

APR 2016 - 17
Accredited in Public Relations



Canadian Public
Relations Society

Société canadienne
des relations publiques

Accredited in Public Relations

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What's Your Motivation?

“Professionals have credentials and others have titles such as Vice-President,” says Jeffrey Geibel, APR, Principal of Geibel Marketing and Public Relations. “An APR is a transportable credential such as an MBA. It goes with you, unlike a title. Obtaining your APR is a personal achievement. When all is said and done – a badge of accomplishment.” (2012)

Top 10 Reasons

1. Provides a higher level of professional credibility and distinction.
2. Enhances your familiarity with current public relations standards, updates and processes.
3. APR preparation is a real eye-opener to the breadth and depth of the profession.
4. APR accreditation means the practitioner demonstrates competent and ethical behaviour.
5. APR increases your strategic thinking.

Top 10 Reasons

6. Differentiator – sets you apart.
7. Comes with a fantastic network!
8. Opens up opportunities for speaking, teaching and mentoring – as well as grading and becoming a regional or chief examiner!
9. Shows you are committed to seek and obtain a higher professional standard.
10. Know that you've joined a group of professionals committed to communication excellence!

What if I am still undecided?

You can start preparing even if you aren't quite ready this year:

- Think about potential work samples
- Talk to other APRs and your local Accreditation Chair about their experience with the process
- Find a mentor
- Read from the recommended reading list
- Look at past work samples & exams in the CPRS Resource Library
- Apply R-A-C-E and strategic communications approaches to your everyday practice

How Will I Know I'm Ready?.

You will know you're ready when:

- ✓ You have five or more years of public relations experience
- ✓ You are a strategic thinker, problem solver and can analyze and think on your feet
- ✓ You know what RACE is – and you've used the formula in creating a communications plan
- ✓ You have checked out the self-assessment tool on www.cprs.ca - and you are able to respond positively to all the statements

OK I'm Ready – What's The Process?

Annual cycle:

- Application – due by December 1, 2016
- Work sample overview – due by December 30, 2016
- Eligibility Notification – January 31, 2017
- Work Sample – due April 1, 2017
- Written Exam – October 20, 2017
- Oral Exam – October 20, 2017
- Results notification – December 2017

Application – December 1, 2016

To apply you need:

- Membership in good standing with the Society (CPRS)
- Employed full-time in a public relations position for at least five years
- Three references (two must be current APRs)
- A current resume
- A completed application form and payment of \$425
- Your eligibility will be confirmed by formal letter by January 31, 2017

Work Sample Overview

December 30, 2016

In one page, your work sample overview must show:

- Your role in the project and the scope
- Organizational and PR goals and how they relate to the evaluation of your project
- Approximate date of completion
- Clear ownership of the project
- Your role in implementing the RACE formula

Your eligibility will be confirmed by formal letter by January 31, 2017

Recent changes

- Eligible work sample projects will now include academic materials, such as program curriculum or major class projects.
- Candidates may have completed the work individually, or as part of a team or working group.

FOR

- Educators
- Public relations program graduates or Communications program graduates

The Work Sample – April 1, 2017

For the work sample, you must:

- Provide a case study or analytical discussion of your best work that has been completed within the last three years
- Use the RACE formula to detail your planning, execution and evaluation
- Include a budget
- Provide an executive summary – 500 words max / 600 words max in French
- Main body of the work sample – 2500 words max / 3000 words max in French

Spelling and grammar count!

Written Exam – October 20, 2017

3.5 hours supervised testing on:

- ✓ History
 - ✓ Theory
 - ✓ Fundamentals of practice
 - ✓ Professional Ethics
- Exam takes place at a local college or university
 - Invigilator is present to administer the exam

Exam breakdown:

- Professionalism (20%)
- Communications Planning (50%)
- Public Relations and Society (30%)

Oral Exam – October 20, 2017

Oral Exam – same day as written exam

45-60 minute conversation around:

- Work sample
- Current Events
- Ethics
- General Knowledge

There will be three examiners – at least one in person

Poise and deportment count!

How Do I Prepare: Make the CPRS Website Your New Best Friend!

www.cprs.ca

Login and click on Accreditation – Information for candidates

You'll find:

- Am I ready? Questionnaire
- Accreditation Handbook
- CPRS Code of Ethics
- Reading List
- Previous exams – questions and answers/ written + oral
- Examples of work samples
- Marking sheets, marking guidelines for oral, written and work samples
- Links to the National Resource Library at Mount Royal University

The Back Office

Everyone is a volunteer:

- Accreditation Council
- Chief Examiner
- Regional Examiners
- Graders
- Local Society Accreditation Chairs
- Mentors for the Distance Study Group

Possible Outcomes

To be successful:

Work Sample = 60%

Written Exam = 60%

Oral Exam = 60%

Overall = 65%

Weighting of marks (out of 100%)

Work Sample = 20%

Written Exam = 45%

Oral Exam = 35%

What If I Don't Pass?

The Work Sample:

If you achieve between 55-60% on the work sample, mentoring is offered by the Chief Examiner to get your work sample grade up to 60% so you can proceed to the written and oral exams. If you decide not to be mentored, then the fail stands and a candidate must re-submit the work sample.

What If I Don't Pass?

Written and Oral Exams:

If you achieve between 55-60%, your exam is automatically appealed and assigned to three more APRs (appeal graders); this means a total of six APRs will have reviewed and decided on the outcome.

In fact, a candidate could have as many as nine different accredited individuals involved in confidentially reviewing the three components.

Deferrals

All candidates have the opportunity to defer:

- You may defer until the next year upon request
- If you defer the work sample, you cannot proceed to the written or oral exam until the next cycle
- Presiding Officer decides on deferral request
- Three year window maximum for all components with no financial penalty
- Work sample cannot be stale

What If I Have To Re-do The Entire Process?

- If you fail the work sample and resubmit, your work sample must reflect work in the past three years
- If you fail just the written exam, you only have to retake the written exam
- If you fail the oral exam, you only have to retake the oral exam
- There is a nominal re-take fee (\$50 plus tax)
- You may resubmit or retake exams up to three times
- If you are unsuccessful after three times, you must take a one-year hiatus after which a new application with full fee and references is required

Success!

Congratulations!!!

Candidates who receive over 60% on each exam element and a total grade over 65% attain accreditation

Accredited members:

- May use the APR designation
- Will receive a certificate and pin at the CPRS National Conference
- Will be recognized in the CPRS membership directory and website
- Will be recognized in a newspaper advertisement
- Will be recognized by your local society

Advice!

- Find someone to mentor you through the process
- Read the accreditation handbook
- Be up to date on current events
- Study the marking guidelines
- APR Online Forum
- APR Distance Study Group
- Practice with mock exams

Good luck – you'll be glad you did it!

Your turn



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