



SYLLABUS 2008-9

1. Outline of syllabus, including:

- **Aims**
- **Learning Objectives**
- **Learning Outcomes**
- **Indicative content**
- **Assessment methods**

2. Detailed content for each unit

1) OUTLINE OF SYLLABUS FOR EACH UNIT

UNIT 2.1 – PR THEORY AND PRACTICE (PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE)

Suggested teaching time – 45%

Aim

To develop the ability to analyse and critique a range of public relations concepts, models and theories and to apply them to public relations practice

Learning Objectives

- introduce the basic elements of public relations theory, including schools of thought
- encourage greater use of academic study skills, including critical evaluation
- encourage wider, critical, reading into current thinking about public relations practice and theory
- examine the social, economic and political impact of public relations in the organisation, UK, European Union and globally
- apply a range of theories to public relations practice in the workspace

Learning Outcomes: at the end of Unit 2.1 learners will be able to:

- critically evaluate a wide range of public relations theories and concepts
- write essays/ papers to academic standards
- access a wide range of relevant public relations writing and thinking
- locate public relations theory in wider academic and social contexts
- evaluate the impact of public relations in their own organisation and wider contexts
- apply a range of public relations ideas to their own workplace and to the sector in general

Indicative content

- Introduction to public relation practice and study
- Public relations theory – an overview
- Public relations in society – the wider context

Assessment: Critical Reasoning Test (essays/reports: 5,000 – 6,000 words)

UNIT 2.2 – PR PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

(VOCATIONAL SKILLS)

Suggested teaching time – 45%

Aim

To develop the ability to explain, critique and apply a range of theories and practices to strategic public relations planning and management

Learning Objectives

- introduce a range of theories, models, concepts and practices concerning strategic public relations management
- emphasise the importance of planning to strategic public relations
- explore corporate communication and its strategic functions
- consider the needs of publics / stakeholders in designing communication
- increase effective media planning and execution, including the use of informative and persuasive communication strategies
- understand the role of research and evaluation in the planning process
- encourage students to apply the above to their own public relations practice.

Learning Outcomes: at the end of Unit 2.2 learners will be able to:

- apply a range of theories, models and concepts to public relations planning for a range of situations
- produce and identify clear strategic objectives for a range of situations, as well as appropriate tactics, in line with corporate goals
- consider and prioritise the needs of different publics / stakeholders in a range of situations
- design effective communications, using appropriate media channels, and informative and / or persuasive messages
- select appropriate research and evaluation tools
- use the above planning tools in their own place of work / practice.

Indicative content

- Introduction to public relations planning in theory and practice
- Strategic PR planning and organisational objectives
- Strategic publics
- Strategic media planning
- Research and evaluation

Assessment: Planning assignment based on a case study (5,000 words)

UNIT 2.3 – PERSONAL SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT (REFLECTIVE PRACTICE)

Suggested teaching time – 10%

Aim

To support students conducting a self-directed research investigation into an aspect of public relations practice and/ or theory

Learning Objectives

- introduce a range of primary and secondary research tools
- encourage students to produce realistic and achievable research plans
- understand the importance of sourcing, reviewing and critiquing appropriate literature
- explore the different values and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods
- introduce appropriate questionnaire designs
- enable links to be made between theories, concepts and practices outlined in earlier modules and current public relations practice.

Learning Outcomes: at the end of Unit 2.3 learners will be able to

- define their own project parameters and produce a realistic research plan
- produce a literature review of current thinking in the field, including critical evaluation
- conduct primary and secondary research, as appropriate, using suitable research tools
- produce an in-depth reflective investigation of a selected area of public relations practice or theory, drawing on material introduced in previous modules.

Indicative content

- Project design
- Research tools
- Personal reflection

Assessment: Personal project agreed with tutor (6,000 words)

2) DETAILED CONTENT FOR EACH UNIT

UNIT 2.1 - PR THEORY AND PRACTICE	
<p>Introduction to public relations theory and practice (approx 20% of unit)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining the field, understanding professionalism • The importance of theoretical ideas to developing best practice • Using theory to secure jurisdiction and recognition • Personal learning approaches/reflective practice • Academic writing styles and study skills
<p>PR Theory - overview (approx 40% of unit)</p>	<p>Schools of thought</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • systems theory • critical perspectives • rhetorical approaches • relationship management <p>Sources of theory (overview)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management – strategic communication, organisational culture and change, stakeholders/publics, leadership, issues etc • communication/media – 2-way models, role of media, decoding messages, semiotics etc • social psychology – motivation, needs, influence, persuasion <p>PR theory in practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g. internal communications case study (from QMUC)
<p>Public relations in society – the wider context (approx 40% of unit)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisational context for PR – the PR department/agency • How PR impacts on society – economically, politically and socially (inc. social/democratic ‘good’ vs ‘propaganda’ views of PR) • Current debates in public relations, such as ethics, CSR, environment monitoring, global communication (e.g. blogging), diversity • Trends in society and PR (e.g. employee engagement)

Unit 2.2 - PR planning and management

Intro: Planning as theory and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic management theories and planning models• Communication and organisational strategy• Integrated communications management
Strategic PR planning & organisational objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporate communications• Corporate image & ID• Organisational reputation• Issues management and crisis PR• Managing and preparing live projects for clients/employers (e.g. class activity)• Planning & resources
Strategic publics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concepts of publics/ stakeholders• Relationship management• Working with pressure groups & local communities• Persuasion and influence
Strategic communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creativity in communication• Informative and persuasive communication styles/ models• Using existing and emerging media channels Message strategies & tactics
Research & Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organisational research – design and execution• Tools and models• Accountability

Unit 2.3 - Personal Skills and Development

Project design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting academic research, literature search and review • Developing a research question, hypothesis and methodology
Research tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative and qualitative research methods • Personal planning skills – managing a research project
Personal reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective approaches to PR theory at work • Personal and professional ethics in research issues • Life long learning/ CPD

Note: The CIPR has established the Diploma as equivalent to level 7 of the National Qualifications Framework.

The following description of a level 7 course is taken from the National Qualifications Framework http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/qca_05_2242_level_descriptors.pdf on 21/08/08

Intellectual Skills and Attributes	Processes	Accountability
<p>Display mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills</p> <p>Demonstrate expertise in highly specialised and advanced technical, professional and/or research skills</p>	<p>Conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, using and modifying advanced skills and tools</p> <p>Design and apply appropriate research methodologies</p> <p>Communicate results of research to peers</p> <p>Develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques</p> <p>Act in a wide variety of unpredictable and advanced professional contexts.</p>	<p>Accept accountability in related decision making including use of supervision</p> <p>Take significant responsibility for the work of other professional staff; lead and initiate activity.</p>