CEPR

Certification in
Education for
Public Relations

The Global Standard
in Public Relations Education

2024 GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION

ABOUT CEPR

Certification in Education for Public Relations (CEPR) is a voluntary program of quality assurance endorsement for studies in public relations at colleges and universities worldwide. CEPR credentials honor those programs that provide the faculty, curriculum and resources needed to prepare students for professional public relations positions and career growth.

Established in 1989 by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and affiliated with the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), CEPR is a program with evolving standards based on the research findings of the Commission on Public Relations Education (www.commpred.org). The Commission conducts regular research among public relations educators, practitioners and employers to identify emerging trends and needs in public relations education and practice.

ELIGIBILITY FOR CEPR

CEPR applies to academic programs in public relations studies at the undergraduate and master's levels, to colleges and universities both internal and external to the U.S., and programs housed in various types of academic units in communication and business. International programs with CEPR credentials, located on four continents, have been assessed according to indigenously appropriate applications of standards.

Although active participation in PRSA and PRSSA is strongly encouraged for all schools applying for the CEPR, it is not required. Master's degree programs and those located outside the U.S. can provide students with professional affiliations through other organizations. It is strongly recommended that the school applying for certification be affiliated with PRSA and/or a member association of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

LETTER OF INTENT

Schools interested in applying for CEPR should email a letter of intent to PRSA's VP of Education, Jeneen Garcia, at jeneen.garcia@prsa.org and to CEPR Coordinator Dr. Susan Walton, susanrwalton@gmail.com. This letter begins dialogue between PRSA, the CEPR coordinator and the school and helps with predicting the likely need for reviewers. In no way, however, does this informal memo obligate the school to move any further in the process.

APPLICATION FOR REVIEW

Should the program decide to move forward in seeking CEPR, an application for review would be submitted next. The application should follow the outline found on page 9 of this document. It can be submitted in Word or PDF format, and it should be sent electronically to Jeneen Garcia (jeneen.garcia@prsa.org) and Susan Walton (susanrwalton@gmail.com) **at least three months** in advance of the preferred site visit dates (which will be indicated in the application).

Information in the application is not arranged in order by the eight standards. It is, instead, arranged in order of topics (resources, curriculum, faculty, etc.). This logical arrangement should be relatively easy for applicant schools to compile because it is how academic units typically file information. Tips and examples are provided for each of the seven sections (A-G) of the application.

Supporting information may be submitted in additional electronic documents and/or with a link to a website. Some schools provide all of the requested information in a single document with appendices (but no hyperlinks embedded in the application document); other schools prefer to provide some of this information and/or additional evidence separate from the application document. As applications with excessive links can be more challenging for reviewers to work with, applicants are encouraged to provide as much evidence as possible in the document itself.

If more than one program is undergoing a review at a school (an undergraduate and a graduate program, for example), an application is required for each program, even if much of the background information about the school is the same in both applications.

The school's preferred site visit date requests are likely to be met for schools that apply at least three months in advance. Schools are encouraged to submit their applications as early as possible, and reviews are scheduled in the order the applications are received. It is imperative that the site visit is scheduled when school is in session, as reviewers need to witness teacher-student interaction as well as interview current students.

Schools sometimes request to schedule back-to-back CEPR site visits for CEPR and its sister

certification program, ACEJMC. Schools interested in this option should notify Jeneen Garcia and Susan Walton as early as possible (such as when the ACEJMC site visit dates are confirmed) that a CEPR site visit is being requested following a scheduled ACEJMC site visit. If contacted far enough in advance, the public relations representative on the ACEJMC team can sometimes extend time on campus for the CEPR review, thus saving on travel expenses. The closer the preferred dates are to the PRSA International Conference in the fall, the more difficult it is to coordinate back-to-back site visits. The easiest site visit dates to arrange for back-to-back ACEJMC and CEPR reviews are usually in January or February. Early application will also help to accommodate your preferred site visit dates and better manage the cost of the site review.

FEES AND RELATED EXPENSES

The CEPR certification or recertification fee is $900. The payment should be submitted at the time the application is submitted. Remittance can be made to Jeneen Garcia at PRSA (jeneen.garcia@prsa.org) by credit card, or she can issue an invoice. Please contact Jeneen directly to let her know your preference.

CEPR SITE VISIT

After the application has been received and the fee has been remitted, the CEPR coordinator, Dr. Susan Walton, will appoint a team of professionals who will complete a site visit. The review is usually conducted by two PRSA members, a full-time educator and an APR-credentialed practicing professional (this may be expanded to a three- or four-person team, depending on the number of program levels being examined and other situational factors). The review teams examine the school's curriculum, resources, facilities and university support of its programs. The two-to-three day site visit includes meetings with faculty, students, administrators and key external constituencies. Expenses for the review team, including travel to the campus being reviewed, lodging and meals, are covered by the institution being reviewed. The school should accommodate reasonable requests from the team regarding housing and meals. These expenses may be paid directly by the institution and/or reimbursed upon submission of receipts. Alcoholic beverages are not covered.

Gifts or entertainment for the reviewers are inappropriate, although it is acceptable to give them token souvenirs with the insignia of the university or the program.

Travel should be at the lowest reasonable cost – coach rather than first-class flight bookings, for example. Reviewers may schedule travel time to allow sightseeing at their own expense before or after the site visit.

The school should also provide a workspace with internet access that is for the exclusive use of the review team during their time on campus. The workspace should have internet access, and the reviewers may request computers and/or printers for their exclusive use while on site.

Before, during or after a review, both applicant schools and reviewers are encouraged to address any questions to the CEPR coordinator, Dr. Susan Walton, susanrwalton@gmail.com. She welcomes the opportunity to help schools prepare for reviews and to assist site visit teams with their assessments.

THE CEPR PROCESS

The process and time commitment are, in general, as follows:

PRE-WORK (4-6 weeks before site visit)

The reviewers will have conversations with the organizing faculty of the program to be reviewed, and conduct interviews with program graduates, employers and internship providers of students in the program. These interviews are required as part of the review process, and most reviewers find that it is helpful to have completed many or all of these conversations before arriving on campus.

CAMPUS VISIT (2-3 days)

This may be up to three full days on campus, with departure on the fourth day, if both undergraduate and postgraduate programs are being reviewed.

The time commitment must include a Monday or Wednesday PLUS a Tuesday or Thursday, so that both Monday-Wednesday and Tuesday-Thursday classes can be observed. (Possible schedule variation: CEPR reviews that are scheduled back-to-back with ACEJMC reviews, as described above.)

On the last day, before departure from campus, the reviewers will brief the school on their initial impressions. However, the reviewers should stress that the final assessment will not be determined until the report has received the approval of both the Educational Affairs Committee and the PRSA Board.

POST-WORK (including the creation of the report)

The written report goes through a four-step review process:

1. **Factual accuracy –** Within a few weeks of the site visit, the reviewers will submit their report to the applicant school to check for factual accuracy only. The applicant school's lead program contact is asked to respond within a few days.

2. **Submission to Educational Affairs –** The reviewers make any factual corrections noted, complete the report, and then submit the entire report for review by the Educational Affairs Committee. The Committee may occasionally make suggestions or request clarifications of items in the report. Those requests are forwarded to reviewers for consideration and response.

3. Reviewers make further revisions or clarifications suggested, if any, and if applicable.

4. The report is then submitted by the Educational Affairs Committee to the PRSA Board for final approval.

Please bear in mind that the primary mission of CEPR is to strengthen public relations education. Therefore, deficiencies in the program should not be hidden or downplayed during the review process. In fact, the applicant school should clearly communicate the program's needs so that reviewers can document them in the report. A third-party validation of such needs can strengthen the program's case for acquiring resources in the future.

Once a program has achieved CEPR certification, program recertification takes place every six years, and this process is repeated.

" The University of Waikato PR programme was certified by PRSA in 2009, 2016, and 2023. Each review helped us improve our programme, validate our reputation, and gain recognition for the programme and the PR industry within our school and university.

We take into consideration the PRSA certification's evaluation criteria in our decisions about the curriculum and the way we deliver our teaching. Our PRSA certification reassures international students that our PR programme meets international standards, and it helps their decision to choose Waikato for their public relations degree. The application process is demanding and rigorous, but its outcome is very gratifying, and it is worth the effort."

Dr. Margalit Toledano, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA, PRiNZ
Associate Professor
The Department of Management Communication
The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand

SITE VISIT REPORT FORMAT

Reviewers will write a separate report for each program under review. So, if a site review involves both an undergraduate and a graduate program, for example, the reviewers will submit two separate reports. Sources may include information from the application, from the site visit, and off-site research, and reviewers may request additional documents or other information at any time. History and environment are unique to each school; therefore a program will be assessed for compliance with CEPR standards within the parameters of its own mission.

Institutions submitting multiple applications should bear in mind that, while some information (such as facts and figures about the overall institution) may be the same in the various reports, applications for multiple programs should not take a "cut and paste" approach. The application information for each program (especially for undergraduate and graduate programs), should be specific and unique. Enrollment, retention and graduate statistics will vary between programs, as will courses offered and course content. Faculty members, resources, internship or professional development activities, and student clubs or organizations may differ from program to program, and the applications should reflect these differences. Schools providing the review team lists of individuals to contact, such as former students, employers and internship providers, should provide contacts that have specific knowledge of the program being reviewed. This list of contacts should be sufficiently extensive (the reviewers will discuss the precise number desired), and each program should have a different list of contacts.

The report should objectively document the strengths of the program, without excessive exaggeration, but with recommendations/expectations for improvement.

The report will contain the following elements:

COVER PAGE

The first page of the report should be dated with a header that identifies the document as a review for certification or recertification, with introductory information from Section A of the application; name and location of the institution; credentials held by the institution; contact information for administrators in the academic unit in which public relations is housed; credentials held by the unit; and academic degree(s) under CEPR review. It should also provide phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and basic credentials of the reviewers.

OVERVIEW

Following the cover page and preceding assessment of standards, the report should provide background on the history of the program and/or what is unique or noteworthy about the program. A statement about the educational philosophy and goals of the program, including ethics, diversity and global perspectives, can provide a smooth transition to conclude the overview and begin analysis of compliance with the standards.

Specifically Defined Evidence: Throughout the assessment of standards, reviewers should identify documents reviewed, classes observed and the number of interviews conducted with each key constituency.

Recommendations/expectations: The report should conclude with constructive recommendations for improvement. Any significant deficiencies can rise beyond the level of recommendations and be stated as expectations for achievement prior to the next recertification review.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

The site visit reviewers can put forth one of several opinions and recommendations:

- Certification based on compliance with all standards;

- Certification based on compliance with six or seven standards if non-compliance is manageable as an expectation prior to the next recertification review in six years;

- Pending certification based on deficiencies that can be remedied prior to a follow-up review specific to one or two standards within 18 months (specifics on follow-up reviews to be determined on a case-by-case basis); or

- Denial of certification if non-compliance is significant and/or widespread.

> " Feedback from the CEPR site visit team is super helpful in discovering needed program adjustments, building the case for program support, helping to differentiate your program, and recruiting good students. "
>
> **Dr. Steve Iseman, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA**
> Public Relations Professor Emeritus
> Ohio Northern University

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APPLICATION FOR REVIEW

SECTION A.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

A-01. Name of institution and location.
Example: University of the Arctic - North Pole, Arctic Zone

A-02. Credentials held by the institution.
Example: Accredited by the Far North Accrediting Council

A-03. Contact information for administrators in the academic unit in which public relations is housed.
Example:
Jorge Perez, dean of the College of Business,
555-123-4567, perez@arctic.edu
Fran Claus, chair of the Department of Journalism,
555-123-5678, claus@arctic.edu
Terry Smith, head of the Public Relations Program,
555-123-6789, smith@arctic.edu
Also include a mailing address for the key contact in the program.

A-04. Credentials held by the unit.
Example: The College of Business is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International, and the Department of Journalism is accredited by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications.

A-05. Academic degree under CEPR review.
Example: Bachelor of Science in Communication - Public Relations

SECTION B.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAM

B-01. Statement of educational philosophy and goals of the program in public relations education, including ethics, diversity and global perspectives.

B-02. Assessment criteria, methods and results, including summative findings (achievement of goals) and formative findings (application to improvement of the program).
Methods could be exit interviews with graduating seniors, focus groups with alumni and surveys of graduates' employers. How did findings indicate achievement of the program's goals? How were findings applied to improving the program?

B-03. Admissions and retention criteria for the university and for the program.
Example: Admission to the university is moderately selective with a minimum 2.0 ACT score, a 3.0 high school GPA or matriculation in the top 10 percent of the high school class. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA for retention in the university. Completion of 45 hours with a minimum 2.5 GPA is required for admission to the public relations program, and a minimum "C" in each course in the major with a cumulative 2.5 GPA is required for retention in the major.

B-04. Admissions data for at least each of the last three years – number of applicants and acceptance percentage by gender, ethnicity and/or national origin.

B-05. Matriculation data for at least each of the last three years – number of students and graduation rate by gender, ethnicity and/or national origin.

SECTION C.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESOURCES OF THE PROGRAM

C-01. Library holdings and other learning resource tools.

C-02. Technological currency of classroom and learning facilities compared to similar academic units.

C-03. Budget allocations compared to similar academic units.

C-04. Scholarships, grants and gifts to the program.

C-05. Awards received by students (year, title, organization).

SECTION D.

INFORMATION ABOUT PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

D-01. Organizations public relations students may join and types of activities available for students.

D-02. Opportunities for public relations students to interact with practicing professionals.

D-03. Professional contacts – a sample of 10 practicing professionals (other than alumni) engaged with the public relations program with e-mail addresses and phone numbers.

SECTION E.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CURRICULUM

E-01. Minimum credits required by the institution for this degree.

E-02. Requirements and electives in the public relations program, including credits per course, frequency of offerings and measures of assessment for each course.
Example: 39 hours (15 department, 18 public relations, 6 elective)

15 hours department:
3 credits: CM 113 Intro to Communication 3 times/year 2 exams
3 credits: CM 213 Writing for Mass Media 3 times/year writing projects
3 credits: CM 313 Communication Theories 3 times/year 2 exams
3 credits: CM 413 Communication Law & Ethics 3 times/year 2 exams
3 credits: CM 493 Internship 3 times/year portfolio

15 hours public relations:
3 credits: PR 333 Public Relations Principles 2 times/year 3 exams
3 credits: PR 343 Public Relations Writing 1 time /year writing projects
3 credits: PR 353 Public Relations Multimedia 1 time /year production projects
3 credits: PR 363 Public Relations Ethics 1 time/year analysis papers
3 credits: PR 383 Public Relations Research 1 time /year research projects
3 credits: PR 483 Public Relations Campaigns 1 time /year campaign project

6 hours electives (choose 2 of 5):
3 credits: JO 323 Reporting 2 times/year writing projects
3 credits: AD 323 Advertising Principles 2 times/year 3 exams
3 credits: TV 323 Video Production 2 times/year video projects
3 credits: PR 373 Social Media Strategy 1 time /year online projects
3 credits: CM 333 Diversity in Media 2 times/year 2 exams

E-03. Curricular and extracurricular experiential learning opportunities for students (internship, practicum, cooperative education, service learning student-run agency/firm).

E-04. Statement of the inclusion of ethics, diversity and global perspective in course content.
Example: CM 113 includes a unit of study on minority media, PR 333 includes a unit of study on global communications, and CM 333 focuses on the strength of ethnic diversity in communications professions.

E-05. Faculty-student ratio for survey and skills classes during at least each of the last three years.

E-06. Alumni – a sample of 20 graduates with e-mail addresses and telephone numbers.

E-07. Internship providers – a sample of 10 providers with e-mail addresses and telephone numbers.

E-08. Employers of graduates – a sample of 10 employers with e-mail and telephone numbers.

E-09. Faculty in other programs – a sample of 10 colleagues at your school who are familiar with the public relations program with e-mail addresses and telephone numbers.

E-10. For master's level, titles of a sample of 10 recent student theses.

E-11. For master's level, citations for recently published student works.

E-12. For master's level, a statement about the capstone experience, which could be a thesis, project and/or comprehensive exam.

SECTION F.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE FACULTY

F-01. Full-time and part-time faculty credentials and responsibilities.

- **Name, gender, rank, tenure/non-tenure status, ethnicity and/or national origin.**
- **Degrees earned (year, title, field, institution).**
- **Experience in the practicing profession of public relations (years, positions, descriptions).**
- **Service (years and nature of service).**
- **Scholarship (full citations of presentations and publications).**
- **Awards received (years, titles, organizations).**
- **Professional affiliations (years, organizations, leadership positions).**
- **Workload (courses taught each academic year compared to similar units).**

F-02. Academic advising and career counseling – methods and record keeping.

SECTION G.

PREFERRED SITE VISIT DATES

G-01. First choice of preferred dates.
Example: Immediately following the ACEJMC site visit scheduled Feb. 1-4.

G-02. Second choice of preferred dates.
Example: Late March (after March 10-17 spring break) or early April.

STANDARD ONE
Public Relations Curriculum

UNDERGRADUATE

The public relations curriculum should be adaptable to changes in the profession and sufficient to prepare students for career growth in the field. In accordance with the report of the Commission on Public Relations Education, which informs the eight standards, the program should be well grounded in liberal arts, communication and business disciplines. Available courses specific to public relations should include (1) principles; (2) writing/content creation with writing as a key component of each course; (3) research; (4) campaigns/case studies; (5) ethics (including global perspectives and other responsibilities of the profession); and (6) experiential learning.

Through academic advising, students should be fully aware of requirements, prerequisites and opportunities in electives and/or minors. Students should be able to progress through the program in a timely manner.

Evidence required in application sections:

B-01. Statement of educational philosophy and goals of the program in public relations education, including ethics, diversity and global perspectives.

E-01. Minimum credits required by the institution for this degree.

E-02. Requirements and electives in the public relations program, including credits per course, frequency of offerings and measures of assessment for each course.

E-03. Curricular and extracurricular experiential learning opportunities for students (internship, practicum, cooperative education, service learning, student-run agency/firm).

E-04. Statement of the inclusion of writing, ethics, diversity and global perspectives in course content.

E-05. Faculty-student ratio for survey and skills classes during each of the last three years.

E-06. Alumni – a sample of 20* graduates (e-mail and phone contact information).

E-07. Internship providers – a sample of 10* (e-mail and phone contact information).

E-08. Employers of graduates – a sample of 10* (e-mail and phone contact information).

*The sample numbers above (20 alumni, 10 internship providers and 10 employers) are the number of samples that reviewers prefer to complete. Since some people on those lists may be unavailable, it is suggested that programs include extra names on the list.

E-10. Titles of a sample of 10 recent student theses (if applicable).

E-11. Citations for any recently published student works (if applicable).

E-12. A statement about the capstone experience, which could be a thesis, project and/or comprehensive exam (if applicable).

Additional evidence to be gathered by reviewers:

- A review of syllabi for appropriate content.

- Interviews with internship providers and/or employers of graduates about the adequacy of the curriculum in preparing students for career growth in public relations.

- Observations of classes.

- Review of course evaluations.

The Commission on Public Relations Education has recommended the following content areas (not specific courses) with a minimum of 30.

- Communications/public relations theory and research methods.

- Ethics (ethical and legal issues).

- Global influences on the practice of public relations (understanding of cross-cultural and intercultural communications, and public relations practices worldwide). Blended/hybrid and online programs should be rigorous, providing students with in-depth understanding, advanced knowledge, scholarly competence, and an appreciation of inquiry and discovery.

It is not the purpose of CEPR to prescribe specifics of the arrangement and titles of courses – only to provide expected content areas. This content can be manifest in whatever curricular arrangement is appropriate to the program's institutional and cultural environment. However, it is not enough for students to complete general writing or research courses; content must be specific to public relations. The report should provide hard data on degree requirements, course offerings, faculty-student ratios and other information descriptive of the curriculum, with the following expectations specific to public relations:

- Principles

- Writing/content creation with writing as a key component of all public relations courses

- Research applicable to theory and outcomes measurement/assessment

- Campaigns/case studies

- Ethics (including global perspectives and other responsibilities of the profession)

- Experiential learning

This section of the report should conclude with a summary of strengths and recommendations, followed by the reviewers' judgment for compliance or non-compliance. Appropriate recommendations could include creation of a new course or strengthening of some area of pedagogical deficiency

GRADUATE

Master's degree programs may be designed to prepare students for professional public relations careers and/or for entering doctoral programs. Both types of programs should teach public relations and management

techniques and leadership, business, and communications skills. A professional program should also include courses in an area of public relations specialization, as well as an internship, practicum or cooperative educational experience. Master's programs that are designed to prepare students for doctoral programs should have the same outcomes as professional master's programs, with additional instruction in theory and social science research methods. These academically focused programs should require a thesis.

Evidence required in application sections:

B-01. Statement of educational philosophy and goals of the program in public relations education, including ethics, diversity and global perspectives.

E-01. Minimum credits required by the institution for this degree.

E-02. Requirements and electives in the public relations program, including credits per course, frequency of offerings and measures of assessment for each course.

E-03. Curricular and extracurricular experiential learning opportunities for students (internship, practicum, cooperative education, service learning, student-run agency/firm).

E-04. Statement of the inclusion of ethics, diversity and global perspectives in course content.

E-05. Faculty-student ratio for survey and skills classes during each of the last three years.

E-06. Alumni – a sample of 20 graduates (e-mail and phone contact information).

E-07. Internship providers – a sample of 10 (e-mail and phone contact information).

E-08. Employers of graduates – a sample of 10 (e-mail and phone contact information).

E-10. Titles of a sample of 10 recent student theses.

E-11. Citations for any recently published student works.

E-12. A statement about the capstone experience, which could be a thesis, project and/or comprehensive exam.

Additional evidence to be gathered by reviewers:

- A review of syllabi for appropriate content.

- Interviews with current students to assess their perceptions about the adequacy of the curriculum in preparing them for career growth in public relations.

- Interviews with alumni to assess their perceptions about the adequacy of the curriculum in preparing them for career growth in public relations.

- Interviews with internship providers and/or employers of graduates about the adequacy of the curriculum in preparing students for career growth in public relations.

- Observations of classes.

- Review of course evaluations.

The Commission on Public Relations Education has recommended the following content areas (not specific courses) with a minimum of 30 hours for the degree:

- Strategic public relations management, best practices in a digital environment, crisis communication, risk communication, and written and oral communication skills.

- Basic business principles and processes.

- Communications/public relations theory and research methods.

- Ethics (ethical and legal issues).

- Global influences on the practice of public relations (understanding of cross-cultural and intercultural communications, and public relations practices worldwide).

Blended/hybrid and online programs should be rigorous, providing students with in-depth understanding, advanced knowledge, scholarly competence, and an appreciation of inquiry and discovery.

STANDARD TWO
Public Relations Faculty

It is essential that the faculty makeup represents diversity. Doctorate-holding faculty, professors of practice, and adjunct instructors should all be skilled in effective teaching with experience in the practicing profession. They should have specialized pedagogical training for online teaching, program quality control and assessment, and they should stay current on emerging communication platforms, tools and issues.

Faculty members should be effective mentors who prepare their students well for careers in public relations. Those who are research faculty should ensure that their research strengthens their ability to teach and mentor students effectively. Part-time faculty should be selected based on experience and ability to teach and mentor, and they should be well-supervised to ensure the consistent quality of public relations courses. Faculty should be actively engaged in the field and with other professionals.

GRADUATE

Faculty teaching in master's degree programs should have professional experience and remain professionally engaged in addition to their academic credentials. They should be involved in professional development programs through professional societies, media organizations and other venues, and they should lead professional development programs to share their research findings and expertise with others. A Ph.D., Ed.D. or equivalent terminal doctorate is the preferred qualification for teaching public relations; in most cases, a master's degree and professional experience should be the minimum acceptable credentials.

Evidence required in application sections:

F-01. Full-time and part-time faculty credentials and responsibilities, including:

a.   list of faculty by name, rank, tenure/non-tenure status, gender, ethnicity and/or national origin;

a.   degrees earned (year, title, field, institution);

b.   professional experience in the field (years, position, description);

c.   service (years and nature of service);

d.   scholarship (full citations of presentations and publications);

e.   awards received (years, titles, organizations);

f.   professional affiliations (years, organizations, leadership positions);

g.   workload (courses taught each academic year compared to similar units).

Additional evidence to be gathered by reviewers:

•   Interviews with current students to assess their perceptions about the faculty.

•   Interviews with alumni to assess their perceptions about the faculty.

•   Interviews with faculty to assess their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

•   Observations of classes.

•   Review of course evaluations.

Faculty with advanced-level academic degrees are particularly essential for master's level programs, and experience in various sectors of the practicing profession is important at all levels.

This section should conclude with a summary of strengths and recommendations, followed by the reviewers' judgment for compliance or noncompliance. Appropriate recommendations could include an additional faculty line, professional experiences for existing faculty and/or the recruitment of guest speakers.

STANDARD THREE
RESOURCES, EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

The public relations program should have equitable access to unit budgetary assets, library resources, computer and other technology tools. Technology should be current and comparable to that used in the field.

GRADUATE

Master's level programs should have increased autonomy to manage facilities and budget with support for global initiatives of master's students and faculty, such as travel grants and international internships, as well as proper technology to support social and digital media skills.

Evidence required in application sections:

C-01. Library holdings and other learning resource tools.

C-02. Technological currency of classroom and learning facilities compared to similar academic units.

C-03. Budget allocations compared to similar academic units.

C-04. Scholarships, grants and gifts to the program.

Additional evidence to be gathered by reviewers:

- Inspection of equipment and facilities.
- Interviews with current students to assess their perceptions about the adequacy of resources, equipment and facilities.

The review should assess whether the public relations program is getting its fair share of resources compared to similar units within the university and/or within the unit's area. This section should conclude with a summary of strengths and recommendations, followed by the reviewers' judgment for compliance or non-compliance. Appropriate recommendations could include dedicated space for PRSSA or additional technology for the program.

STANDARD FOUR
PUBLIC RELATIONS STUDENTS

The quality of the program's students and recruitment of outstanding students into public relations is at the foundation of a successful educational program. It is essential that student makeup represents diversity, and students should also receive adequate career counseling.

Evidence required in application sections:

B-02. Assessment criteria, methods and results, including summative findings (achievement of goals) and formative findings (application to improvement of the program).

B-03. Admissions and retention criteria for the university and for the program.

B-04. Admissions data for at least each of the last three years – number of applicants and acceptance percentage by gender, ethnicity and/or national origin.

B-05. Matriculation data for at least each of the last three years – number of students and graduation rate by gender, ethnicity and/or national origin.

C-05. Awards received by students (year, title, organization).

E-10. For the master's level, titles of a sample of 10 recent student theses.

E-11. For the master's level, citations for any recently published student works.

F-02. Academic advising and career counseling, including methods and record keeping.

Additional evidence to be gathered by reviewers:

- Interviews with faculty about recruitment and retention efforts.
- Interviews with current students about why they chose this program, as well as adequacy of advising and counseling.
- Interviews with alumni about why they chose this program and if they are satisfied with the program.

The review should assess recruitment, retention, academic and career advising, matriculation and accomplishments of students. It is essential that the makeup of the student body represent diversity. This section should conclude with a summary of strengths and recommendations, followed by the reviewers' judgment for compliance or noncompliance. Appropriate recommendations could include ideas for recruitment or suggestions for stronger engagement of students with the program.

STANDARD FIVE
ASSESSMENT

Quality academic programs have routine and systematic assessment built into the curriculum and the program. Assessment determines if the program is meeting its objectives (summative assessment) as well as specific actions needed for improvement (formative assessment). This section offers hard data supporting findings, a summary of strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations for improvement.

Evidence required in application sections:

A-02. Credentials held by the institution.

A-04. Credentials held by the unit.

B-02. Assessment criteria, methods and results, including summative findings (achievement of goals) and formative findings (application to improvement of the program).

E-07. Internship providers – a sample of 10 providers with e-mail addresses and phone numbers.

Additional evidence to be gathered by reviewers:

- Interviews with current students about achievement of course objectives.
- Interviews with internship providers regarding their involvement in evaluating the performance of interns.
- Review of achievement of program objectives.
- Interviews with faculty and/or administrators about how findings are applied to improve the program.

STANDARD SIX
Professional Affiliations

The involvement of alumni and other practicing professionals in mentoring students into the profession is critical. The program should help students cultivate the professional relationships they will need throughout their careers. PRSA/PRSSA and/or other professional organizations offer students excellent opportunities to prepare for the public relations practice. Ongoing dialogue among educators and practicing professionals help ensure that curricula and experiential learning match evolving industry needs. Students also benefit from shadowing programs and opportunities to attend local and national PRSSA conferences.

Evidence required in application sections:

D-01. Organizations public relations students may join and types of activities available for students.

D-02. Opportunities for public relations students to interact with practicing professionals.

D-03. Professional contacts – a sample of 10 practicing professionals (other than alumni) engaged with the public relations program with e-mail addresses and phone numbers.

E-06. Alumni – a sample of 10 graduates with e-mail addresses and phone numbers.

F-02. Academic advising and career counseling – methods and recordkeeping.

Additional evidence to be gathered by reviewers:

- Interviews with current students about the adequacy of career counseling.

- Interviews with alumni about their involvement with the program.

- Interviews with practicing professionals about their involvement with the program.

- Consideration of awards received by the program, faculty and students from sources external to the university.

- Consideration of student and faculty service internal and external to the university.

STANDARD SEVEN
Relationships With Total Unit and University

Public relations programs frequently cooperate and collaborate with other programs and faculty within their unit and the university that offer general education, liberal arts, business and/or communications courses. The perception and reputation of the public relations program, its faculty and students may influence its ability to gain access to teaching and mentoring resources in other units.

Evidence required in application sections:

A-03. Contact information for administrators in the academic unit in which public relations is located.

Additional evidence to be gathered by reviewers:

- Interviews with administrators to assess the reputation of the public relations program and its level of support.

- Interviews with faculty external to the program to assess the reputation of the public relations program.

- Consideration of university-wide awards received by the program, faculty and students.

STANDARD EIGHT
Diversity and Global Perspectives

Public relations education must prepare students to live, work and thrive in a diverse global society. Educators play a vital role in emphasizing the importance of respect and understanding of diverse people, cultures, and interests in communicating effectively to regional, national, and global audiences. Course content should include global influences on the practice of public relations. Student- and faculty-centered global initiatives, including study and work abroad, are important elements in a strong public relations program.

Evidence required in application sections:

A-03. Contact information for administrators in the academic unit in which public relations is located.

B-01. Statement of educational philosophy and goals of the program in public relations education (should include ethics, diversity and global perspectives).

B-04. Admissions data for at least each of the last three years – number of applicants and acceptance percentage by gender, ethnicity and/or national origin.

B-05. Matriculation data for at least each of the last three years – number of students and graduation fate by gender, ethnicity and/or national origin.

E-04. Statement of the inclusion of ethics, diversity and global perspectives in course content.

Additional evidence to be gathered by reviewers:

- Interviews with current students to assess their appreciation for ethics, diversity and global perspectives.

- Consideration of gender, ethnic diversity, multi-national representation and/or multilingual representation in the program.

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Unlike Law, Medicine, Accounting and other disciplines, Public Relations does not have a common "port of entry." Public Relations educational programs that choose to invest their time and thoughtful review of their curricula; their full-time and part-time faculty; the available resources, equipment and facilities; their relationships campus-wide and within the professional; and ultimately the quality of their graduates, can rightfully claim a distinguishing and distinguished status within and among today's ever-increasing, highly competitive, number of undergraduate and master's programs.

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Maria P. Russell, APR, Fellow PRSA
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