



Panel Presentation Guide and Materials

for Accreditation Chairs, Panel Chairs and Panelists

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www.praccreditation.org

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PANEL PRESENTATION GUIDE AND MATERIALS FOR ACCREDITATION CHAIRS AND PANELISTS

Welcome to the Panel Presentation Process

As the Accreditation chair or panelist for your Chapter or organization, you have agreed to provide support, training and guidance to candidates who seek to complete the Panel Presentation and Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations. The materials contained in this document describe: 1) how the panelists for a candidate's Panel Presentation are selected and the Panel Presentation is conducted; 2) training, policies and procedures for conducting a Panel Presentation; and 3) how to ensure the Panel Presentation is conducted in a professional, fair manner for each candidate. The document is divided into four sections:

I. Purpose of Panel Presentation. The Panel Presentation is the system that evaluates a candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities in 12 specific areas of competency that cannot be effectively judged in the Examination.

II. Selecting the Panelists for a Candidate's Panel Presentation. The Panel is an important body of public relations experts who, when trained properly, can offer accurate assessment of the candidate. This section will guide the selection of public relations professionals to serve as evaluators for the candidates.

III. The Panel Presentation Process. The Panel Presentation is a two-step process for the candidate: 1) the candidate completes the Panel Presentation Questionnaire and prepares information containing collateral supporting the public relations plan described in the Panel Presentation Questionnaire; and 2) the candidate participates in the Panel Presentation by presenting the information and responding to panelists' questions on public relations. This section offers a training agenda for preparing panelists to conduct fair assessments of the candidate.

IV. Appendices. This section contains all the forms and tools Accreditation chairs and panelists need in organizing, conducting and evaluating candidates. For additional resources, visit the APR chair [pages](#) of the Universal Accreditation Board Web site, www.praccreditation.org.

Panel Presentation at-a-Glance

Typical Timeframe*	Candidate	Chair/Panelists
Before the Panel Presentation	Notify local Accreditation chair of intent to begin the Accreditation process.	Provide the candidate with local resources and overview of the process. Inform candidate of whether the panel will be face-to-face or virtual (or give candidate the choice).
	Read this document thoroughly and assess your public relations experience and ability to respond effectively to the Panel Presentation Questionnaire before completing the application.	
Before Application Submittal	Begin collecting and preparing materials for the Panel Presentation.	
Month 1	Submit application for Accreditation to the Universal Accreditation Board.	
14 days after application is received by UAB.	Receive notification from UAB of application approval. If not approved, UAB provides reasons for ineligibility. <i>Note: Panel Presentation and Examination MUST be completed within one- year of application approval.</i>	Receive notification from UAB of candidate's application approval.
Months 1, 2, 3	Prepare for the Panel Presentation and Examination. Prepare written responses to the Panel Presentation Questionnaire.	Conduct study course. Assist candidate in preparation.
Month 4 (30 days prior to Panel Presentation)	Request to schedule a Panel Presentation. Submit the final Panel Presentation Questionnaire to the chair.	Recruit three Accredited professionals to serve as panelists in the Panel Presentation. APRs must be in good standing with APR renewal requirements. Organize the panel – date, time, and location. Review the candidate's written responses to Panel Presentation Questionnaire. Review Panel Presentation Instructions.
Month 4 (at least 15 business days prior to Panel Presentation)	Finalize work example and presentation.	Provide candidate's final Questionnaire to panelists.
Month 4 (at least 15 business days after submitting the Panel Presentation Questionnaire)	Participate in Panel Presentation.	Conduct Panel Presentation. Vote to Advance or Not Advance.
Immediately following Panel Presentation		Submit required documentation and Advance/Not Advance recommendation to UAB.
Within two weeks of receipt of panel's recommendation	Receive notification via email of Advance or Not Advance status from UAB.	Receive notification via email of Advance or Not Advance status from UAB. Provide mentoring and preparation support to candidate, as needed.
Post Panel Presentation	If Advanced, prepare for Examination. Must sit for Examination by completion deadline (one year after application approval.)	
	If not Advanced, may repeat Panel Presentation process after 90-day waiting period. Must sit for Examination by completion deadline (one year after approval.)	

*Each candidate progresses through this process at his or her own pace.

This timeframe reflects an average time period but may be shortened or lengthened per candidate's needs.



I. PURPOSE OF PANEL PRESENTATION

The Panel Presentation marks the beginning of the process to earn Accreditation in Public Relations. It is a gateway to the Examination.

According to the Universal Accreditation Board Policies and Procedures, the intent and purpose of the Panel Presentation for APR is to assess the candidate on the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) that cannot be assessed on the Examination.

*The final decision on whether or not to advance a candidate rests with the Universal Accreditation Board.

The Panel Presentation is an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate competence in 12 specific areas of public relations that cannot be effectively assessed in the Examination. These 12 areas of competency can be found in 12 Areas of Competency Assessed by the Panel Presentation (Appendix A) and Panel Presentation Scoring Forms (Appendix B-1, B-2).

Once the candidate earns an Advance decision from the UAB, he or she can sit for the Examination. Candidates who are Not Advanced can be mentored by one of the panelists or others, repeat the Panel Presentation process after a 90-day waiting period, and, when Advanced, schedule the Examination. A candidate can retake the Panel Presentation as many times as needed within one year of notification of eligibility for the Examination process. More information on Advance or Not Advance can be found in Section III. The Process.

II. SELECTING THE PANELISTS FOR A CANDIDATE'S PANEL PRESENTATION

The Accreditation chair is responsible for assembling a panel of three confirmed Accredited professionals in your area and appointing one of the three as panel chair. The Panel Presentation chair is responsible for overseeing the Panel Presentation process for each candidate assigned by the Accreditation chair. Within 30 days of notification that a candidate has become eligible for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations, the Accreditation and/or panel chair must notify the candidate to determine timing for the Panel Presentation. The Presentation does not have to take place in 30 days; however, the candidate must be notified of scheduling possibilities within 30 days.

*Accredited members of a participating organization who agree to serve as panelists have several responsibilities and should be aware that their role is critical to the success of the Accreditation candidate. When considering Accredited members in your organization to serve as panelists for a candidate's Panel Presentation, keep the following roles and responsibilities in mind.

Panelist: Roles and Responsibilities

Role

- Serves as evaluator during the candidate's Panel Presentation.
- Votes to recommend Advance/Not Advance status of a candidate based on the assessment of the specific KSAs identified for evaluation during the Panel Presentation. Note, it is not the role of the panel to assess whether the candidate is prepared to take the exam.

*To serve as a panelist, the Accredited member must be in good standing with their APR renewal and have submitted the required number of CEUs.



Responsibilities

Before the Panel Presentation

- Reviews the Panel Presentation Questionnaire, which includes a public relations plan, submitted by the candidate.
- Develops list of questions or concerns based on the Panel Presentation Questionnaire responses to review with the candidate during the candidate's Panel Presentation.

During the Candidate's Panel Presentation

- Discusses each portion of the Panel Presentation Questionnaire with the candidate.
- Reviews and evaluates the candidate's presentation of the public relations plan and project to determine if competencies in the 12 specific areas (see Appendix A) are demonstrated.
- Rates the candidate's performance by assigning a score of 0-3 for each of the 12 specific areas.
- Collaborates and reaches agreement with other panelists on the Advance/Not Advance recommendation.

Who Makes a Good Panelist?

Three Accredited public relations professionals serve as panelists for each candidate's Panel Presentation. One of the three is appointed chair of the panel. Select members of your Chapter who have:

- A demonstrated interest in the Accreditation process.
- A reputation for providing fair, unbiased, objective assessments of problems and situations.
- Proven skills in mentoring, teaching and coaching.
- In-depth knowledge of the public relations profession.
- Familiarity with at least one of the study books from the [bookshelf](#).
- Good decision-making skills as demonstrated in Chapter business or through work experience.
- A dedication to task that allows for thoroughness, timeliness and follow-up.
- A similar position to the candidate (i.e., educators should serve on an educator's panel).
- A willingness to help others.
- Time to commit to helping others.



III. PANEL PRESENTATION PROCESS

The Panel Presentation is a two-step process that allows a volunteer panel to assess a candidate's competence in 12 areas of skills as noted in Appendix A. Accreditation chairs or the chair of a Panel Presentation should consider conducting a one-hour training session with prospective panelists to ensure that all panelists are familiar with the process and steps they will take in conducting the Panel Presentation. The following pages provide a suggested agenda and information for this one-hour training. If a training session is not practical in your area, Accreditation or panel chairs should distribute a copy of this guide to each panelist for independent review.

SUGGESTED AGENDA FOR ONE-HOUR TRAINING

A. Introduction: Panel Presentation — The Two-Step Process

Questionnaire
Presentation

B. What to Do Before the Panel Presentation

Preparing for the Panel Presentation:

- Become Familiar with the Panel Presentation Scoring Forms
- Read Candidate's Instructions
- Resources for Preparation in Accreditation in Public Relations

C. Conducting the Panel

Presentation Policies:

- -Confidentiality
- -Timing
- -Sensitivity

The Panel Presentation

Special Circumstances

Voting Procedures

Introduction: Panel Presentation — The Two-Step Process

Step 1. The Panel Presentation Questionnaire

The Panel Presentation Questionnaire (Appendix D) is a three-part survey that allows candidates to develop a written response for questions in these areas:

- 1) Candidate's Organization and Role.
- 2) Candidate's Work Experience and Sample Public Relations Plan.

The candidate's completed questionnaire is submitted to the Accreditation chair and panelists no fewer than 15 business days before the Panel Presentation date. Panelists **must** study the candidate's responses carefully and should prepare a list of questions or concerns to review with the candidate during the Panel Presentation.

Tip 1

Panelists who are unable to perform this careful review should inform the panel chair for the candidate's Panel Presentation immediately. The chair will assign another individual to conduct the Panel Presentation for the candidate.



Step 2. The Panel Presentation

During the Panel Presentation, three panelists will meet with the candidate to:

- Ask questions about the candidate's responses to the two-part Panel Presentation Questionnaire.
- Listen to the candidate's presentation of the materials supporting the public relations plan outlined in the questionnaire.

What to Do Before the Panel Presentation

Preparing for the Panel Presentation

Assessing the Panel Presentation Questionnaire

As mentioned previously, panelists will receive the candidate's written questionnaire at least 15 business days before the scheduled presentation. When reviewing the candidate's responses, panelists can make an overall assessment by asking the following questions. If the candidate's responses do not provide clear answers to these questions, the panelist should develop a list of questions to ask for clarity or explanations from the candidate during the Panel Presentation.

Tip 2

The Panel Presentation and the panelists' review of the Panel Presentation Questionnaire should be conducted in strict confidence. See page 5 for more on confidentiality.

Evaluating the Candidate's Responses to the Panel Presentation Questionnaire

Section One

- Does the candidate demonstrate knowledge of his/her public relations operation and the roles of the public relations professional in relation to others in the organization?
- Does the candidate clearly assess the economic climate that might affect his/ her public relations duties?
- Does the candidate respond to the questions in Section One with a sense of leadership based on experience?
- Does the candidate provide reasonable examples of real-life situations to support answers?
- Are specific knowledge, skills and abilities on the scoring form demonstrated throughout this section?

Section Two

- Has the candidate presented a complete public relations plan that he/she has clearly had a key role in developing and implementing?
- Does the candidate provide narrative and examples for a four-part public relations plan including research, planning, implementation and evaluation?
- Was the public relations plan developed with approval and corroboration from other departments and sectors as needed?
- Are the candidate's responses to improving the plan reasonable, well thought-out and rational?
- Are specific knowledge, skills and abilities on the scoring form demonstrated throughout this section?

Become Familiar With the Panel Presentation Scoring Forms and Focus of Evaluation

Panelists should be familiar with the knowledge, skills and abilities that should be demonstrated during the Panel Presentation process. See Appendix A for the 12 specific areas of competency and Appendix B for Scoring Forms. Remember that the full set of KSAs, tested by the Examination, are more comprehensive and the candidate should not be assessed on these KSAs but rather those found in Appendix A. The Panel Presentation is designed to evaluate the candidate's acumen in these 12 KSAs but may also point to deficits in the full set of KSAs. These deficits should be the candidate's focus for study in preparing for the Examination.

Tip 3

Remember, the panelists assess 12 specific KSAs. The panelists are not evaluating whether or not the candidate will succeed in the Examination.

Read Candidate's Instructions

Panelists should read the "Panel Presentation Guide and Materials for Candidates," available at www.praccreditation.org/apply/apr/ to become familiar with the guidance provided each candidate. Knowing what the candidate has been instructed to do will help each panelist evaluate the candidate's compliance with each component of the Panel Presentation process.

Resources for Preparation for Accreditation in Public Relations

The Universal Accreditation Board has identified several resources to help candidates prepare for the computer-based Examination. Each textbook has been evaluated as a potential reference for each of the competencies tested in the Examination and every question on the Examination is linked to one or more of these books. Panelists should have some familiarity with at least one or two of the books found on the UAB [bookshelf](#). Panelists should also be informed of local resources such as Accreditation prep courses and mentoring so that they can share these resources with candidates.

Review the complete, detailed list of knowledge, skills and abilities tested by the Examination (Appendix E). This list is an important resource for the candidate.

Conducting the Panel Presentation

The Panel Presentation is scheduled by the APR chair or participating organization coordinator in conjunction with the candidate. The chair selects a business-like environment that is free of distraction, phones and other interruptions and reserves the space for a maximum of two hours per candidate. Several policies should be kept in mind at all times during the presentation.

Policies

Confidentiality

As a Panel Presentation evaluator, please follow these guidelines to protect the confidentiality of each candidate and to ensure the fairness of the process.

- Keep each candidate's participation and materials used to administer the Panel Presentation in strict confidence. This includes the names of candidates and materials they submit or present.
- Do not report or discuss results of the Panel Presentation with anyone. This includes people involved in your organization's Accreditation program, local, regional and national officers, or other candidates. Results are reported only to the Universal Accreditation administrator at PRSA Headquarters.
- Avoid serving on a Panel Presentation if you have a relationship that might present a conflict of interest with the candidate. This includes a client/counselor, employer/employee, colleague or a competitive relationship. If you have such a conflict, please inform your Panel Presentation chair immediately and remove yourself from the panel for the candidate in question.



Timing

The Panel Presentation is conducted in a minimum of one hour and a maximum of two hours. Panelists must be prompt to allow the session to begin on time. Panel chairs should ensure the presentation is conducted within the time limit.

Sensitivity

The Panel Presentation evaluators agree to ask questions or make comments that are free of cultural, gender, organizational or any other bias.

The Panel Presentation

During the Panel Presentation, the panel chair and the panelists take several actions:

Panel Chair:

1. Assures that all cell phones, telephones, pagers or other potential sources of distraction are eliminated.
2. Distributes scoring forms (First and Second Vote forms) to each panelist.
3. Introduces the candidate to the panelists and establishes a relaxed, professional environment.
4. Reads verbatim the intent and purpose statement to the candidate (Appendix F).
5. Leads discussion on the candidate's responses to Sections 1 and 2 of the Panel Presentation Questionnaire. Invites panelists to ask questions for clarification and discussion until all questions are satisfied.
6. Invites the candidate to begin presentation of the materials that support the public relations plan presented in the Panel Presentation Questionnaire. Remember, candidates may ask for questions to be held until the presentation is finished or tell panelists to feel free to ask questions throughout.
7. Facilitates panelists' questions and interactions with candidate. Panelists are encouraged to give any feedback that might be helpful to the candidate in preparing for the Examination. This may be done during and after the completion of the Panel Presentation.
8. Explains to candidate that the Advance or Not Advance recommendation to the UAB will be determined by collaboration among the panelists. The candidate will be informed of the result by email from the Universal Accreditation Board.
9. Thanks and dismisses the candidate.
10. Conducts voting procedure among panelists.

Panelists:

1. Interact with the candidate to gather information, insights and impressions that will assist in completing the scoring sheet.
2. Keep the purpose and intent of the Panel Presentation in mind at all times. Questions or comments that are irrelevant to the Questionnaire, the public relations plan may lead to unintended, unproductive and lengthy discussions.
3. Listen intently as the candidate presents his/her project, which should contain public relations collateral that supports the public relations plan presented in the Panel Presentation Questionnaire.
4. Participate in voting procedures as instructed by the chair.

Tip 4

The candidate's project should contain collateral (e.g., brochures, website pages, news releases, speeches, etc) that supported the candidate's public relations plan and may include other samples that accurately demonstrate a candidate's expertise. During the presentation, clarify the candidate's role(s) with the sample materials to help provide later guidance about preparation for the Examination.

Tip 5

Remember that the public relations plan submitted on the Panel Presentation Questionnaire and further explained during the Panel Presentation may not have been prepared solely by the candidate. However, the candidate must have made a **significant** contribution in its preparation and must be able to fully explain all aspects. In doing so, the candidate must show a thorough understanding of the four-step process of public relations research, planning, implementation and evaluation. The candidate must also be able to clearly indicate what his/her role was in the plan's preparation and execution.

Special Circumstances

Candidates With Limited Resources in the Workplace

Some candidates may not hold management-level positions, may have limited budgetary resources or may lack supervisory support to implement public relations programming. These candidates should be encouraged to respond as if they were working under the best possible circumstances but should do so within the context of the plan submitted on the Panel Presentation Questionnaire and supporting materials. For example, they should be encouraged to discuss a different approach they would have taken if the plan had been fully financed and under their full control.

Candidates Who Are Full-time Educators

Candidates who are full-time educators should be asked to prepare a project that demonstrate their knowledge, skills and abilities in the 12 rated areas using academic and scholarly writings, in addition to materials supporting the public relations plan outlined in the Panel Presentation Questionnaire.

Candidates Who Are Senior Professionals

The senior professional who sits for the Panel Presentation will have more in-depth experience than the typical candidate. Panelists are encouraged to review the Panel Presentation Questionnaire and the presentation with an understanding that the senior professional may demonstrate public relations expertise beyond that which is required in the Questionnaire and that some of the questions found on the Questionnaire will be less applicable to the senior professional.

For both full-time educators and senior professionals, the Accreditation chair may consider selecting Accredited members of the candidate's peers whose demographics and experience are more aligned with the candidate. These Accredited members would add value to the evaluation and mentoring of the candidate.

Voting Procedures

First Vote

Without discussion, each Panel Presentation evaluator completes a First Vote form (Appendix B) and gives it to the chair to determine if discussion or further voting is required. In assessing the candidate in each area, panelists use a scale of "0" to "3" defined as:

- 0 = The candidate was unable to demonstrate any knowledge, skills or abilities in the rated areas.
- 1 = The candidate demonstrates a very weak level of knowledge, skills and abilities in the rated area.
- 2 = The candidate shows acceptable knowledge, skills and abilities in the rated area.
- 3 = The candidate demonstrates exceptional knowledge, skills and abilities in the rated area.

Earning an Advance recommendation on first vote. Candidates, who achieve a total of at least 24 points *and* have *no* zero assessment in any single KSA category from any panelist, receive an Advance recommendation. At this time, the panel chair completes the Panel Presentation Summary (Appendix G).

Earning a Not Advance recommendation on first vote. If a candidate, in the opinion of any **one** panelist, does not achieve a total of at least 24 points *or* has any assessment of zero in any single knowledge, skills and abilities category, the candidate is tentatively set for a Not Advance recommendation. Panelist(s) scoring the candidate as Not Advance, must complete Appendix H, Reasons for Not Advance Recommendation and submit to the panel chair. Discussion among the panelists will take place based on the scores and the information provided on Appendix H.

Note: it is not the role of the Panel to assess whether the candidate is prepared to take the Examination. Reasons given for a Not Advance should relate only to the 12 specific KSAs assessed during the Panel Presentation.



Second Vote

After the panel chair leads a discussion about the candidate's performance, he or she distributes the Second Vote form (Appendix B-2).

Earning an Advance recommendation on second vote. Candidates, who achieve a total of at least 24 points *and* have *no* zero assessment in any single KSA category from each panelist, receive an Advance recommendation. At this time, the panel chair completes the Panel Presentation Summary (Appendix G).

Earning a Not Advance recommendation on second vote. If a candidate, in the opinion of any **one** panelist, still does not achieve a minimum of 24 total points *or* has an assessment of zero in any single knowledge, skills and abilities category, assign a Not Advance recommendation to the candidate. The panel chair completes the Panel Presentation Summary (Appendix G) and the Reasons for Not Advance Recommendation (Appendix H).

Note: it is not the role of the Panel to assess whether the candidate is prepared to take the Examination. Reasons given for a Not Advance should relate only to the 12 specific KSAs assessed during the Panel Presentation.

Finalizing the Voting Procedure — for the Panel Chair

When the final votes have been determined, the panel chair takes these steps:

- 1) Collects all materials, including notes taken during the session by any panelist. When the panel is held virtually, be sure panelists understand that all files, notes and copies of the Vote forms must be appropriately deleted/shredded. This is required to maintain the confidentiality and privacy promised to candidates. Dismisses the panelists.
- 2) As soon as possible, **destroys** all notes and Panel Presentation materials collected *except*:
 - The candidate's scoring sheets (Three forms for candidates earning Advance recommendation on first vote: six forms for candidates requiring second vote.
 - A clean copy of the candidate's Panel Presentation Questionnaire.
 - One Panel Presentation Summary per candidate and, in the case of the Not Advanced candidate, along with a completed Reasons for Not Advance Recommendation form.
- 3) Within **five business days**, return the candidate's scoring sheets, clean copy of the completed Panel Presentation Questionnaire and Panel Presentation Summary to:

**Universal Accreditation Board
Public Relations Society of America
120 Wall Street, 21st Floor
New York NY 10005
(212) 460-1400**

These materials may also be submitted electronically to the UAB.



IV. APPENDICES

- Appendix A. Twelve Areas of Competency Assessed by the Panel Presentation
- Appendix B-1. The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations Panel Presentation Scoring Form:
First Vote
- Appendix B-2. The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations Panel Presentation Scoring Form:
Second Vote
- Appendix C. Resources for the Preparation for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations
- Appendix D. Panel Presentation Questionnaire for the Candidate
- Appendix E. Detailed List of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Assessed in Examination
- Appendix F. Statement: Intent and Purpose of the Panel Presentation
- Appendix G. Form: Panel Presentation Summary
- Appendix H. Form: Reasons for Not Advance Recommendation



Appendix A. Twelve Areas of Competency Assessed by the Panel Presentation

The Panel Presentation will be responsible for evaluating candidates' responses in 12 specific areas of competence that cannot effectively be judged in the Examination environment:

1. **Creative conceptualization/creativity:** Uses imagination to develop new insights into or responses to a public relations issue. Develops innovative solutions to the issue or problems posed. Devises new methods/processes or adapts existing ones when the standard methods and processes are not applicable.
2. **Initiative:** Displays courage in suggesting new ideas and justifying them to clients/employers.
3. **Interpersonal skills:** Relates empathetically to other individuals to understand their concerns or needs. Influences another's decision or behavior. Displays confidence when interacting with others.
4. **Management skills:** Develops expertise in planning, organizing, budgeting, communicating, coordinating, scheduling, monitoring and evaluating.
5. **Multi-tasking:** Effectively and efficiently manages numerous projects and responsibilities simultaneously. Applies prioritization and tracks progress toward completion of tasks.
6. **Flexibility:** Responds to the changing business, social and cultural landscape.
7. **Time management:** Prioritizes and sequences tasks to meet goals and deadlines.
8. **Uses multiple delivery mechanisms:** Uses advertising, direct mail, Web and other delivery mechanisms and promotional tools effectively.
9. **Communication skills/speaking:** Demonstrates logical thinking when describing client issues and framing approaches to solving public relations problems.
10. **Communication skills/writing and editing:** Communicates relevant information (including technical material) in a concise, organized fashion. Writes content that is factual and grammatically accurate, and at a reading level that is appropriate to the target audience. Writes persuasive communication material for public relations programs. Demonstrates the ability to examine and alter a document and correct for format, organization, completeness, factual accuracy, style, tone and grammar.
11. **Communication skills/listening:** Receives, interprets, verifies, and responds to verbal and non-verbal messages and other cues in the context of client, teammate and audience concerns.
12. **Presentation skills:** Uses visual aids (charts, slides, transparencies, etc.) effectively. Maintains eye contact with audience. Uses appropriate language, gestures, tone of voice and volume to convey information.



Appendix B-1. The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations Panel Presentation Scoring Form: First Vote

Candidate _____

Name of PRSA Chapter _____

or

Participating Organization _____

Panel Presentation _____

Evaluator _____

Panel Presentation _____

Evaluator's Signature _____

Date of Panel _____

Presentation _____

Instructions

Without discussion with your colleagues on the Panel Presentation, assess the candidate you have just examined on each of the 12 criteria below on a scale of "0" to "3." Refer to Appendix A: Twelve Areas of Competency Assessed by the Panel Presentation for more detailed explanation of each skill area. In assessing the candidate in each area, panelists use a scale of "0" to "3" defined as:

- 0 = the candidate was unable to demonstrate any knowledge, skills or abilities in the rated area;
- 1 = the candidate demonstrates a very weak level of knowledge skills and abilities in the rated area;
- 2 = the candidate shows acceptable knowledge, skills and abilities in the rated area;
- 3 = the candidate demonstrates exceptional knowledge, skills and abilities in the rated area.

If the candidate has earned a "Not Advance" assessment (fewer than 24 points total or an assessment of 0 in any knowledge, skills and abilities category), assign a "Not Advance" assessment and briefly list the reasons (directly related to the 12 KSA areas) why you have done so on the form found in Appendix H (for example, a short set of bulleted items). Be prepared to take a second vote.

Give this completed form to your Panel Presentation chair.

Skill	Demonstrated in	Score (0-3)
1. Creative conceptualization/creativity	Questionnaire (all sections); Panel Presentation	
2. Initiative	Questionnaire (section 2); Panel Presentation	
3. Interpersonal skills	Panel Presentation	
4. Management skills	Questionnaire (section 1)	
5. Multi-tasking	Questionnaire (section 2); Panel Presentation	
6. Flexibility	Questionnaire (all sections); Panel Presentation	
7. Time management	Questionnaire (section 1)	
8. Uses multiple delivery mechanisms	Panel Presentation	
9. Communication skills/Speaking	Panel Presentation	
10. Communication skills/Writing and Editing	Questionnaire (all sections); Panel Presentation	
11. Communication skills/Listening	Panel Presentation	
12. Presentation skills	Panel Presentation	
TOTAL SCORE		



Appendix B-2. The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations Panel Presentation Scoring Form: Second Vote

Candidate _____

Name of PRSA Chapter _____

or

Participating Organization _____

Panel Presentation _____

Evaluator _____

Panel Presentation _____

Evaluator's Signature _____

Date of Panel _____

Presentation _____

Instructions

Following discussion with your colleagues evaluating the candidate's Panel Presentation, score the candidate you have just examined on each of the 12 criteria below on a scale of "0" to "3. Refer to Appendix A: Twelve Areas of Competency Assessed by the Panel Presentation for more detailed explanation of each skill area. In assessing the candidate in each area, panelists use a scale of "0" to "3" defined as:

- 0 = the candidate was unable to demonstrate any knowledge, skills or abilities in the rated area;
- 1 = the candidate demonstrates a very weak level of knowledge skills and abilities in the rated area;
- 2 = the candidate shows acceptable knowledge, skills and abilities in the rated area;
- 3 = the candidate demonstrates exceptional knowledge, skills and abilities in the rated area.

If the candidate has earned a "Not Advance" assessment (fewer than 24 points total or an assessment of 0 in any knowledge, skills and abilities category), assign a "Not Advance" assessment and briefly list the reasons (directly related to the 12 KSA areas) why you have done so on the form found in Appendix H (for example, a short set of bulleted items).

Give this completed form to your Panel Presentation chair.

Skill	Demonstrated in	Score (0-3)
1. Creative conceptualization/creativity	Questionnaire (all sections); Panel Presentation	
2. Initiative	Questionnaire (section 2); Panel Presentation	
3. Interpersonal skills	Panel Presentation	
4. Management skills	Questionnaire (section 1)	
5. Multi-tasking	Questionnaire (section 2); Panel Presentation	
6. Flexibility	Questionnaire (all sections); Panel Presentation	
7. Time management	Questionnaire (section 1)	
8. Uses multiple delivery mechanisms	Panel Presentation	
9. Communication skills/Speaking	Panel Presentation	
10. Communication skills/Writing and Editing	Questionnaire (all sections); Panel Presentation	
11. Communication skills/Listening	Panel Presentation	
12. Presentation skills	Panel Presentation	
TOTAL SCORE		



Appendix C: Resources for the Preparation for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations

The Accreditation in Public Relations Online Study Course

One-year subscription:

\$260 for members of UAB Participating Organizations

\$360 for non-members

This interactive online multimedia course helps candidates prepare for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations (APR). Course content, geared toward the knowledge, skills and abilities measured during the Examination, is presented through a variety of interactive methods, including multimedia module introductions, asynchronous activities, case study analysis, projects, directed discussions, self-correcting quizzes and simulations. It provides opportunities for self-study, collaboration and teamwork, all situations that public relations professionals encounter in their day-to-day work.

The course is easy to use. Candidates can proceed through the course at their own pace, and optional web conferences allow candidates to ask questions and meet other course participants. This Online Study Course is helpful to those who can't participate in the study programs offered by local Chapters and member organizations because of distance or other constraints. It also is valuable to candidates who want to take advantage of additional preparation tools for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.

APR Study Guide

The APR Study Guide is a key tool in preparation for Accreditation in Public Relations and a tremendous resource for all APR candidates. It contains exercises, case studies and insight into modern public relations practices. It's available at no cost to those pursuing Accreditation.

The Bookshelf of Texts Recommended to Candidates for Accreditation in Public Relations

The Universal Accreditation Board suggests that APR candidates review contents of at least one general text and at least one of the specialized texts from the bookshelf of texts. ***You do NOT need to buy or study every text on the Bookshelf.***

Bookshelf of Recommended Texts

- **AP Stylebook current edition**

The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law (current edition). New York: The Associated Press.

- **Cutlip and Center's Effective Public Relations 11th edition or current**

Broom, G. M., & Sha, B-L (2013). *Cutlip and Center's Effective Public Relations (11th or current edition)*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education.

- **Public Relations**

Kelleher, Tom (2020). *Public Relations*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- **Public Relations Strategies and Tactics 11th edition or current**

Wilcox, D. L., Cameron, G. T., & Reber, B. H. (2015). *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics* (11th or current edition). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education.

- **Strategic Planning for Public Relations 3rd or current**

Smith, R. D. (2009). *Strategic Planning for Public Relations (3rd or current edition)*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.

For the entire bookshelf of texts recommended to candidates for Accreditation in Public Relations, visit
<http://www.praccreditation.org/resources/recommended-texts/index.html>.



Appendix D: Panel Presentation Questionnaire for Candidates

Instructions

You will submit either an electronic copy or 3 copies of your typewritten responses to the Panel Presentation Questionnaire no fewer than **15 business days** before your scheduled Panel Presentation. Submit your completed document to your local or organizational Accreditation chair.

Section One: Your Organization and Your Role

This section asks for your response to questions about your current employment in public relations, be it corporate, non-profit, agency or academic. Answer all questions completely and succinctly. Answers in this section are not right or wrong. They should be truthful and accurate.

- 1) Why have you chosen to become Accredited at this time?
- 2) Describe how your public relations agency, department or other operation is organized. Describe the reporting structure, personnel and the key relevant roles of each person.
- 3) Given the current economic climate and present social situations, what is/are the major problem(s)/opportunity(-ies) facing your department, agency or other public relations operation at this time? What about in the next three-to-five years? Pick and briefly articulate the most significant solution or approach you would recommend to address this opportunity or challenge.
- 4) Describe the changes, if any, you think are needed in the structure/function of your public relations agency, department or operation. Describe the steps you would recommend to implement these changes.
- 5) If you were starting a public relations department, academic department or public relations agency today (or starting over again in your organization, institution or agency), what would be your top-three concerns or considerations in doing so, and what would you plan for addressing them?
- 6) Describe what you do each day to contribute to helping your organization achieve its objectives.
- 7) In what ways can you improve your productivity?
- 8) Provide an example of when and how you have provided training or mentoring to others, either as a public relations professional or other organizational adviser.
- 9) Describe a situation where you had to deal specifically with the issue of time management in completing a major assignment.

Section Two: Your Experience

- 1) Describe how you planned or participated in planning a specific public relations program for your organization or a client. Clearly state the problem or opportunity the program was created to address, the research, the objective(s) of the program and all other components of a complete public relations plan. Include specific information to describe your role. If you have never written or participated in the development of a formal public relations plan, develop a program for an organization in which you are or have been involved. Work samples from the plan you describe in this section must be included in the information you will present during the Panel Presentation.
- 2) Describe the research you conducted to develop the plan presented in the first question in this section. If no research was conducted, explain why not. In *specific* terms, explain how the research guided the development of the plan?
- 3) Describe how you obtained or participated in obtaining approval for the plan described in the first question in this section.
- 4) Describe in detail the process you used to evaluate the outcome of the program described in the first question in this section. Describe the outcomes. (Do *not* attach work product samples to this submission but do include them in your project review.)
- 5) Describe how you would, if given unlimited resources and authority, improve the process by which public relations programs in your organization are developed, approved and measured.



Appendix E. Detailed Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) Tested on the Examination

Objective 1: Researching, Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Programs (30%)

1.1 Research (Concepts)

Applies primary and secondary, formal and informal, quantitative and qualitative methods. Decides on the population and sampling techniques. Explains instrument design. Develops a research premise and research plan.

1.2 Research (Applications)

Uses a variety of research tools to gather information about the employer or client, industry and relevant issues. Investigates stakeholders' understanding of the product, organization and issues. Applies research findings.

1.3 Research (Analytical skills)

Continuously analyzes the business environment that includes the client, stakeholders and employer. Objectively interprets data.

1.4 Planning (Strategic thinking)

Synthesizes relevant information to determine what is needed to position the client, organization, or issue appropriately in its market/environment, especially with regard to changing business, political, or cultural climates.

1.5 Planning (Programming)

Sets goals and objectives based on research findings. Distinguishes among goals, objectives, strategies and tactics. Differentiates organizational/operational goals and strategies from communication goals and strategies. Aligns project goals with organizational mission and goals.

1.6 Planning (Identification of publics)

Differentiates among publics, markets, audiences and stakeholders. Identifies appropriate publics and the opinions, beliefs, attitudes, cultures, and values of each. Assesses interests of influential institutions, groups and individuals. Identifies appropriate communication channels/vehicles for reaching key publics. Identifies communities formed through technologies. Assesses varying needs and priorities of individual constituent groups (e.g., investors, governmental agencies, unions, consumers).

1.7 Planning (Diversity)

Identifies and respects a range of differences among key publics. Researches and addresses the cultural preferences and/or needs and barriers to communication with key publics. Develops culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies and tactics.

1.8 Implementation

Develops timelines and budget. Assigns responsibilities. Executes planned strategies and tactics. Follows sequence of events in plan.

1.9 Evaluation of programs

Determines if goals and objectives of public relations program were met and the extent to which outcomes of public relations programs have been accomplished. Uses evaluation results for future planning.

Objective 2: Applying Ethics and Law (15%)

2.1 Ethics (Integrity)

Conducts professional activities in a lawful and principled manner.

2.2 Ethics (Behavior)

Adheres to commonly accepted standards for professional behavior. Recognizes ethical dilemmas. Acts to remedy unethical acts.

2.3 Law (First Amendment issues)

Recognizes First Amendment as a foundational principle for public relations. Distinguishes between commercial and corporate speech. Articulates conditions for libel and defenses for charges of defamation. Assesses effects of digital record on status as public and private figure.

2.4 Law (Privacy issues)

Follows federal law regarding privacy (e.g., HIPAA, FERPA, DPPA), identity protection, ethical implications and digital record. Effectively advises organization on strategic adoption and effective use of technology for listening to, communicating with and engaging priority publics.

2.5 Law (Other legal issues)

Upholds applicable federal laws regarding disclosure, copyright, trademarks and fair use.



Objective 3: Managing Issues and Crisis Communications (15%)

3.1 Issues and risk management

Identifies potential or emerging issues that may affect the organization. Identifies potential risks to the organization or client. Analyzes probability and potential impact of risk. Ensures organization develops appropriate response plans. Designs and deploys a strategic public relations response.

3.2 Crisis management

Identifies roles and responsibilities of public relations practitioners at the pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis phases of a situation. Acts and communicates appropriately during each of these phases.

3.3 Counsel to management

Demonstrates the importance of providing counsel to the management team or client about issues, risks and crises. Looks beyond the current organizational mindset. Considers and accommodates all views on an issue or crisis. Factors these views into communication strategy.

Objective 4: Understanding Communication Models, Theories and History of the Profession (5%)

4.1 Communication/public relations models and theories

Demonstrates familiarity with social science theories, models and research that guide planning, prioritizing publics, developing messages, selecting spokespersons, and establishing credibility and trust.

4.2 Barriers to communication

Determines how messages and messengers are interpreted by different audiences. Evaluates barriers that prevent changes to knowledge, attitude and behavior. Interprets how semantics, cultural norms, timing, context and related factors affect communication.

4.3 Knowledge of the field

Defines public relations and differentiates it from related concepts (e.g., publicity, advertising, marketing, press agency, public affairs, lobbying, investor relations, social networking, and branding). Identifies key figures who influenced the field and major trends in the development of public relations as it is practiced today.

Objective 5: Leading the Public Relations Function (20%)

5.1 Business literacy

Explains how employers/clients generate revenue and how their operations are conducted. Identifies relevant business drivers and how they impact the business. Tells how the public relations function contributes to the financial success of the organization.

5.2 Organizational structure and resources

Recognizes chain of command, including boards of directors, senior leadership, middle management, direct-line supervision, line positions, and each level's distinctions. Knows how organizations are horizontally and vertically structured. Identifies which divisions within an organization need to be involved in any communication program. Assesses impact of organizational governance. Recognizes the relationships among PR, legal, finance and IT as essential management functions.

5.3 Problem solving, decision making and resource management

Approaches problems with sound reasoning and logic. Distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant information. Evaluates opportunities for resolution. Devises appropriate courses of action based on context and facts. Makes sound, well-informed and objective decisions in a timely manner. Assesses the impact and implications of these decisions. Takes into account human, financial and organizational resources. Prepares, justifies and controls budgets for departments, programs, clients or agencies. Knows what information needs to be collected, evaluated, disseminated, and retained. Obtains information by using innovative methods and appropriately store it so that it can be retrieved easily for future use.

5.4 Leadership skills

Influences others to achieve desired goals. Motivates and inspires others, builds coalitions and communicates vision. Influences overall organizational changes in policy, procedures, staffing and structure, as appropriate.

5.5 Organizational skills

Integrates multiple dimensions of a public relations campaign. Combines internal and external components, so that messages are synchronized.

Objective 6: Managing Relationships (15%)

6.1 Relationship building

Employees consensus-building strategies and techniques to persuade key stakeholders to support a decision. Ensures discussions allow key stakeholders the opportunity to express opinions. Recognizes need for affected parties and stakeholders to find mutually acceptable solutions. Uses persuasion, negotiation and coalition building.

6.2 Reputation management

Acts to maintain individual and organizational credibility with key constituents. Recognizes value of reputation, image, public trust and corporate social responsibility.

6.3 Internal stakeholders

Recognizes importance of internal relationships to the public relations function. Appreciates organizational culture and the importance of communicating key messages through frontline supervisors. Uses mediated and non-mediated communication channels for effective engagement. Prioritizes internal publics.

6.4 Media relations

Defines strengths, weaknesses and needs of different media. Explains relationships among public relations professionals, journalists and media organizations. Builds effective relationships with media based on mutual respect and trust. Analyzes current events and trends for opportunities and threats. Identifies appropriate controlled and uncontrolled media channels and key influencers.

6.5 Networks

Determines how different tactics can be used to establish and enhance relationships (e.g., electronic communications, special events, face-to-face communication, networking, social networking, word-of-mouth and third-party communication). Recognizes interconnectedness among various stakeholders. Considers broad/global relationships.

See Appendix A for the Twelve Areas of Competency Assessed by the Panel Presentation.



Appendix F. Intent and Purpose of the Panel Presentation

(To be read by panel chair at the beginning of each candidate's review.)

The Panel Presentation is the first in a two-step process to earn Accreditation in Public Relations. It is a gateway to the Examination.

According to the Universal Accreditation Board Policies and Procedures, the intent and purpose of the Panel Presentation is to assess the candidate's performance on the KSAs that cannot be assessed on the portion of the Examination.

"The intended result of the Panel Presentation is that each candidate will earn an Advance or Not Advance assessment that will recommend the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) either accept or decline the candidate's request for admission to the Examination at this time." *

*The final decision on whether or not to advance a candidate rests with the Universal Accreditation Board.



Appendix G. Form: Panel Presentation Summary of Candidate's Performance

Candidate _____

Name of PRSA Chapter
or Participating
Organization _____
Date of Panel
Presentation _____

In our unanimous opinion:

- ☐ We recommend that the Universal Accreditation Board Advance this candidate to the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.
- ☐ We recommend that the Universal Accreditation Board Not Advance with this candidate to the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations at this time.

In our collective opinion, this candidate earned a Not Advance assessment for these reasons, which are directly related to the KSAs being assessed in the Panel Presentation:

(Print name and sign)

Panel Presentation chair _____

Panel Presentation
Evaluator _____

Panel Presentation
Evaluator _____

Attach the Panel Presentation evaluator's first and second vote forms listing their individual scores and reasons that the candidate did not earn an Advance to the Examination.

Note: The Score Summary, including any comments, can be provided to the candidate upon his/her written request whether your panel does or does not Advance the candidate.

Within five business days, return the candidate's scoring sheets, clean copy of the completed Panel Presentation Questionnaire and Panel Presentation Summary to:
Universal Accreditation Board
c/o Public Relations Society of America
120 Wall Street, 21st Floor
New York NY 10005

These materials may also be submitted electronically to the UAB, accred@prsa.org



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.