

CIPR Foundation

Syllabus

The CIPR Foundation Award in PR introduces the study and practice of public relations (PR). It is an introductory qualification for people who would like to work in PR. It is also suitable for those who already undertake some PR tasks and wish to consolidate their skills and understanding. The Foundation Award is the entry point to the CIPR's suite of professional qualifications. Alternatively, it provides a basis for study at Level 4 in PR or in a related field.

The Foundation Award focuses on the role of PR in organisations and on engagement through content creation. The syllabus comprises two components:

Component 1: The core skills required for an entry level PR role, specifically content creation for both traditional media outlets and digital media platforms

Component 2: The role of PR within an organisation and what PR practitioners do (and don't do).

The Foundation Award is delivered by CIPR-accredited teaching centres, via 15-20 hours of face to face, online or blended learning, and a further 15-20 hours of self-directed study, guided reading and research and/ or 'homework' tasks. Each CIPR-accredited teaching centre will establish the detailed content, lesson plans and resources provided to candidates. They will also determine which of the eight submission methods for Component 1 will be acceptable to them.

Candidates would be awarded the *CIPR Foundation in PR* by successfully completing the two components.

Qualification Outcomes

Successful candidates will be able to:

1. Create content for written and audio-visual platforms that will engage stakeholders;
2. Identify and prioritise different audience groups and channels, and justify those choices in the context of building relationships between an organisation and its stakeholders;
3. Explain how PR helps to support different organisational objectives, and how it works with related disciplines such as marketing communications and advertising.

The Component Objectives are detailed below.

Assessment

The CIPR Foundation is assessed as follows:

Component 1: Candidates produce a portfolio of content for traditional and digital media to generate positive coverage for an organisation.

Component 2: Candidates produce an accompanying discussion paper showing how the portfolio of content will help deliver the objectives of the PR team in that organisation.

The two component assessments must be based around a single organisation. This can be:

- a real organisation identified by the teaching centre, or
- a fictitious organisation created by the teaching centre, or
- the candidate's own employer or another organisation known to the candidate **if** the teaching centre has approved the chosen organisation as suitable for the assessments.

Component 1: PR Skills and content creation

Component 1 considers the types of content PR practitioners produce and how to target content for particular audiences and channels. It also develops practical content creation skills.

Component Objectives

At the end of Component 1, candidates will be able to:

1. Identify the different communities/ audiences/ stakeholders an organisation might want to engage with, and the intended organisational outcome(s);
2. Describe the different types of media channels using, for example, the PESO model (paid, earned, shared and owned media);
3. Explain the role of influencers and endorsers in getting a story covered and shared; and
Explain how to identify influencers, including journalists, experts, celebrities and exclusively online influencers, for example vloggers and Instagrammers;
4. Identify potential positive news stories about an organisation:
 - 4.1 Identify news or feature angles that would catch a journalist's interest and motivate them to produce a story for their news outlet, from broadsheet newspapers and broadcast news programmes as well as online news outlets such as BuzzFeed, Huffington Post etc;
 - 4.2 Identify a news or story angle that would interest social and digital media audiences and influencers;
5. Understand the key principles of storytelling and narrative; and
Produce and adapt stories across a range of platforms including, but not restricted to, media releases, websites, blogs, Tweets, videos / video storyboards (short or long form), podcasts and / or infographics;
6. Monitor references to an organisation on social media.

Component 2: The role of the PR practitioner

Component 2 focuses on the role of PR within an organisation. It looks at the contribution PR makes to the organisation's key objectives, the way PR practitioners interact with other disciplines, and their responsibility to operate ethically and to keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

Component Objectives

At the end of Component 2, candidates will be able to discuss:

1. The role of PR within an organisation including its role in reputation management, and its role within the marketing mix;
2. The convergence between PR, advertising, marketing communications, publicity, lobbying, fundraising and other related disciplines, particularly in a digital context;
3. The ethical responsibilities of a PR practitioner and ways to manage ethical dilemmas;
4. The relevance to PR practitioners of PR competencies, continuing professional development/ training, and the role of professional bodies.

Component 1 Assessment: Portfolio of content

Aim: To enable candidates to demonstrate the ability to identify a news story relating to a named organisation, and to create content about that story that will engage audiences, journalists and influencers to generate positive coverage and dialogue with the organisation.

Submission: The portfolio should comprise 1000 words (+/- 10%) of content (or equivalent if audio / visual content – i.e. number of minutes) about an organisation designated by the teaching centre. The content should:

- Showcase a positive news story about the designated organisation;
- Include four separate pieces of content about that story that are ready for use by a journalist or online audience/ influencer, or ready to be published directly on the organisation's own channel;
- Include both written content and audio/ visual/ digital content, choosing any four items from the list below (in accordance with guidance on acceptable submission methods given by individual teaching centres*):
 - Media release of roughly 250 words
 - Blog post of roughly 250 words
 - Series of 5 Tweets
 - Video storyboard of 6 – 12 frames
 - Video of no more than 2 minutes (note: a video counts as two pieces of content)
 - Podcast script outline of 200 – 500 words

- Podcast of no more than 5 minutes
- Infographic

***IMPORTANT:**

Individual teaching centres can choose which of the above items they will accept and candidates should check this with them before starting work on Component 1.

Candidates must identify the targeted channel for each piece of content. For example, 'content A is for the organisation's website; content B is for local radio; content C is for the organisation's Twitter feed'.

Component 2 Assessment: Discussion paper

Aim: To enable candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how content creation around an individual news story helps to deliver organisational objectives, and to consider any internal negotiation required, and the ethical or professional implications of the story.

Submission: The discussion paper must address the same organisation as the Unit 1 assessment (portfolio) and must reflect on and relate to the portfolio. It should comprise 1000 words (+/- 10%) and should:

- Introduce the chosen organisation and any particular challenges or opportunities it faces (maximum 200 words);
- Identify the audiences who are being targeted with the portfolio content and the desired organisational outcome;
- Identify which particular channels are being chosen to reach them and justify this choice;
- Address any potential ethical or other risks associated with this story;
- Show how this PR activity will sit alongside other disciplines in the organisation, for example marketing communications or advertising;
- Conclude with a statement of how the news story will help the organisation to meet the challenges or opportunities outlined at the start (maximum 200 words).

Word count

A substantive response to both Components is necessary to meet the requirements for a Pass.

The word count must be recorded in the appropriate spaces provided on the cover sheet and at the end of the relevant text in the main documents.

Bibliographies and footnotes, if any, are not included in the word count. Footnotes must not contain appendices or be used to include additional text that should have been in the main body of the work.

Candidates are allowed a +/- 10% leeway on the word count. Anything outside this allowance will be penalised and may result in the assessment being graded Fail.