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## Recent changes in APR program demonstrate continuous improvement; new remote option allows candidates to test from home

The past several years demonstrate the Universal Accreditation Board's emphasis on continuous improvement of the Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) credential. Most recently, as a result of the pandemic, the computer-based Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) is now offered remotely.

Since June of 2020, APR candidates have had the option to sit for the Examination in either a Prometric Testing Center, or remotely, through ProProctor. The remote examination still offers the same rigor and process; candidates use a computer equipped with a camera, microphone and Internet connection. Remote candidates also are required to install a lightweight computer app prior to the exam to ensure integrity in the testing process. Once candidates are Advanced from their Panel Presentation, they will be offered the remote examination option.

"Candidates were still very interesting in taking their APR test, and we found a way to make this happen, even when the physical testing center locations closed earlier this year," said 2020 UAB chair Dr. Ann Peru Knabe, APR+M. "As testing centers opened back up, we kept the remote testing option. The remote option also helps candidates who don't live near a Prometric Testing Center. This is especially significant to our military members overseas who are seeking APR+M."

Another recent change is the introduction of the "Panel Presentation," which replaces what was formerly called the "Readiness Review."

"Since 2017, we have used the term Panel Presentation to identify the process that assesses a candidate's Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs)," said Knabe. "The Panel Presentation is often conducted virtually via Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other online video platforms."

The candidate Panel Presentation questionnaire now consists of two parts (formerly three). The questionnaire requires candidates to provide written answers to questions about their organization roles and their professional experience.

As part of continuous improvement, in 2016 the percentage weights of the KSAs changed to better reflect the profession based on research. The [Executive Communication Online Series](#)

on-demand program is an option for candidates to gain a deeper understanding of the KSAs. The KSA percentages are:

- For Researching, Planning, Implementing and Evaluating programs (RPIE): 33%.
- For Applying Ethics and Law: 13%.
- For Managing Issues and Crisis Communications: 13%.
- For Leading the PR Function: 18%.
- For Managing Relationships: 15%.
- For Communication Models, Theories and History of PR: 8%.

A final improvement applies to professionals who have already earned the credential. “Accreditation Renewal” replaces what was formerly known as “APR maintenance.” APR Renewal has a phased-in approach that began in 2019, with all newly Accredited professionals using Continuing Education Units (CEUs) as the unit of Accreditation Renewal. The changes align the APR and APR+M processes and procedures to reflect current standards and best practices in professional development programs. Accreditation Renewal allows better member-tracking capabilities and overall process improvement. The cost of Accreditation Renewal is \$75, and it occurs every three years. For more information about Accreditation Renewal, visit [www.praccreditation.org/resources/documents/apr-renewal-faq-rev060920.pdf/](http://www.praccreditation.org/resources/documents/apr-renewal-faq-rev060920.pdf/).