



APR+M Frequently Asked Questions

www.praccreditation.org

1. What is APR?

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

2. What is APR+M?

The Accreditation in Public Relations + Military Communication (APR+M) is an enhanced certification added to the well-established APR. The APR+M signifies that an individual meets all the qualifications of Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) and has demonstrated additional skills in military public affairs. The mark is awarded to candidates who master APR tested areas (<http://www.praccreditation.org/resources/candidates/>) **plus** military public affairs relevant topics.

3. What is the Universal Accreditation Board?

The Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) oversees the Accreditation program. UAB members provide a balanced blend of backgrounds in a number of public relations specialties. This group of senior-level Accredited members meets several times a year to decide policies that govern the Accreditation process. Day-to-day Accreditation operations are administered at PRSA Headquarters. The UAB is a consortium of eight leading industry organizations, including PRSA, and the Department of Defense.

4. What is PRSA?

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

5. What is the Defense Media Activity, and how does it relate to the APR+M program?

The Defense Media Activity (DMA) represents the Department of Defense (DOD) in the Accreditation process. DMA provides a liaison and alternate to the UAB and APR+M Council. The liaison and alternate have voice and vote in UAB and APR+M Council decisions. DMA was established in October 2008 and consolidated military service and DOD media components into a single, joint, integrated multimedia communications organization. Previously known as the American Forces Information Service, DMA reports to the assistant secretary of defense for public affairs and is the official joint public affairs and visual information program of record.

6. What is the purpose of Accreditation?

Accreditation unifies and advances the public relations profession. Accreditation identifies practitioners who have demonstrated broad knowledge, experience and professional judgment in the field. The APR+M identifies individuals with expertise in public relations in general plus specialized knowledge, skills and abilities in military public affairs. The APR+M credential is designed to improve military public affairs practice, encourage ongoing professional development, and establish a standard of knowledge within the public affairs community.

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

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

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

APR+M M candidates must come from three groups:

- Military personnel (active or reserve) whose primary responsibilities lie in military communication-related fields
- Department of Defense civilian employees whose primary responsibilities lie in military communication-related fields
- Department of Defense military contractors, who are members of a UAB participating organization and whose primary responsibilities lie in military communication-related fields.

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

Yes. Reservists and National Guard members are eligible if they are serving in a military public affairs capacity. Retired military public affairs professionals can earn the APR+M designation if they meet maintenance requirements and are members of a UAB participating organization.

10. How will I benefit from earning this credential?

Those earning APR+M demonstrate to other communications professionals and, more importantly, to military leaders that they have achieved high proficiency in skills critical to military communication. The APR designation is “transportable” between military organizations and into the civilian job market. APR is the oldest, most recognized credential in the public relations industry. APR is valued by public, private and government sectors in the selection of trusted counsels to senior leaders. Research conducted by the UAB has found that Accredited practitioners earn on average more than those without certification.

11. How does this credential benefit the military?

APR+M establishes a cadre of public affairs professionals who have broad knowledge in public relations, can think and plan strategically, and adapt to joint operations.

12. Do I have to be a member of a professional association to qualify for APR+M?

No, military personnel and DoD civilians are not required to maintain a membership in any UAB participating organizations. Defense contractors working in a military public affairs capacity must still belong to a participating organization to qualify for APR+M. Requirements for eligibility are listed on www.praccreditation.org.

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

Membership in professional organizations has no impact on whether military personnel and DoD civilians may earn APR+M.

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

If you do not work in a military public affairs, you may drop the “+M” from your designation and become an APR. You remain Accredited as long as you meet eligibility requirements, satisfy maintenance of Accreditation requirements and belong to a UAB participating organization. If this happens, you should communicate to the APR+M administrator as soon as possible.

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

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

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

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

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

Candidates should keep their questionnaire and portfolio presentation at an unclassified level.

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

The APR+M Council has conducted APR+M Readiness Reviews with candidates overseas by telephone conference call or videoconference. The Council assesses each overseas application case by case to determine how to handle a Readiness Review. The computer-based Examination is administered at Prometric Testing Centers in the United States and its territories only. We are tracking candidate demand to determine if international locations are needed.

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

Visit <http://www.praccreditation.org/resources/candidates/> to learn about Accreditation. The website contains the application, frequently asked questions, a study guide, study resources and other aides. The *APR+M Study Guide* should be used with the *APR Study Guide*. Both are available at no cost to candidates.

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

You may initially earn APR only. You may add the +M later. Visit <http://www.praccreditation.org/apply/apr-m/> for details.

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

Yes. The application fee is \$25. The Examination fee is \$385. If you have already achieved your APR credential, the cost to apply for adding "+M" is \$75. Visit <http://www.praccreditation.org/apply/apr-m/> for a details. Several of UAB's participating organizations offer rebates to members, rebating a portion of Examination fees.

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

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

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

Additionally, Navy and Army **Credentialing Opportunities On Line (COOL)** programs offer funding and *may* offer promotion points for Accreditation for enlisted members. Also, the APR program has been specifically evaluated to match its testing areas with those tested at the Defense Information School. Because the areas overlap by at least 80 percent, those services generally will reimburse candidates for Accreditation. Each military Service is different, so military candidates must check with their education counselors to determine what funding options are available. For DOD civilians, reimbursement may be available through civilian training and education funds.

Many defense contract employers may offer their own education and reimbursement incentives for professional develop. Some helpful web sites:

- <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>
- http://www.dantes.doded.mil/Dantes_web/certification/index.htm
- <https://www.cool.army.mil/>
- <https://www.cool.navy.mil/>

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

Those already Accredited may pursue the APR+M by completing an application, submitting a \$75 fee, and successfully going through a specific APR+M Readiness Review. Maintenance requirements still apply.

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

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

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

Candidates who lack joint experience must demonstrate an understanding of joint operations. Candidates do not need to show direct personal experience in all the knowledge, skills and abilities tested.

26. More Information

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