

The Foundation Award in Public Relations

What it is:

- a short – 3 day course with a test at the end and a nationally recognised qualification
- an introduction to the knowledge and skills needed in PR and a platform for further studies

Who it is for:

- those doing A levels, perhaps thinking about a subject for higher study or simply deciding on a career to follow (eg 16-18 year olds)
- those seeking a career change or returning to work
- working in organizations with PR colleagues, or in junior roles, who want to increase their understanding of PR policies and practise
- those who are simply curious to know what PR is really all about!

The Foundation Award in Public Relations awarded by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations

This course and qualification provides an introduction to PR. Success at this level will make you eligible to enrol for the CIPR's Advanced Certificate, which in turn leads to the Institute's senior award – the (post graduate) Diploma.

These two CIPR higher qualifications were developed, in 1998, to help the Institute of Public Relations fulfil its requirement to develop the profession. The Institute was awarded a Royal Charter in recognition of this commitment to help develop practitioners' skills and knowledge and to set and maintain high professional standards.

Entry requirements:

- General education should be to "A" level or equivalent.
- Those whose first language is not English but who wish to study for the English award must be able to demonstrate proficiency in the language – spoken and written to – International English Language Testing System (IELTS) band score of 7.0 or above or equivalent. Those abroad wishing to study for the award in their mother tongue must have proven language skills to the satisfaction of their chosen centre.

Aim of course:

- To introduce the profession of public relations and develop key writing skills.

Teaching:

- Fifteen hours of lectures and participative workshops during which the background, some basic theories and practical skills will be explained and demonstrated using case studies and current issues.

Self directed study:

- Fifteen hours of background reading and revision.

Learning outcomes:

- By the end of the courses participants should be able to demonstrate:
 1. an understanding of and differentiate between the concepts and practices of: public relations, marketing, advertising, publicity, public information, spin and propaganda.
 2. an understanding of and work with key PR terms: publics, reputation, relationships, media relations, newsworthy, dialogue, mutual understanding, social responsibility, evaluation and communication
 3. an understanding of and know how to work under the CIPR code of ethics
 4. an understanding of when and how to write and place a news release, a blog post or tweet (micro-blog).

Assessment:

- A three hour examination involving a report, a news release/blog post exercise and an essay covering all three units of the award.

Recommended reading:

The CIPR intends to publish a book in October 2011 to support this course, titled: '*An Introduction to Public Relations: An International Perspective*' ed. S. Wolstenholme, Pearsons. Until this text is published, we recommend that tutors continue to use their existing texts, eg "*Introduction to Public Relations*", by Shirley Harrison, (Thomson 1995). You may also want to refer to the CIPR skills guide series; for example *Introduction to Blogging* by Pauline Christie MCIPR.

Syllabus in more detail:

- **Unit 1 - Distinguishing PR Activities.**

To enable students to define the field and scope of public relations and its relationship with marketing, advertising, publicity, propaganda etc. Students will also be able to demonstrate an understanding of the way that public relations is placed within organisations (in terms of its relative position to the dominant coalition, budget share etc.) Broad introductions will be given to some specialist areas including financial/investor public relations, lobbying, marketing PR (FMCGs) sponsorship, working in-house or in a consultancy and corporate social responsibility. Concepts such as relationship building, reputation management and working with publics will be illustrated.
- **Unit 2 - Writing for News Media and Online Audiences.**

To make clear the basics of working in partnership with the news media – meeting their needs; writing press releases for them; knowing what is news and why it needs currency and human interest; beginning to understand what makes a good picture for print, the right sound for radio and when something might be of interest to television. Also to understand the needs of online audiences and influencers such as bloggers, what makes a good concept for a viral video, and to be able to write a blog post or tweet to publicise a news event.
- **Unit 3 - Ethics and the PR Professional.**

To establish the role of the professional practitioner, difficult choices will be debated for those working under the CIPR code of practice. We will address what it means to use an ethical approach and examine a commitment to continuous professional development.

How to find a course; how to enrol; who to pay:

- Courses will be provided by a variety of organisations. You can contact the CIPR Qualifications Dept for the latest news of what is available, the timetables, and costs. Such information will be shown on the CIPR website too. Many organisations intent on providing the course will advertise directly in their own locality.
- All Teaching Centres offering this course will have been approved for the purpose by the CIPR. Students can enrol directly with Teaching Centres. The Teaching Centre will also ensure that students complete a form to send on to the CIPR to register them as CIPR/C& G Foundation students.
- Teaching Centres will levy one fee only. This will cover their own charges and include a sum of £150 which is the standard sum due to the CIPR.

Certification:

This award is conferred by the **Chartered Institute of Public Relations**.

Students who achieve 50% or more in the examination will have passed and so achieve the award. Those achieving 60% to 69% will have passed with merit, and those achieving 70% and above, with distinction. Merit passes and distinction passes will be shown on the certificates.

The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), the professional body for public relations practitioners, was founded in 1948, and received its royal charter in 2005. For a number of years, it has provided courses and qualifications at undergraduate and post graduate levels, in co-operation with British universities and selected private training organizations. Now, owing to public demand both in the UK and overseas, it has developed a new award, at United Kingdom "A" level standard, or level 3.

Last revised 19/05/2011