus of the Examination?

- 30% research, planning, implementation, evaluation
- 15% ethics and law
- 15% communication models and theories
- 10% business literacy
- 10% management skills and issues
- 10% crisis communication management
- 5% media relations
- 2% information technology
- 2% history/current issues in public relations

- 1% advanced communication skills

So what is the focus of the Examination? Questions have been designed to evaluate a candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities in 10 areas, including research/planning/implementation/evaluation, ethics and law, communication models and theories, business literacy, management skills and issues, crisis communications, media relations, information technology, history and current issues, and advanced communication skills. Many practitioners have inquired about the change from an all-essay to a multiple-choice examination, and whether the material is as challenging. Feedback from 168 beta test subjects suggests the Examination is every bit as rigorous as the essay version. The multiple-choice format has been carefully designed to test a candidate's critical knowledge, skills and abilities, but in a more streamlined process. Given that each of us practices Public Relations differently, with varying emphases and needs, preparation for the Examination will vary for each of us. Because of this, a variety of support is available to help candidates in their preparation.

Preparing for the Accreditation Examination

- www.praccreditation.org
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Candidate's Checklist
- A Candidate's Preparation Guide
- 10 Suggested Textbooks
- Online Study Course
- Local and Regional Workshops
- Local Chapter Mentoring/Coaching

A wealth of resources are available to help you decide whether to pursue Accreditation, and then to help you prepare. To begin, log onto www.praccreditation.org for answers to frequently asked questions, an eligibility application, a short bookshelf of textbooks and a candidate's preparation guide. You may prefer a more self-directed process and in that case, the Online Study Course might be beneficial for you. If you prefer to learn in a group setting, contact our Chapter Accreditation chair (NAME) and discuss what classes and study groups are available locally. Resources are available through Kathy Mulvihill, PRSA manager of Accreditation. If you already have your APR, you can still benefit from the textbooks, workshops and other preparatory materials available. In many cases, the workshops are attended by current APRs who wish to sharpen their knowledge and by future candidates interested in a more long-term study approach.

How to Begin

If you'd like to learn more about how to achieve Accreditation, you can start by logging onto www.praccreditation.org. Once there, you'll be able to apply for eligibility and review the Frequently Asked Questions. After that, your two main contacts will be [INSERT NAME], our Chapter Accreditation chair, and Kathy Mulvihill, the PRSA Accreditation manager.

Accreditation Investment

Public Relations Accreditation is an educational endeavor and thus requires an investment of both time and money. In many cases, the costs may be supplemented or covered entirely by your employer. For independent practitioners, Accreditation is a tax-deductible professional

development activity. Regardless of its value to your financial bottom line, consider its value to you personally and its effect on your marketability. You heard from other Accredited members of our Chapter today. The decision is yours. I'd like to open up the floor to questions at this time.

- Two options: \$385 up front or two payments of \$205 each (includes \$25 application fee)
- \$110 rebate to PRSA members

Optional:

- Online Candidate's Preparation Guide \$25
- Selected Texts (costs vary)
- Online Study Course \$195 (PRSA members)
- Local/Regional Workshops (costs vary)

Q & A

Speaker should be prepared to answer questions about the UAB, its participating organizations, recent numbers of those who have taken the Examination and the pass rate (available from Kathy Mulvihill at PRSA National), Maintenance of Accreditation, and the local Chapter Accreditation program.

PowerPoint

Public Relations Accreditation: A Competitive Advantage



Notes: _____

PowerPoint

What is Accreditation?

What is Accreditation?

A recognized standard of knowledge, skills and abilities for the public relations industry.



Notes: _____

PowerPoint

Accreditation: A Brief History

Accreditation: A Brief History

- Introduced in 1965 by PRSA.
- At one time, up to 35% of PRSA members were Accredited.
- Today, closer to 22% are Accredited.
- Exam process was not tailored for today's professional.
- Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) formed in 1998 to re-engineer the Examination.



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What Does Accreditation Accomplish?

What Does Accreditation Accomplish?

- Emphasizes the science of Public Relations.
- Legitimizes and lends credibility.
- Standardizes our knowledge.
- Holds practitioners accountable.



Notes: _____

PowerPoint

How Does Accreditation Benefit the Individual?

How Does Accreditation Benefit the Individual?

- Enhances reputation.
- Increases industry knowledge.
- Enhances self-esteem.
- Increases value and marketability to clients/employers/media.
- Accredited professionals earn nearly 20% more than non-Accredited professionals, according to PR Week 2005 survey.



Notes: _____

PowerPoint

How Does Accreditation Benefit the Chapter/Society?

How Does Accreditation Benefit the Chapter/Society?

- Raises the industry standard.
- Creates a source of pride.
- Challenges and motivates junior members.
- Offers upper-level, seasoned APRs the opportunity to engage in mentoring and teaching roles.



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Why Aren't more PRSA Members Accredited?

Why Aren't More PRSA Members Accredited?

- Currently 21% of PRSA members are Accredited.
- Approximately 50% are eligible.
- Lack of time is an issue.
- So is perceived lack of value.



Notes: _____

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What's New About the Accreditation Process?

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- Examination – Computer-delivered and scored, 100% multiple-choice, three-hour, forty-five minute examination, scheduled at the candidate's convenience.
- Readiness Review Panel – Candidates' readiness to take examination is evaluated by local APRs.
- Examination results within weeks.



Notes: _____

PowerPoint

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- 5% Media relations
- 2% Information technology
- 2% History/current issues in public relations
- 1% Advanced communication skills



Notes: _____

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Preparing for the Accreditation Examination

Preparing for the Accreditation Examination

- www.praccreditation.org
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Candidate's Checklist
- A Candidate's Preparation Guide
- 10 Suggested Textbooks
- Online Study Course
- Local and Regional Workshops
- Local Chapter Mentoring/Coaching



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How To Begin

How To Begin

- Apply for eligibility/review FAQs at www.praccreditation.org.
- Contact your local Chapter Accreditation chair.
- Contact Kathy Mulvihill, PRSA Accreditation manager



Notes: _____

PowerPoint

Accreditation Investment

Accreditation Investment

- Two options: \$385 up front or two payments of \$205 each (includes \$25 application fee)

- \$110 rebate to PRSA members

Optional:

- Online Candidate's Preparation Guide \$25

- Selected Texts (costs vary)

- Online Study Course \$195 (PRSA members)

- Local/Regional Workshops (costs vary)



Notes: _____

PowerPoint Q&A

Q&A



This presentation is available in PowerPoint format. Please contact the Accreditation department at PRSA, 212-460-1436 or accred@prsa.org.

The PRSA Palm Beach and Gulfstream Chapters
present

An Introduction to
The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations



Have you been thinking about taking the APR Examination? Are you interested in learning more about the process and how becoming Accredited can help you achieve your professional goals? Then join us:

DAY, DATE
TIME

LOCATION
ADDRESS
ROOM

Directions: OPTIONAL. MIGHT WANT TO INCLUDE BRIEF DIRECTIONS IF LOCATION IS NOT WELL KNOWN

There is no charge for the course.

For more information and to RSVP,
please contact [INSERT NAME]
TELEPHONE, or via e-mail at
[\[INSERT E-MAIL ADDRESS\]](#)

Public Relations Society of America Professional Accreditation Q&A

- I. What is Accreditation?**
- II. Brief History of Accreditation**
- III. Reasons to Become Accredited**
- IV. Why Aren't More Members Accredited?**
- V. About the Accreditation Process**
- VI. Focus of the Computer-Based Examination**
- VII. Suggestions for Preparing**
Additional handouts: FAQs, copy of short bookshelf, expanded list of competencies
- VIII. How To Begin**
- IX. Requirements/Investment/Preparation**
- X. Q&A**

Power Point

Give yourself the Accreditation Advantage — You, APR



Give yourself
the Accreditation Advantage

You, APR

Presenter
Organization
Date

Notes: _____

Power Point

Give the Accreditation advantage ... to yourself:

Give the Accreditation advantage...

...to yourself:

“Accreditation made a positive impact on how I do my job and how I view the practice of public relations....earning the APR was a challenge; the sense of accomplishment earned is something that will last throughout my career.”

Edward M. Bury, APR
Director of Public Relations
CCIM Institute



Notes: _____

PowerPoint

Give the Accreditation advantage ... to your employers:

Give the Accreditation advantage...

...to your employers:

“Anyone can walk off the street and start ‘practicing public relations.’ Accreditation is what sets apart those who are providing counsel that is strategic, managing relationships with constituents through good and bad times, and contributing to the success of the business. It's sorely needed in our industry, more than ever.”

Kelly Groehler, APR
Account Supervisor
Padilla Speer Beardsley



Notes: _____

PowerPoint

Give the Accreditation advantage ... to the profession:

Give the Accreditation advantage...

...to the profession:

"I wanted to take the APR exam to reassure myself that I had what it takes to operate professionally in this industry...[Accreditation] gives them more confidence in the results that public relations efforts can produce. The APR program is a great support for an often misunderstood industry."

Sonya Ruffin, APR
Public Information Officer
Nevada State Contractors Board



Notes: _____

PowerPoint

What are we going to talk about?

What are we going to talk about?

96% of Accredited professionals find the APR credential valuable

- Accreditation sets industry standards
- Making Accreditation personal
- Resources
- Accreditation and our changing profession



Notes: _____

PowerPoint

Accreditation sets professional standards

Accreditation sets professional standards

93% of Accredited professionals agree the Examination covers the KSAs needed to succeed.

■ Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

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



Notes: _____

PowerPoint

Accreditation defines the profession

Accreditation defines the profession

Accredited professionals find the process establishes the practice as strategic (93%) and ethical (91%).

- **Sets standards**
 - “science” of public relations
- **Legitimizes profession**
 - standards
 - uniformity
- **Builds accountable**
 - ethics
 - legal knowledge



Notes: _____

PowerPoint

Accreditation serves changing profession

Accreditation serves changing profession

- Continued high standards
- Brand equity through unified program across many industries, specialties, geographies
- Meeting human resource recruiting criteria
- Increased visibility among business and human resource communities



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PowerPoint

Taking Accreditation personally

Taking Accreditation personally

94% of those Accredited would become Accredited again.

96% would recommend it to a colleague.

Professionals find Accreditation to

- be a source of pride (91%)
- develop professional skills (78%)
- provide personal benefit (75%)
- help resolve ethical dilemmas (58%)



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PowerPoint

Use Accreditation resources

Use Accreditation resources

- Coaching and mentoring
- Extensive bookshelf of suggested texts
- Online study, prep resources
- Feedback through Readiness Review
- User-friendly Examination
- Improved feedback to candidates
- Candidate-focused scheduling



Notes: _____

PowerPoint

There is no *try*.

There is only *do*. – Yoda

**There is no *try*.
There is only *do*. -Yoda**

- Apply for eligibility at www.praccreditation.org
- Seek coaching support from Accreditation chair
- Integrate online and in-print study materials
- Form local study groups
- Readiness Review
- Computer-based Examination
- Start signing your name: *You, APR!*



**This PowerPoint document is also available on the Web site at
http://www.praccreditation.org/become_an_apr/presentation.pdf**

Candidates Frequently Asked Questions

Here are the answers to the most-asked questions about the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations that candidates may ask:

What is the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations like?

The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations consists of a Readiness Review to help you determine your readiness for the computer-based Examination, and the multiple-choice Examination.

The Readiness Review is conducted by a panel of three Accredited professionals. Through an in-person portfolio review and question-and-answer session, the Readiness Review panel helps you determine your areas of weakness and identify specific areas of the public relations body of knowledge in which you should focus further study. Candidates cannot take the computer-based Examination until they have advanced from the Readiness Review. The Universal Accreditation Board (UAB), all volunteers and fellow study partners are all bound to confidentiality about your participation in process as a candidate.

The computer-based portion of the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations is three hours, forty-five minutes long and is in a multiple-choice format. It tests what public relations professionals do in the 21st century, maintains a high level of quality, is credible and relevant to today's practitioner and employs current best practices in professional certification testing.

You can take the computer-based Examination at your convenience at more than 300 Prometric Testing Centers in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. Strict confidentiality procedures are enforced, and feedback and results are available quickly.

How does the Examination test what public relations professionals do today?

In developing the Examination, the Universal Accreditation Board used a complex, multi-year scientific process to ensure that the Examination measures the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities public relations professionals must have today. Following the Professional Practice Analysis in 2000, the UAB recruited subject-matter experts to review the data from the practice analysis and organize it into more refined categories for the public relations profession. As a result, the UAB identified a final list of 60 competencies or knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that a public relations professional must possess to perform his or her work effectively. The content of the Examination is reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to reflect the current professional practice of public relations.

Not every public relations practitioner does the same thing on the job. How does the Examination account for that?

UAB recognized that not all 60 competencies/KSAs contribute equally to effective job performance. It was important to determine differences in the frequency, criticality and importance of the competencies to job performance in order to develop an accurate certification examination. This was accomplished with the Practice Analysis and an additional survey of subject-matter experts. The Examination tests competencies that the experts say are required in

the five-to-seven-year range. Following are the 10 areas of professional practice the Examination covers:

- Research, planning, implementing and evaluating programs - 30 percent
- Ethics and law - 15 percent
- Communication models and theories - 15 percent
- Business literacy - 10 percent
- Management skills and issues - 10 percent
- Crisis communication management - 10 percent
- Media relations - 5 percent
- History of and current issues in public relations - 2 percent
- Using information technology efficiently - 2 percent
- Advanced communication skills - 1 percent

What happens after I apply to take the Examination?

Once your eligibility is confirmed by UAB, you may request a Readiness Review from your local Accreditation chair. You may prepare for your Readiness Review whenever you want – you can start today – by downloading the [Readiness Review Questionnaire](#) and instructions for preparing your portfolio. Start your preparation as early as possible by downloading the detailed list of Competencies/Knowledge Skills and Abilities and other information from www.praccreditation.org. Once a local Accreditation chair has scheduled your Readiness Review, you must submit the completed Readiness Review Questionnaire to your Accreditation chair no fewer than 15 business days before your scheduled review. Participating organizations may be able to schedule Readiness Reviews at different times, so work closely with your local Accreditation chair to be sure your intended schedule works with your local organization's.

How can I prepare for the Examination?

Many resources are available at www.praccreditation.org. Contact your local Accreditation chair to learn more about how to prepare and what local resources, such as preparation courses, are available. An online, self-study course also is available for an additional fee.

What is the Readiness Review like?

The Readiness Review is a one- to two-hour interview and portfolio review conducted by a panel of three Accredited professionals. The Readiness Review panel helps you determine your areas of strength and weakness and identify specific areas of the body of knowledge in which you should focus further study. Candidates cannot take the computer-based Examination until they have been Advanced from the Readiness Review. The Universal Accreditation Board, all volunteers and fellow study partners are bound to confidentiality about the participation of candidates.

How will I know if the Readiness Review panel has recommended my advancement to the computer-based Examination?

You will be notified of the Readiness Review panel's recommendation to Advance or to Not Advance by the UAB within two to four weeks.

What if I am Not Advanced after the Readiness Review?

Go back and study the areas that you and your Readiness Review panel agreed are areas where you need strength. Review the tips for preparing for the Readiness Review and continue to study for the computer-based Examination as you prepare to request another Readiness Review. You must wait at least 90 days after your first Readiness Review to schedule another.

How do I schedule an appointment for the computer-based Examination?

Once you are notified by UAB that your Readiness Review panel has Advanced you to the computer-based Examination, you will be asked to complete payment of any outstanding fees to UAB. You will then receive a special ID number that you will use to schedule your appointment at one of more than 300 Prometric Testing Centers throughout the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.

What happens if I fail the computer-based Examination?

You may retake the Examination at any time. You will need to notify UAB at 212-460-1436 and pay the Examination fee to get another authorization to take the Examination.



Section 4

Qualification of Candidates

Outline

Section 4: Qualification of Candidates

Web Links

The “Become an APR” section of www.praccreditation.org has a great deal of information for candidates who express an interest in Accreditation.

Completing Paperwork

Following is a list of materials that candidates need to complete and submit:

- Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations Application – available on the Web site under “Become an APR” section, http://www.praccreditation.org/become_an_apr/applications.asp
- Candidate Readiness Review Written Submission – submitted at least 15 business days before meeting with panelists, http://www.praccreditation.org/become_an_apr/candidate_submission_form.asp
- Candidate Readiness Review Portfolio Presentation – prepared by candidate and given to panelists on day of meeting, <http://www.praccreditation.org/readiness/rrcaninst.pdf>

Accreditation Chair’s Checklist

Confirmation from Universal Accreditation Board

- Sample of the letter/e-mail that is sent to candidates/Accreditation chairs

Qualification of Candidates

Accreditation Candidate's Checklist

TO DO:

- **Apply for Eligibility.** Log onto http://www.praccreditation.org/become_an_apr/ and click on the Applications subhead. Complete the form and remit payment (\$110 will be rebated to PRSA members upon completion.)
- You will be informed by the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) of your eligibility.
- **Select and Purchase Books.** Available on Amazon.com and other online sites. <http://www.prsa.org/resources/bookstore/index.html>.
- **Prepare.** Access Local Chapter Preparatory Workshops and/or Online Study Course available for \$195 at http://www.praccreditation.org/become_an_apr/resources.asp.
- **Complete the Candidate Readiness Review Written Submission Form** at http://www.praccreditation.org/become_an_apr/candidate_submission_form.asp.
- **Assemble your Work Portfolio** which you will take to the Readiness Review and present to APR panelists. Instructions at <http://www.praccreditation.org/readiness/rccaninst.pdf>.
- **Request a Readiness Review** from local Chapter Accreditation chair who will convene panelists and confirm a date with candidate. (Await approval from UAB.)
- **15 days before Readiness Review**, candidate must submit 4 completed copies of the Readiness Review Written Submission Form to local Accreditation chair.
- **Attend your Readiness Review** and present your Written Submission Form and portfolio to panelists. (Panelists will submit Advance or Not Advance recommendation to PRSA National, UAB administrator.)
- **Receive Notification from UAB** of Advance or Not Advance. In the event of Advance, you will proceed to testing. In the event of Not Advance, ask Readiness Review panelists for recommendations on further preparation.
- **Register for your Exam** online at www.prometric.com.
- **Attend Scheduled Examination** at your local Prometric Testing Center. Take with you a photo ID and make sure the name matches the name you registered under with PRSA National. Note: The results of your exam will be mailed within 2-4 weeks.

UAB Confirmation Letter

DATE

CANDIDATE NAME
ADDRESS

Dear :

Congratulations on your first step toward becoming Accredited in Public Relations. On behalf of the Universal Accreditation Board, I am pleased to advise you that your application to take the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations has been approved. **Your personal candidate ID # is [INSERT ID].** Please keep this number handy; you may be asked for it at various stages of the Accreditation process so that we can better track your progress through the program.

The next step is to contact your Accreditation chair. This is extremely important because the Accreditation chair is responsible for many activities locally, including coordinating the Readiness Review and assisting you in studying for the Examination.

You have until [INSERT DATE] to complete the required Readiness Review process and take the computer-based Examination. Once you are advanced from the Readiness Review process, you will receive an “Authorization to Test” letter that gives specific instructions on how to make your appointment to sit for the computer-based Examination with the Prometric testing center you select.

As you prepare for the written portion of the examination, please pay close attention to the resources available to you on the Accreditation web site: www.praccreditation.org. You will find a great deal of information on the site that will help you identify areas of study, including Examination Preparation Sources. Please note that candidates *do not* need to purchase or read all of the books on this list. However, every candidate is *strongly* encouraged to prepare for this Examination and for a successful career in public relations by becoming familiar with *all* areas of the body of knowledge. Your Accreditation chair can provide additional direction as you prepare for the Examination.

If have any questions, please contact me by phone at (212) 460-1436 or by e-mail at kathy.mulvihill@prsa.org. We welcome your interest in the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.

Sincerely,
Kathy Mulvihill
Manager, Universal Accreditation Program

c: Accreditation chair(s)



Section 5

About the Examination Process

Outline

Section 5: About the Examination Process

Introduction to Examination process

Two parts:

Readiness Review

Computer-based Examination

Preparation

About the Examination Process

The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations is delivered in two parts: the Readiness Review and the computer-based Examination. Chapter Accreditation chairs should serve as a resource and counselor to the Examination candidates. After applying and qualifying to take the Examination, candidates will want to proceed through the process quickly. The payment schedule also provides incentives to complete the process within a limited amount of time.

Your job is to insure that candidates also have a smooth and positive exam experience. You should reinforce the message that preparation is required for both parts of the Examination. Candidates should approach the preparation of their Readiness Review Questionnaire and Portfolio as a significant effort that truly reflects their professionalism and the quality of their achievements.

Similarly, while it is not required that candidates purchase or use any of the recommended reference materials and/or participate in one of the many (live or Web-based) review programs, all have been identified as having value in the preparation process. If at all possible, you should plan to offer a preparation program for your Chapter on a regular basis. If your Chapter is geographically dispersed and travel for study is difficult, self-study, the APR Online Study Course or e-mail conversations involving suggested readings, provide good alternatives. Ultimately, candidates will benefit commensurate with their level of preparation. It is rare that any of us would intuitively know the entire Examination content without review.



Section 6

About Readiness Review

Outline

Section 6: About Readiness Review

The Readiness Review Process

What's Involved

What a Candidate Must Do

Readiness Review: Frequently Asked Questions

16 Competency/KSA Areas Tested: What the Readiness Review Panel Will Evaluate

Readiness Review Candidates' Written Submission Form

Readiness Review Portfolio Preparation: Instructions for Candidates

About Readiness Review

The Readiness Review Process

The Readiness Review marks the beginning of the process to earn Accreditation in Public Relations. It is a gateway to the computer-based portion of the Examination and will give you the opportunity to meet with a local panel of three Accredited professionals who will help assess your readiness to succeed in the computer-based Examination.

What's Involved?

The Readiness Review includes a written submission by candidates, a portfolio review, and a dialogue between candidates and the three members of the Readiness Review panel. Ultimately, each candidate will be scored by his or her Readiness Review panel on about 16 specific KSAs and be authorized to Advance or Not Advance to the computer-based portion of the Examination. The Readiness Review panel also will provide specific guidance and direction to candidates about additional steps needed to prepare for the computer-based portion of the Examination. These sessions will be one-to-two hours in duration.

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 portion of the Examination and 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 portion of the Examination at this time.”

An Advance decision represents a recommendation to the UAB to accept the candidate’s request for admission to the computer-based portion of the Examination. A Not Advance decision represents a recommendation to the UAB to decline the candidate’s request for admission to the computer-based portion of the Examination at this time. Candidates who do not earn an Advance assessment may apply for another Readiness Review 90 days from the date of their previous Readiness Review. There is no limit to the number of times candidates may submit to the Readiness Review process. If candidates do not earn an Advance assessment after two successive Readiness Reviews, they can appeal to the UAB. Details are available through the Accreditation program office at PRSA headquarters. Notification to Advance/Not Advance will be provided by the UAB.

The Readiness Review is not an adversarial proceeding. It is not “just like a job interview.” It is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your knowledge and experience to three Accredited professionals and to receive focused feedback. It provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your competence with the “softer” skills required of successful public relations practitioners that cannot effectively be tested in the computer-based Examination environment.

Readiness Review panelists will serve as both judges and mentors. As judges, they will determine the Advance/Not Advance component of the process. As mentors, they will help candidates – whether they advance or do not advance to the written stage as a result of a given Readiness Review – to plan a course of study to prepare for the computer-based Examination. Please see FAQs about the Readiness Review.

The Readiness Review panel will look for a balance of general knowledge and experience in the profession and an understanding of the setting in which candidates practice the profession.

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:

- 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.
- Initiative: Displays courage in suggesting new ideas and justifying them to clients/employers.
- 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.
- Management skills: Develops expertise in planning, organizing, budgeting, communicating, coordinating, scheduling, monitoring, and evaluating.
- Client/Employer/Organizational focus: Holds service to and interest in their 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.
- Multi-tasking: Effectively and efficiently manages numerous projects and responsibilities simultaneously. Applies prioritization and tracks progress toward completion of tasks.
- Flexibility: Responds to the changing business, social, and cultural landscape.
- Teaches others: Identifies learning needs of staff. Coaches others on how to perform tasks. Serves as a mentor. Leads by example.
- Time management: Prioritizes and sequences tasks to meet goals and deadlines.
- Uses multiple delivery mechanisms: Uses advertising, direct mail, Web and other delivery mechanisms and promotional tools effectively.

- 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.
- Communication skills/Speaking: Demonstrates logical thinking when describing client issues and framing approaches to solving public relations problems.
- Communication skills/Interviewing: Asks relevant, insightful, and probing questions while interacting with employers/clients and target audiences (priority publics).
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Visit the UAB Web site, www.praccreditation.org, for more detailed Readiness Review preparation guidelines.

What a Candidate Must Do

Download the Readiness Review Questionnaire and complete it at his or her own discretion. When the candidate is ready to proceed to the next step, request a Readiness Review. The local Chapter or organizational Accreditation chair will then contact you to schedule your Readiness Review.

At least 15 business days prior to the scheduled review, the candidate must submit four copies of the completed three-part questionnaire to your local Readiness Review panel chair and prepare a portfolio presentation. The three Accredited professionals who will serve as Readiness Review panelists will review the candidate Questionnaire in order to prepare questions they may have about the candidate's submission. During your Readiness Review, they will ask questions about each of the three sections the candidate submitted. Next, the candidate will present his/her portfolio. Finally, the candidate will discuss his/her preparation and review plans for the computer-based portion of the Examination and be directed to specific resources to help prepare.

Readiness Review: Frequently Asked Questions

What is Readiness Review?

A Readiness Review session is conducted prior to the computer-based portion of the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations. This process replaces what has been known as the oral Examination. Scheduled to last between one and two hours, the Readiness Review includes the submission of answers to a series of advance questions about the candidate's professional experience, a portfolio review and an extended discussion between the three panelists and the candidate. Information gained from these three key steps of the process will help the panelists assess the candidate's readiness to take the Examination.

A three-person local Readiness Review panel will coach candidates to determine their areas of weakness and help identify specific areas of the body of knowledge in which candidates should focus further study. These three Accredited professionals will provide candidates with a specific set of textbook references related to these areas. Candidates may not take the computer-based Examination until they successfully advance past the Readiness Review process.

How does Readiness Review differ from the old oral examination component of the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations?

The Readiness Review process is the first step in the process of earning Accreditation, whereas the oral examination formerly was the final step. Unlike the oral examination, which served as a checkpoint prior to the granting of Accreditation, the Readiness Review is designed to help determine how well prepared candidates are for taking the Examination and to provide an additional means of mentoring candidates as they approach the Examination. The new process is designed to allow close integration into existing candidate support mechanisms provided by local public relations organizations affiliated with the Universal Accreditation Board.

Who conducts the Readiness Review?

A Readiness Review panel consists of three professionals who are Accredited in Public Relations by the Universal Accreditation Board. These are local professionals who are committed to Accreditation, to the process of granting Accreditation and to candidates pursuing the process. Readiness Review panels follow detailed processes and procedures to assure the highest possible levels of support and consistency for all Accreditation candidates.

What role do candidates play in the Readiness Review?

Candidates are expected to have considered fully their credentials, experience and commitment to Accreditation in embarking on this process and to demonstrate personal leadership throughout the Readiness Review process. Candidates are expected to supply thoughtful responses to the Readiness Review Questionnaire and to make solid presentations of their capabilities through a portfolio presentation that summarizes their knowledge and experience.

What goes into the portfolio that will be presented in Readiness Review?

Ideally, a portfolio should include evidence of personal knowledge and experience in all aspects of a comprehensive public relations/communications program, from pre-program research through post-implementation evaluation. In cases where individuals other than the candidate performed key functions within the program or campaign being presented, the candidate should

be fully prepared to summarize those elements that were conducted by others. If candidates have no first-hand knowledge of one or more of the elements performed by others – due to being a latecomer to the project, for example – they should be prepared to identify the types of procedures performed that would result in a comprehensive, objective public relations program.

Where will Readiness Reviews be held?

Readiness Reviews will be conducted at a location mutually convenient to the three panelists and the candidates involved in the process.

Who is responsible for managing the Readiness Review process?

Readiness Review panels are recruited and prepared by the local Accreditation chair.

Should the local Accreditation chair be involved in the Readiness Review process?

In local organizations with a limited number of Accredited professionals and/or a large number of candidates being reviewed, the Accreditation chair may opt to serve also as a Readiness Review panelist.

How does the Readiness Review connect with the computer-based portion of the Examination?

Candidates successfully demonstrating competency in the 16 different criteria being evaluated during the Readiness Review are viewed as generally having the essential competencies required to pass the computer-based Examination. While no guaranty is expressed or implied, the Readiness Review process has been designed to maximize candidates' potential for success.

How do I prepare for Readiness Review?

Candidates should review the preparation guide for general insight into the Readiness Review process. Then, candidates should download and answer a series of Readiness Review questions that provide an overview of the candidate to the Readiness Review panel. The Guide to Preparing Your Portfolio supplies recommendations for building the content for the panel's review.

Do Readiness Review candidates need to acquire and become familiar with all 10 core textbooks included on the short bookshelf?

No. Candidates are not obligated to read any or all of the books recommended on the bookshelf. These are resources that have been identified by Accredited professionals as valuable to the preparation process.

Are the ten books listed on the short bookshelf the only resources to be used in preparing for the Readiness Review?

No. Local Accreditation chairs and Readiness Review panels can recommend other resources that will assist in gaining further knowledge in specialty areas of the practice of public relations.

Does the Readiness Review panel grant or deny candidates permission to take the computer-based Examination?

No. The panel will review candidate' Readiness Review sessions and support materials and determine their readiness using a standardized set of criteria. If candidates score a minimum of 32 points and score at least 1 point (on a range of 0-3 points) in each of the 16 criteria, the panel will recommend to the Universal Accreditation Board that candidates be Advanced to take the computer-based Examination. If candidates do not receive a recommendation to Advance to the computer-based Examination, the panel will recommend areas in which candidates can strengthen their knowledge or understanding in preparation for resubmission for Readiness Review. Whether candidates are Advanced or Not Advanced to the computer-based Examination, the panelists will serve as mentors following readiness assessment activities to assist candidates in further preparation.

Is Readiness Review "graded" on the quality of the presentation made?

While speaking and presentation skills are two of the 16 criteria that Readiness Review seeks to identify in candidates, these two criteria are not weighed any more than the other 14 criteria being sought in the process. Candidates must have a certain minimum level of competency in all 16 criteria to advance through Readiness Review and be approved to take the computer-based Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.

How are Readiness Review candidates scored?

To be Advanced, candidates must earn a total of 32 points across the 16 criteria examined in this process, based on a scoring range of 0 through 3 points. An assessment of "0" indicates that candidates were unable to demonstrate any skill in the rated area, "1" reflects a very weak demonstration of skill, "2" shows acceptable skill in the rated area and "3" demonstrates exceptional skill in the rated area. Additionally, candidates receiving a score of "0" in any category cannot be recommended for advancement to the computer-based Examination.

How will I learn whether or not I have Advanced through the Readiness Review stage of the process?

The Readiness Review panel will report its recommendation to the UAB. Candidates will receive communication from the Board within two to four weeks, reporting the outcome of the Readiness Review.

How often can candidates submit to the Readiness Review process?

Candidates may submit as many times as are needed to demonstrate their readiness for the Examination. If candidates are not recommended for advancement to the computer-based Examination, they must wait ninety (90) days from the date of the initial Readiness Review session to submit a request for a subsequent Readiness Review.

If candidates need to repeat the Readiness Review process, will they sit before the same panelists?

To the fullest extent possible, a different group of Accredited professionals will be compiled for a second or subsequent Readiness Review.

Is there an appeal process, if candidates disagree with the results of the Readiness Review?

If candidates are not deemed ready to be Advance to the computer-based Examination after two separate Readiness Review sessions, candidates may request an appeal of the decision from the UAB.

16 Competency/KSA Areas Tested: What the Readiness Review Panel Will Evaluate

The Readiness Review panel will look for a balance of general knowledge and experience in the profession and an understanding of the setting in which candidates practice the profession. The Readiness Review panel will be responsible for evaluating candidate's readiness in 16 specific areas of competence that cannot effectively be judged in the computer-based Examination environment:

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.

Initiative

Displays courage in suggesting new ideas and justifying them to clients/employers.

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.

Management skills

Develops expertise in planning, organizing, budgeting, communicating, coordinating, scheduling, monitoring, and evaluating.

Client/Employer/Organizational focus

Holds service to and interest in their 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.

Multi-tasking

Effectively and efficiently manages numerous projects and responsibilities simultaneously. Applies prioritization and tracks progress toward completion of tasks.

Flexibility

Responds to the changing business, social, and cultural landscape.

Teaches others

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

Time management

Prioritizes and sequences tasks to meet goals and deadlines.

Uses multiple delivery mechanisms

Uses advertising, direct mail, Web and other delivery mechanisms and promotional tools effectively.

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.

Communication skills/Speaking

Demonstrates logical thinking when describing client issues and framing approaches to solving public relations problems.

Communication skills/Interviewing

Asks relevant, insightful, and probing questions while interacting with employers/clients and target audiences (priority publics).

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.

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.

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.

Readiness Review Candidates' Written Submission Form

Instructions

This document is available at www.praccreditation.org. Complete and submit four printed copies of your typewritten responses to the questions on this form no fewer than 15 business days prior to your scheduled Readiness Review. This submission should be routed 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, non-profit, agency or academic. Answer all questions completely and

succinctly. There are no right or wrong answers for this section, 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.
4. Describe the steps you would recommend to implement these changes.
5. 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?
6. Describe what you do each day to contribute to helping your organization to achieve its objectives.
7. In what ways can you improve your productivity?
8. 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.
9. Describe a situation in which 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 some organization in which you are or have been involved. Please be sure that the plan that you are describing here is included in the portfolio presentation you make to the Readiness Review panel.
2. Describe the research you conducted to develop the plan described 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; however, you should 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 Written Portion of the 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 portion of the 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 [click here.](#))
 - History of and current issues in public relations
 - Management skills and issues
 - Business literacy
 - Crisis communication management
 - Ethics and law
 - Using information technology
 - Communication models and theories
 - Media relations
 - Research, planning, implementing and evaluating communication programs
 - Advanced communication skills

Readiness Review Portfolio Preparation Instructions for Candidates

Overview

The Readiness Review aspect of the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations is the point-of-entry for Accreditation candidates, setting the tone for the process and helping ensure you are sufficiently experienced and as fully prepared as possible for the Examination. The portfolio that you prepare and present is tangible evidence of your readiness for the examination process. It should both complement and supplement information you provide in your pre-session questionnaire responses and in the answers that you give to the panelist questions during their meeting with you.

Preparing to Assemble Your Portfolio

This handout is designed to provide general direction and guidelines for preparation of your portfolio. However, the materials and information you present are as individualized as you are, serving as a reflection of the composite experience you have amassed over your professional career. Within the ultimate boundaries of best practices in public relations, your portfolio presentation should be a personalized extension of your life's work experience. As traditionally has been the case, local Accreditation chair and other accredited professionals are available to provide guidance, advice and counsel as you ready your portfolio.

The structured review programs, materials and other resources supplied by Accreditation chairs, committees and others that you use in preparing for both your Readiness Review session and the actual computer-based Examination will also provide additional perspective to your portfolio preparation.

Portfolio Contents

Keep in mind that the portfolio you present should furnish the fullest possible evidence of your use of the essentials of public relations planning, execution 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 product shown.

In planning your portfolio, you ideally should identify one or more campaigns or major programs in which you were responsible for the full cycle of public relations activities, including:

- 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
- Identification of strategies and program elements/tactics directed to targeted audiences that will accomplish your stated program objectives
- Post-program analysis that loops back to the program objectives and situation appraisal to demonstrate program effectiveness

A highly comprehensive focus on a single program from inception to completion is preferable to inclusion of multiple programs with less emphasis on the full cycle of conceptualization, research, program development, implementation and assessment.

Your Readiness Review panel understands that you may not have been directly or solely involved with all aspects of the program or programs 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 tap extra-curricular organizational activities in which you have provided pro-bono services as a source of materials for your portfolio. Your local Accreditation chair may also be able to offer suggestions for rounding out your portfolio presentation.

Organizing Your Presentation

Your goal is to relate a story to the panelists – your professional story, told through selected programs in which you have played a major role during your career. Like a case study or other descriptive tool, 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 that you include 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 presented. You should be able to provide the rationale and facts behind the creation of each element or tactic of each program

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 Presentation Manageable

In a world rich in technological capabilities, you may be tempted to use an array of presentation support tools and resources. While the 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 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 place at risk your ability to complete the presentation in the allotted time.

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

Final Rehearsal For Your Presentation

Keep in mind that the entire Readiness Review session is designed to last between one and two hours, so you have between 30 and 60 minutes to present your portfolio. Like any good presentation to an employer, client or other audience, you need to 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.

On the matter of time, be aware that the panelists reserve the right to limit the amount of time they will spend reviewing videotapes or other support materials within your presentation. In the interest of time, you may want to edit any video materials in order to present the most salient points of the larger presentation.

Giving the Portfolio 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 session
- 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 comfortable in the experience

Keep in mind that 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 readying for the Examination.

After the Readiness Review Session

Once the panel has completed its review of your readiness, as evidenced by your responses to the written questionnaire, information secured from your portfolio and your answers to specific questions asked during the Readiness Review session, 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. Note that 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 on your portfolio before being advanced to the computer-based Examination, feedback from the panelists will be available. This information will provide guidance on steps you can take to strengthen your portfolio as you make adjustments in your presentation for subsequent review.

Unlike the role of oral examiners in the old Accreditation process, 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.

Questions?

If you have further questions about the process, read the general FAQ on the Readiness Review process, and speak with the people in your area who manage the Accreditation program and those who have successfully completed the Readiness Review. We wish you the best in your pursuit of the APR credential.



Section 7
Candidate Preparation

Outline

Section 7: Candidate Preparation

Readiness Review Tips

Readiness Review Participant Training

Portfolio Preparation

Questionnaire Preparation

Recruiting Readiness Review panelists

Gather the names of Chapter members that are Accredited. Remember, three Accredited members review each candidate. Panelists must not be related to the applicant, be employed by the same firm or have a client-counselor relationship. Generally, an hour is sufficient for each Readiness Review scheduled. Most Chapters find it easiest to schedule the Reviews in blocks of time – mornings, afternoons, etc. – and ask each team to review two or three candidates. It is helpful to have back-up Readiness Review panelists, in case a panelist needs to cancel at the last minute.

Call for Readiness Review

Orientation/Training the panelists

Readiness Review Thank-You Letter

Computer-based Examination

Candidate Preparation

Candidate Tips for Readiness Review

- Don't go it alone. Visit with your local Accreditation chair or a member of the local Accreditation committee to gain his or her perspective of the Readiness Review process, as well as practical recommendations. If you do not have a local Accreditation chair, contact kathy.mulvihill@prsa.org for the name of an Accreditation chair in your area.
- Don't ask anyone to review or edit your written submission or portfolio. Each candidate is expected to prepare his or her own Readiness Review questionnaire and to present a portfolio that represents his or her own work.
- Before you start building your portfolio or answering questions for the Readiness Review session, go over your resume or curriculum vitae to refresh your memory on the totality of your public relations experience. You want to be sure you select the best representations of your work for your portfolio, exhibiting a depth and breadth of practice commensurate with the standards of Accreditation. Keep in mind that you're assembling materials from your past as support for a presentation that provides compelling reasons for the Readiness Review panel to believe you are prepared for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.
- Review the [16 key criteria](#) being assessed through Readiness Review and be mentally prepared to articulate to the panelists your preparedness in each of these areas. While the Readiness Review panel is not likely to ask you to list your capabilities and experiences in each area, this process – conducted early in your preparation for the session – will assist you in identifying any areas in which you may need to strengthen your portfolio or other submitted materials.
- Make sure you are familiar with the overall timing of the Readiness Review process as detailed in the Instructions to Candidates. Keep in mind that the 20-15-10-day windows described should be considered the final laps of the process, not the earliest time period required to start the formal Readiness Review process. Successful preparation for Readiness Review is likely to span a minimum of eight-to-10 weeks for most candidates.
- Remember to balance your emphasis on the presentation aspect of Readiness Review. Clearly, presentation skills will be one of the 16 criteria assessed by the three Readiness Review panelists as they determine your preparation for the formal examination process, yet showmanship will not make up for deficiencies in your experience or general preparation.
- Be attentive to the basic quality of the materials in your portfolio and in your responses to the written questionnaire that you submit to the panel. People who both are adequately experienced and prepared for the Examination have, as second-nature, the ability to write grammatically and to produce stylistically correct materials that are free of typographical errors. Your last-minute review will help ensure that your work earns a positive reception from the panelists.

- Pace your preparation for Readiness Review to allow for several good nights of sleep prior to the actual review session. Like any other important meeting, you want to be sharp and fresh for the review.
- Be sure to plan adequately to arrive at your Readiness Review session with sufficient time to set up and to become acclimated to your surroundings. Since you are not likely to have a “home-court” advantage, you will want to become comfortable with the setting.
- Enjoy the process. If you’ve followed the advice and counsel of the Accredited professionals who have coached and mentored you and have paid careful attention to the quality and quantity of materials you supplied as part of your Readiness Review submission, you should be equipped with the confidence needed to engage in a pleasant and rewarding session. Remember that Readiness Review is specifically designed and intended *not* to be an adversarial proceeding. Rather, it should be conducted as a dialogue designed to provide a conducive setting in which you can demonstrate the work and accomplishments that have brought you forward to seek this important distinction.

Readiness Review Participant Training PRSA Accreditation Program

- I. Role of Panelists
 - A. Determine candidate’s level of preparedness for exam
 - B. Mentor
 - C. Advance or Not Advance
- II. Time Commitment
 - A. Four to five hours first candidate review (including training and preparation)
 - B. Three to four hours per subsequent candidate review
 - C. Time spent on advance review of questionnaire, Readiness Review, and filling out post-session report
- III. Review Logistics
 - A. Accreditation chair will coordinate with candidate and panelists to determine a date and place
 - B. The candidate’s questionnaire will be distributed to panelists two weeks prior to review
 - C. Panelists review candidate’s questionnaire in advance
 - D. Candidate presents portfolio during Readiness Review
 - E. Panelists review candidate for KSAs (knowledge, skills & abilities) and areas of competence
 - F. Review session should take minimum one hour, maximum two hours
 - G. Panelists fill out a ballot about candidate’s readiness (without discussion)
 - H. Ballots are tallied and the Readiness Review Summary is completed. Accreditation chair sends to PRSA National.
 - I. Candidates are notified directly by the Universal Accreditation Board of Advance or Not Advance
- IV. Post-Review
 - A. If No Advance, panelist(s) may give guidance and mentor Candidate
 - B. Confidentiality is required
- V. Questions For Use During Readiness Review

Sample Readiness Review Questions

Myra Senninger Cocca, APR, Accreditation co-chair for the PRSA Hoosier Chapter, says: "We strongly coach our panelists that these are only sample questions. We've been using sample questions like this since fall of 2003, and they have proven helpful (based on feedback from panelists)." The original questions have been slightly revised for use in spring 2005.

The advice to panelists in spring 2005:

As referenced previously, PRSA National does not provide specific questions for Readiness Review panelists to ask candidates. Questions should, however, relate to the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) outlined in my other correspondence to you. Please refer to these KSAs while preparing for and when conducting the Readiness Reviews. Also, keep in mind that each Review is designed to last between one and two hours total.

Following are some **questions** for your consideration only, **and we encourage you to develop questions of your own to replace or add to these.**

Section One Questions

- 1) What have you most enjoyed about your current position? (warm-up question)
- 2) Name an ethical issue you have faced in the past five years. How did you deal with it? If you do not have an example, discuss an ethical issue you might be confronted with in your work environment.
- 3) What trends do you see in your industry? Please name two.
- 4) What is the difference between one-way communication and two-way symmetrical communication? Of the two, what is the most effective in public relations, and why?
- 5) How do you think the public relations field contributes to our society?
- 6) Describe a time when you proposed a new way of doing something. Your example can be from your current or past positions, or from volunteer posts.
- 7) Ask the candidate a question that elaborates upon his/her answer to Question #8 on the Readiness Review questionnaire. Example: Describe how you lead by example in your everyday work?
- 8) Describe a time when you had competing deadlines and how you handled it.

Section Two Questions

Note: This portion of the Review should take anywhere from a half-hour to an hour. The candidate should describe the project based on the four-step process (research, planning, implementation and evaluation), articulating some, if not all, of the goals and objectives of the project and tying evaluation back to the research and objectives. During this section we encourage you to ask basic questions that focus on research, planning, implementation and evaluation.

1. Name your project and briefly explain why you chose this project.
2. What prompted this project by your organization (or client)?
3. Of the research you did, what was formal and what was informal? What is the difference between the two?
4. How did you determine the target publics for your project or campaign?

5. How did you organize or categorize these target publics? (For example, did the candidate subcategorize the publics demographically, geographically, etc.?)
6. What types of communication barriers did you encounter in planning and implementing this particular campaign?
7. Aside from the barriers just mentioned, did you encounter any setbacks or other challenges during the course of this project?
8. How did you build support for your plan as you developed it?
9. What was most rewarding about this particular project?
10. What, if anything, would you have done differently to improve the outcome/results of the project?
11. Scenario: You have a client who has an idea but no research to back the idea's viability. How do you go about selling the merits of research to that client?

Section Three Questions

Note: During this section, feel free to ask specific questions that pertain to the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities tested as part of the written exam. These KSAs are included in your information, and also will be provided as a handout on the day of the Review.

1. What are your strengths going into the written portion of the exam?
2. What most concerns you about the written exam?
3. Have the coaching sessions offered by the Hoosier Chapter given you a good understanding of the breadth of the written exam?
4. What's your plan going forward to become confident in the areas you are unsure of at this time?

Calling All APRs!

As an Accredited member of PRSA, you understand how achieving a standard of knowledge helps advance our profession. Currently [INSERT CHAPTER NAME] members are preparing to pursue Accreditation. As an Accredited member, please consider volunteering your expertise to serve as a Readiness Review panelist as our candidates prepare to take the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.

To be a Readiness Review panelist means providing professional guidance, insight and support to our local Accreditation candidates. The one-to-two hour Readiness Review is a rewarding way to lend your expertise and help a fellow practitioner improve his or her professional acumen, thus advancing the esteem of our profession. The time commitment is minimal but the rewards are great. If you're interested in serving or learning more, please contact APR CHAIR'S NAME at PHONE/E-MAIL. Thank you.

PS: Serving as a Readiness Review panelist counts as 1 point toward your Maintenance of Accreditation.

Thank-You Letters

Thanks for the Commitment:

Dear [insert panelist's name]:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a Readiness Review panelist. Your role will be to measure the candidate's knowledge skills and abilities in 16 key areas. As a Readiness Review panelist, you will review the candidate's responses to the Readiness Review Questionnaire in advance, as well as information presented to you, including the portfolio and responses to specific questions by the candidate during the presentation.

Each area can be awarded between 0 and 3 points. A score of 32, with each section requiring at least 1 point, is required to Advance the Readiness Review. If you and your fellow panelists determine that the candidate is not ready to proceed to the computer-based Examination, you are encouraged to help the candidate further develop his or her skills by reviewing sections of the "short bookshelf" that correlate to the areas of weakness. You are asked to serve as a mentor and advocate for these candidates as they continue to work on professional skills development.

Thank you again for agreeing to serve in this important role.

Sincerely,
Accreditation chair name

Thanks for Serving

Dear [insert panelist's name]:

Thank you for serving as a Readiness Review panelist. The experience of assessing a colleague's professional development against a set of established criteria is critical to assuring that all practitioners have the same level of knowledge, skills and abilities. Through your efforts, we have reinforced the standards of professionalism throughout the industry.

Thank you again for your commitment to excellence.

Sincerely,
Accreditation chair name

How to schedule your computer-based Examination for Accreditation

Once you have successfully completed the Readiness Review and have received notification that you have been advanced by the Readiness Review panel, you will receive your official Authorization to Test for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations from the Universal Accreditation Board. Using the code number provided, you then can make an appointment at one of more than 300 Prometric Testing Centers around the country at

<http://www.2test.com/index.jsp>. You also can make an appointment by calling Prometric's Customer Service Call Center at (800) 274-1900. Follow procedures detailed in your Authorization to Test letter for whichever method you chose. Please note that if you schedule by telephone, Prometric will not provide confirmation of your appointment, but if you schedule online, you will receive an e-mail confirmation.

You must schedule your computer-based Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations within one year of the date of the letter notifying you that you are Advanced by the Readiness Review panel.

Prometric Testing Center hours of operation vary from testing center to testing center. Weekend and evening hours are available only at some locations. Please note that Prometric experiences heavy volume from June to August and from October to December. During these months, we recommend that you schedule your appointment at least 30 days in advance. Information and guidelines for scheduling your Examination, along with your personal Examination identification number, are included in your Authorization to Test letter. Prometric will give you a different confirmation number that you must use to reconfirm, reschedule or cancel your appointment. On the day of your appointment, you will be asked to arrive at the Prometric Testing Center 30 minutes prior to your scheduled Examination time. To check in, you must present two current forms of identification, including one valid government-issued photo ID such as a driver's license or passport, and a second identification document containing your signature. Your name as it appears on the Authorization to Test letter must match the name on both of the identification documents you present.

Canceling, rescheduling, missed or late appointments

If you need to cancel or reschedule, you must do so by noon at least two (2) business days prior to your appointment. For example, an appointment on Thursday must be rescheduled/canceled by noon Eastern Time on Tuesday. An appointment on Tuesday must be rescheduled/canceled by noon Eastern Time on Saturday. You may cancel or reschedule by calling Prometric at (800) 274-1900. If you do have to cancel or reschedule your appointment, you will be asked to provide your confirmation number and the testing center will charge a small fee. If you miss your appointment, you will forfeit your testing fee. If you are late for your appointment, you may not be admitted. Late admission is at the discretion of the Prometric Testing Center.

The truth about the rumors you've heard

Is the new computer-based Examination less difficult than the old one?

No. In the language of professional certification testing, "difficulty" is one of several statistical measurements that describe how well or poorly each question in an examination performs. The term does not apply to a total examination. In order to be included in a properly constructed professional certification examination and to remain on the Examination, each question must reliably perform at a pre-determined level of difficulty so that not too many candidates consistently pass or fail each question. Each question on the old examination was measured against this statistical standard (though few people knew this) as is each question on the new Examination.

Is the new computer-based Examination easier than the old one?

Since “ease” is a completely subjective evaluation of an examination, candidates will have different opinions. Like every endeavor in life, properly prepared candidates will describe the experience as easy and poorly prepared candidates will find it to be hard. (This was always the case with the old examination as well!) The new Examination process includes a Readiness Review that will, in part, help screen out candidates who are not prepared to succeed in the computer-based Examination. As a result, we expect that the overall pass rate on the new Examination will be consistently higher than it was previously. Some may misunderstand a higher pass rate as a sign that the new Examination is “easier.”

The old written examination took eight hours and the new one takes only half that time. Doesn't that mean that the new one is not as rigorous as the old one?

No, it doesn't. The now-retired examination used methods employed in professional certification testing that were state-of-the-art when it was developed nearly 30 years ago. They were valid for use when they were first used and on the day the last examination was given. However, one of the major goals of re-engineering has been to make the Examination more accessible, in part to increase the volume of successful candidates so that a “critical mass” of Accredited practitioners can develop. This, in turn, we believe will help to address complaints that Accreditation has “no value in the marketplace” as more and more people distinguish themselves in the marketplace by using the credential. The new examination takes advantage of 30 years of research and development in the science of professional certification testing. As a result, the Examination is available year-round in more than 300 testing centers in the United States and easily adapted for delivery worldwide. It also happens to take four (4) fewer hours to complete.

How can a “multiple-guess” examination effectively test a candidate's mastery of a given body of knowledge?

To call the new Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations a “best-guess” examination simply displays the questioner's lack of current information about professional certification testing. The multiple-choice format is an extremely effective and valid method that is widely employed in many industries and professions, including accounting, medicine and technology.



Section 8
About the Computer-Based
Examination

Outline

Section 8: About the Examination

Each Chapter – and each Accreditation chair – may organize the preparation and Readiness Review program for Accreditation differently. The number of candidates interested in preparing for the Examination and the amount of time each is willing to devote to the process will impact the development of your schedule.

Here are some of the examples of how material and preparation can be addressed. The following Chapters have graciously given us permission to use their published Accreditation schedules:

- Akron/Greater Cleveland Chapters
- Phoenix Chapter

Please take a look and feel free to modify them for your Chapter. These are offered to provide you with ideas on where to begin.

Examination Preparation – Model Program Timelines

- **Generic Timeline**
- **Akron/Greater Cleveland Chapters Timeline**
- **Phoenix Chapter Timeline**

Working with Recommended Texts

Online Course Info

Examination Process

Generic Timeline

Note: The Accreditation chair for the PRSA Kansas Chapter and the FPRA Southwest Florida Chapter have collaborated and combined their individual schedules to create this generic timeline as a sample for this Tool Kit.

Accreditation in Public Relations (APR)

Chapter Timeline
Winter/Spring 2005

Step 1: Orientation/Information Session for Candidates

Saturday, January 22, 2005

Time

Location

Step 2: Purchase Study Guide and Textbooks

www.praccreditation.org and www.amazon.com or other booksellers

Step 3: Study Sessions

Feb. 16

Session 1

Introduction/Current Public Relations/History of PR/Crisis Management/Media Relations
17% of APR Examination

Feb. 21

Session 2

Communication Theory, Management Skills & Issues
25% of Examination

Feb. 28

Session 3

Research Methodology/Planning/Implementation/Evaluation
30% of Examination

Readiness Review – Download questionnaire and begin written responses.

March 7

Session 4

Communication Law and Ethics
15% of Examination

March 16

Session 5

Business Literacy/Information Technology
12% of Examination

March 23 **Session 6**
Material review (optional)
Readiness Review Presentations: preparation/rehearsals

March 23-April 6 Finalize written portion of Readiness Reviews
Request Readiness Review with Kathy Mulvihill at PRSA National.
Make four copies of written questionnaire and provide to local
Accreditation chair.

Step 4
Present to Readiness Review Panels

April 20 – 29

(May 1-15 Receive notification from PRSA National on whether to Advance or Not
Advance)

Step 5
Schedule computer **Examination** to be taken by June 10.
Log onto www.prometric.com for location.

** Results mailed to candidates within four weeks.

Step 6
Request rebates from local Chapters (if offered).

Step 7
Celebrate new APR's!
(Local luncheons, press release to local media, Chapter newsletters)

PRSA/UAB www.praccreditation.org
Information: www.prsa.org

Kathy Mulvihill, Accreditation manager
kathy.mulvihill@prsa.org

Akron/Greater Cleveland Chapters Timeline

Note: The Accreditation co-chairs for the Akron and Greater Cleveland PRSA Chapters have given us permission to use their fall schedule as a sample for this Tool Kit.

The PRSA Cleveland and Akron Chapters are pleased to announce the 2005 fall schedule for Accreditation

Before Aug. 15	Candidate must apply for Accreditation online at www.praccreditation.org (five years' experience required). Candidate must download the Questionnaire for Readiness Review and complete fully. All persons interested in Accreditation must sit for a Readiness Review <u>prior to taking classes for the written exam</u> . The questionnaire will be part of the Readiness Review and must be submitted to Accreditation chair before Sept. 1, 2005. The Readiness Review is an informal meeting with a panel of three APRs. At this interview, you will be asked to present a sample PR campaign in which you have played a major role. You will also be asked to discuss your questionnaire answers.
Before Sept. 1	E-mail your completed questionnaire to Accreditation co-chair Karen Frashier, kmfrashier@sbcglobal.net .
Week of Sept. 5	Readiness review prep meetings: One-on-one mentoring sessions to help you get ready for your campaign presentation.
Week of Sept. 12	Readiness Reviews held beginning at 3:00pm. Location to be determined. *Next Readiness Review date will be spring 2006
Week of Sept. 26	Classes begin and run four weeks. Location, dates and time to be set in consultation with candidates who advance after Readiness Review
Examination	May be taken anytime (computer-based Examination at Prometric Testing Centers) following your Readiness Review by contacting the appointment number listed on your Authorization To Test letter.

For information about the Accreditation process, or how to prepare for the Readiness Review, please consult www.praccreditation.org. If you have questions after reviewing this information, call one of the APR co-chairs...

Karen Mess Frashier, APR
440-717-0878
kmfrashier@sbcglobal.net

Jan Gusich, APR
President
Akhia Public Relations
330.463.5650
jan@akhia.com

Phoenix Chapter Timeline

Note: The Accreditation co-chair for the Phoenix PRSA Chapters has given us permission to use their fall schedule as a sample for this Tool Kit.

The PRSA Phoenix Chapter is pleased to announce the 2005 fall schedule for Accreditation

Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2005

Accreditation Orientation Meeting

Tuesday, Sept. 27, 2005

Deadline for candidates to submit Examination request and fee to Universal Accreditation Board

Thursday, Sept. 29, 2005

First Preparation Session

Thursday, Oct. 6, 2005

Second Preparation Session

Tuesday, Oct. 11, 2005

Candidates provide official notification of intent to participate in Readiness Review; must provide proof of eligibility; panel members confirmed with panel member instructions distributed for the Examination from the Universal Accreditation Board (no later than 20 days from Examination).

Thursday, Oct. 13, 2005

Third Preparation Session

Monday, Oct. 17, 2005

Candidates submit Readiness Review packets to committee chair (no later than 15 days from examination).

Thursday, Oct. 20, 2005

Fourth Study Session - Readiness Review times, dates and locations confirmed.

Friday, Oct. 21, 2005

Readiness Review Panel Members receive packets (no later than 10 days from examination).

Thursday, Oct. 27, 2005

Final Preparation Session

Readiness Review Dates:

Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2005

Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2005

Thursday, Nov. 10, 2005



Section 9
Celebrating Success

Outline

Section 9: Celebrating Success

There is nothing that is more important than celebrating success. The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations is a challenging and somewhat stressful process. Chapters should provide successful candidates with recognition on a personal and professional level.

Following is a list of the types of recognition that can be provided, as well as examples of some tools that can be used to accomplish this objective.

National Recognition: Congratulations Letters

UAB version

PRSA Accreditation Marketing Committee (AMC) version

Other ways to recognize new APRs

- Encourage your Chapter to acknowledge and honor newly Accredited members at a Chapter event.
- Announce it in your Chapter newsletter.
- Send a letter to newly Accredited members' employers.
- Encourage newly Accredited members to use the APR initials after his or her name.
- Use special name tags at Chapter events for APRs to wear and be acknowledged.
- Some Chapters take out ads in local business publications announcing that candidates have earned Accreditation, and they use the ads as an opportunity to list all the Chapter's Accredited members in the body of the ad, identifying Accreditation as an honored distinction in the practice of public relations.
- Other ways to recognize new APRs:
 - E-mails
 - Web announcements

Maintenance of Accreditation

Celebrating Success

Sample Congratulations Letter – UAB

Dear :

I want to share with you the exciting news that _____ has recently become an Accredited member of the public relations profession by successfully completing a comprehensive examination governed by the Universal Accreditation Board.

The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations measures a candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities in the practice of public relations, including communication theory, management science, and ethics. It is structured in such a way that a candidate must have several years of experience in the profession to attain Accreditation, which is indicated by the designation APR used after an Accredited member's name.

The Universal Accreditation Board was formed in January 1998 to oversee the Accreditation process. The public relations organizations that participate in the program include Agricultural Relations Council, Asociación de Relacionistas Profesionales de Puerto Rico, Florida Public Relations Association, Maine Public Relations Council, the National School Public Relations Association, Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), Religion Communicators Council, Southern Public Relations Federation, and Texas Public Relations Association. The program is administered by PRSA, which previously operated its own Accreditation program beginning in 1965. Since that time, approximately 6,000 public relations professionals have achieved Accreditation. Today, there are more than 4,300 active Accredited practitioners. It is indeed a symbol of professionalism to be able to use the APR designation.

We feel you will be proud to be working with such a capable person and thought you would like to know of this accomplishment.

Cordially,

Chair, Universal Accreditation Board

Above is a copy of the letter that will be sent to your immediate supervisor notifying him/her of your Accreditation. We can send the letter to only **one** person. Please complete and return this form by **DEADLINE DATE** to: Kathy Mulvihill, Accreditation manager, PRSA, 33 Maiden Lane, 11th Floor, New York, NY, 10038-5150, or fax it to (212) 995-0757.

Please Type or Print:

Is your Supervisor an APR? Yes____ No____

Supervisor's Name: (Mr./Ms./Dr.) _____

Title: _____

Company: _____

Street/P.O. Box: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Your Name: _____

(Please Type or Print Clearly)

Sample Congratulations Letter – AMC

Dear xx:

On behalf of the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB), congratulations on successfully passing the Examination for Accreditation in Public relations and becoming an Accredited public relations practitioner.

You've joined an elite group of approximately 6,000 public relations professionals who have achieved Accreditation. Today, there are more than 4,300 active Accredited practitioners. It is indeed a symbol of professionalism to be able to use the APR designation. Reflecting your accomplishment, you can now represent the fact that you are Accredited by using the notation Accredited Public Relations or its abbreviation, APR, in conjunction with your name. Of course, since this certification mark applies only to you and not to your firm or associates, it must be restricted to use by you only. You will soon receive your Certification of Accreditation.

In fact, on average, Accredited practitioners earn 20 percent more than non-Accredited members. And the news gets even better. Your new APR status is now recognized by PRSA and eight UAB organizations including: Agricultural Relations Council, Florida Public Relations Association, Maine Public Relations Council, National School Public Relations Association, Religion Communicators Council, Southern Public Relations Federation, Texas Public Relations Association and Asociación de Relacionistas Profesionales de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico Public Relations Association).

We believe it is also important to you and our Society that your peers, employees and others know of and understand your professional attainment. In that light we have suggested to your Chapter's Accreditation chair that your achievement is publicized through media in your area. As such your Accreditation will be announced in the (insert publication name here).

It's also important to make your employer aware of your accomplishment. If you would like me to send your supervisor (or whomever) a personal letter to notify him or her of this, please return the enclosed form with the individual's name and address.

Together through all of our individual and collective contributions, we can further the practice of public relations.

Once again, congratulations!

Sincerely,
NAME

c: Chapter president and Accreditation chair



MAINTENANCE OF ACCREDITATION PROGRAM
 (Administered by the Public Relations Society of America)

To maintain your Accreditation, you should have accumulated points in continuing education, professionalism or public service within a three-year period. Below are descriptions of qualifying activities or programs and the point allocation for each. No activity can be counted in more than one category. **A MINIMUM OF 10 POINTS TOTAL IS REQUIRED.**

Please complete and sign the enclosed application form, and submit it with a \$50 fee (required to cover the cost of processing your application). **Mail to: PRSA, Attn: Accreditation Department, 33 Maiden Lane, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10038-5150**

PROGRAM or ACTIVITY

I. CONTINUING EDUCATION – Subject matter that relates to your work in public relations (e.g., management, social sciences, or research, etc). If any CEUs (Continuing Education Units) were earned for these activities, one CEU is equivalent to 1.25 points toward Maintenance of Accreditation.

A. College Programs

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. Advanced Degrees
<i>(if earned during the current maintenance cycle)</i> | Automatic
Reaccreditation |
| 2. Individual courses on a semester basis for credit when the subject matter relates directly to the practice of public relations | |
| 4 credit course | 4.0 |
| 3 credit course | 3.0 |
| 2 credit course | 2.0 |

B. Seminars and Continuing Education Programs – Taking part in participating and public relations organizations, other industry or trade associations, and formal in-company training courses that apply to public relations practice (e.g., professional development programs, formal home study courses, national conferences, district, section and/or chapter programs, etc.).

- | | |
|-----------------|-----|
| 1-day | 1.0 |
| 1/2-day (up to) | 0.5 |

C. Readings from material that contribute to one’s professional public relations abilities.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Book | 1.0 |
| 2. A minimum of 10 articles or substantiative material from the public relations body of knowledge | 0.5 |

II. PROFESSIONALISM

A. Leadership in Public Relations: service in public relations organizations*, and/or public relations committees or comparable positions.

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. National officer or board member; Chapter president; section or academy chair | 4.0 per year |
| 2. Chair of national committee; district chair | 3.0 per year |

* *Such as NAPRC organizations: ARC, AWC, ASHCMPR, BPRA, CPRS, FPRA, IABC, IPRA, NSPRA, PRSA, RCC, SPRF, TPRA

- 3. Local Chapter officer or board member; district officer or conference chair; section officer, board member or conference chair; chair of section committee; chair of local chapter committee; special participation in activities such as mentor, professional advisor, and newsletter editor. 2.0 per year
- 4. Member of national committee; member of Chapter local committee; member of section committee; assembly delegate; special participation in activities such as Readiness Review panelist, APR online study course facilitator, award judging, or other. 1.0 per year

B. Presentations or speeches including serving as a panelist on public relations practice 1.0 per presentation

C. Instruction – Serving as an instructor at a seminar, workshop or program on public relations requiring preparation of outlines and other course-related material where subject matter relates to public relations (includes Accreditation instruction); or, instruction in credit courses related to public relations when sponsored by a fully accredited college or university; take credit only for time instructing.

- 4-credit course 4.0
- 3-credit course 3.0
- 2-credit course 2.0
- 1-day 1.0
- 1□-day (up to) 0.5

D. Published works that contribute to the practice of public relations

- 1. Published book Automatic
(if published during the current maintenance cycle) Reaccreditation
- 2. Each article, op-ed, or book review published in a public relations journal, magazine, newspaper or newsletter. 3.0

E. Awards for Significant Contributions in Public Relations

- 1. National awards by public relations organizations or other industry awards related to excellence in public relations practice, research or teaching (e.g., a public relations award given by an industry trade association). Automatic Reaccreditation applies only if award is earned during the current maintenance cycle.
 - Education (Outstanding Educator Award) Automatic
 - Practice (Gold Anvil Award; Dillin Award) Reaccreditation
 - Service (Paul M. Lund Public Service Award; Fleishman Award) " "
 - Programming (e.g., Silver Anvil Award; Golden Image Award Silver Spur Award) 3.0
- 2. Regional and local awards by PRSA Chapters, NAPRC organizations, or other industry awards related to excellence in public relations.
 - Service 2.0
 - Programming 2.0

(In order to receive credit for the award the individual must have played a significant role in the design, implementation and evaluation of the program.)

III. SERVICE - Public Relations service to the local/national community (volunteer or pro-bono work which is outside normal work assignments).

- 60 hours or more 5.0
- 40-59 hours 4.0
- 20-39 hours 3.0
- Under 20 hours 2.0



**Maintenance of Accreditation
Application**
(Type or print legibly in ink)

For Office Use Only
Date _____
Account # _____

Name _____
(Last) (First)

Title _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip + 4 _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____ E-mail _____

Please list all points earned toward your Maintenance of Accreditation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

I. EDUCATION

A. College Programs

<u>College Courses</u>	<u>Where Taken</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Points</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

B. Seminars & Continuing Education Programs

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Title of Program/Location</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Points</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

C. Readings from the Public Relations Body of Knowledge and other material

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Points</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Education Subtotal _____

II. PROFESSIONALISM

A. Leadership Positions

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Points</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

B. Presentations

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Points</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

C. Instruction

<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Where Taught</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Points</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

D. Published Works

<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Points</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

E. Awards

<u>Name</u>	<u>Presenting Organization</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Points</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Professionalism Subtotal _____

III. PUBLIC SERVICE

<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Date(s)/Hours</u>	<u>Points</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Public Service Subtotal _____

Subtotals: I. Education _____
 II. Professionalism _____
 III. Public Service _____

Total Points _____

I hereby apply to maintain my Accreditation and verify the above information is correct.

X _____
(Signature) (Date)

Method of Payment

___ check (Please make check payable to PRSA;
 U.S. Funds drawn on a U.S. bank only)
 ___ Credit Card (Visa, MasterCard, American
 Express only)

Visa MasterCard Amex

Account Number _____

Exp. Date _____

Cardmember's Name _____

Signature _____

Return Application and \$50 Payment to:
 Public Relations Society of America
 Attn: Accreditation Department
 33 Maiden Lane, 11th Floor
 New York, NY 10038-5150



Section 10
Miscellaneous

Outline

Section 10: Miscellaneous

Accreditation Style Information

Participating Organization Information

Miscellaneous

UAB Policy on Style

(Revised and adopted on 4/18/05)

It is the policy of UAB to encourage standardization in the use of terminology and capitalization related to the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations, using the following guidelines.

A. “Universal Accreditation Board”

1. The full name of the organization is “Universal Accreditation Board.”
2. In first reference, use “Universal Accreditation Board (UAB).” Shorten to “UAB” as desired in subsequent references.
3. The only context in which the word “**Universal**” is used is as part of the full name of the organization that governs the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations, the “Universal Accreditation Board.” The word “Universal” is never used to describe the Examination or program (e.g., “Universal Process,” “Universal Accreditation,” “Universal Accreditation Program” and so on are not acceptable). There is NO “Universal Accreditation Department.”
4. “Universal Accreditation Board” should never be used following a participating organization’s name when that name is used as a possessive. It is NOT “XYZ’s Universal Accreditation Board.”

B. “The Examination”

1. On first reference always use **the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations**.
2. On second and subsequent written references in the same body text always use “**the Examination**.”
3. On second and subsequent spoken references, use “**the Examination**” or “**the APR Examination**.”
4. When referring specifically to the “written” part of the Examination, use “**the computer-based Examination**.”
5. NEVER refer to the Examination as an exam or test.
6. Do not refer to the Examination as the “new” Examination.

C. Capitalization

1. **DO capitalize** the following words and terms:
 - a. Always capitalize “Universal Accreditation Board.”
 - b. Capitalize “Accreditation,” “Accredited,” “Accreditation Examination” and “Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.”

- c. Capitalize “Examination” when “the” or “computer-based” is the modifier: “the Examination” or “the computer-based Examination.”
- d. Capitalize “Readiness Review.”
- e. Capitalize “Advance” and “Not Advance” when referring to a candidate’s Readiness Review results.
- f. Capitalize “Accreditation” and “Accredited” when used in reference to the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations or to an individual who has earned the APR designation.

2. Do NOT capitalize:

- a. Do not capitalize “maintenance,” so use: “maintenance of Accreditation is required...”
- b. Do not capitalize “participating organizations.” Note that PRSA is a participating organization, so do not use terms like “PRSA and the participating organizations.” However, “PRSA and the other participating organizations,” is an acceptable usage.
- c. Do not capitalize “certification” when referring to the APR Examination process.
- d. Do not capitalize “examination” when used with any modifier except “the” or “computer-based.” For example, do not capitalize “examination” when used with the adjectives “new,” “written” and “previous.”
- e. Do not capitalize “chair” in the phrase “Accreditation chair.”
- f. Do not capitalize “panel” in the phrase “Readiness Review panel.”
- g. Do not capitalize “board” unless using the word as a part of “the Universal Accreditation Board.”

D. “Readiness Review”

- 1. The result of the Readiness Review is a determination by the panel to recommend to “**Advance**” or “**Not Advance**” the candidate to the computer-based portion of the Examination.
- 2. The *candidate* does not Advance. He/she *is Advanced* by UAB.
- 3. The Readiness Review panel does not Advance a candidate. The panel *recommends* to UAB that the candidate be Advanced. UAB Advances or does Not Advance the candidate.

E. “Public Relations”

- 1. Always spell out *public relations*

F. Other

- 1. For all other matters of style or usage that are not specified in earlier portions of this section, the authority is the current edition of the Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law.



2006 Participating Organization Contacts for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations

Partner Organizations: Agricultural Relations Council, Asociación de Relationistas Profesionales de Puerto Rico, Florida Public Relations Association, Maine Public Relations Council, National School Public Relations Association, Public Relations Society of America, Religion Communicators Council, Southern Public Relations Federation, Texas Public Relations Association.

Agricultural Relations Council

Jeri Mattics Omernik
President
Rocky Mountain Marketing
Communications, Inc.
62768 N. Star Drive
Montrose, CO 81401-7965
Phone: (970) 249-4226
Fax: (970) 249-4385
E-Mail: jmo@rmmc.biz

Asociación de Relationistas Profesionales de Puerto Rico

Gigi G. de Mier, APR, Fellow PRSA
Principal
De Mier & Sainz de la Maza
PMB 374
Ponce de Leon 667
San Juan, PR 00907
Phone: (787) 765-3845
Fax: (787) 765-3845
E-Mail: demierng@dmsmg.com

Florida Public Relations Association

Executive Director
Christopher M. Carroll, APR
Managing Partner
KSC PR
40 Sarasota Center Blvd. #107
Sarasota, FL 34240-8758
Tel: 941-906-1555
Fax: 941-906-1556
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Maine Public Relations Council

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See 2006 Accreditation Chairs List at
<http://www.praccreditation.org/contact/contacts-prsa.asp>

Religion Communicators Council

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See 2006 List of SPRF Accreditation Chairs
at

<http://www.sprf.org/accreditation/accreditationChairs.htm>

Texas Public Relations Association

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Below is the Web site for each UAB Participating Organization:

Agricultural Relations Council

<http://www.agrelationscouncil.org>

Asociación de Relacionistas Profesionales de Puerto Rico

<http://www.relacionistas.com>

Florida Public Relations Association

<http://www.fpra.org>

Maine Public Relations Council

<http://www.meprcouncil.org>

National School Public Relations Association

<http://www.nspr.org>

Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)

<http://www.prsa.org>

Religion Communicators Council

<http://www.religioncommunicators.org>

Southern Public Relations Federation

<http://www.sprf.org>

Texas Public Relations Association

<http://www.tpra.com>