

DEVELOPING THE
HIGHEST STANDARDS
FOR COMMUNICATIONS
PROFESSIONALS

**PRII DIPLOMA
IN PUBLIC
RELATIONS**

WWW.PRII.IE/DIPLOMA



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I did the PRII Diploma in 2021-22 and it was bang-on for what I was looking for at this point in my career. I had worked in advocacy and communications roles at a senior level for a number of years but lacked that bit of confidence around the industry or professional knowledge which I felt I lacked without a degree or specific course in communications.

While so much of PR work is instinct and experience, you do need to get a handle of the theory around the approaches and get your head outside the box you're in on how things can be done. Spending dedicated time to hone your communications craft is worth it, in my opinion, but one of the other big values of the Diploma was connecting with others on the course through the year.

I now work in a vibrant public interest communications, public affairs and PR agency and practically apply what I have learned.

Sóna Cahill,
Account Director, DHR Communications

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I completed the PRII Diploma in Public Relations in 2020/2021. Working in a busy PR agency, I felt that I had a good understanding of the practical side of the profession, but I knew that I needed to broaden my knowledge of communications theory.

The course helped to refine my overall skill set, and has really advanced my career development. The lecturers are some of the most knowledgeable communications experts in the country, and it was a pleasure to learn from their experience.

Above all, the course helped me to develop a peer network of fellow practitioners, from a wide range of industries and backgrounds, which I have found to be a great support base.

I cannot recommend this course highly enough for people who are starting out on their PR journey, or equally for people who want to refine and add to the skills and knowledge that they already have.

Mark Harrington,
Client Manager, AM O'Sullivan PR

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**FOR OVER 30 YEARS THE MOST
WIDELY HELD AND HIGHLY REGARDED
IRISH QUALIFICATION IN PR**



**HELD BY MORE THAN 40% OF SENIOR
COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONALS**



WHY THE PRII DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC RELATIONS?

Held by more than 40% of the senior communications professionals in Ireland, the PRII Diploma in Public Relations is the longest established and most widely held Irish public relations qualification.

This Diploma is delivered and accredited by the Public Relations Institute of Ireland (PRII), the professional body for Irish communications and public relations practitioners. This ensures that the Diploma is kept relevant and up-to-date with the current needs of a dynamic profession. It also means that there is a strong input from practitioners into the course delivery – with all lectures having a practical grounding in public relations, as well as regular guest lectures from industry experts.

The PRII Diploma in Public Relations course commences in late September each year. Classes take place online with online tutorials on Monday evenings 6.30 – 8.30pm and lectures and related learning materials made available to students on Wednesdays, allowing time to review and study in advance of the next Monday evening online lecture. The fee to undertake the Diploma is €2,640 which includes Student Membership of the PRII and examination fees.

The course is aimed at graduates or career changers seeking to move into a communications role, as well as communications and public relations practitioners seeking formal recognition of their professional attainment.

Recent student cohorts have brought with them a broad range of experience from early career executives to experienced political press officers, parliamentary assistants to in-house communications officers. Recent students have also included senior officials in international agencies and those who were completely new to the field and wanted to learn the fundamentals of best practice PR.

Students of the PRII Diploma in Public Relations have full access to all the services, events and opportunities of PRII membership. This is an invaluable support to those undertaking the course, as it allows students the opportunity to network online or in-person with senior professionals at events, receive the weekly PRII Digest keeping them abreast of the latest developments in the Irish public relations community and have access to the ever-expanding resources of the Institute.

Enrolment for the September intake is now open. So, if you are ready to take the next step in your career, read this booklet and contact my colleague, Annmarie Jordan, the PRII's Education Co-Ordinator at annmarie@prii.ie or call **(01) 661 8004**.

I look forward to welcoming you to the PRII Diploma in Public Relations course in September.



Dr Martina Byrne, PRII CEO

COURSE AIMS

The PRII Diploma in Public Relations aims to provide the knowledge, critical understanding, and skills required for entry level and early career positions in public relations and communications organisations, as well as public relations practitioners seeking recognition for their professional attainment.

The knowledge component encompasses the theoretical and practical understanding of public relations and communication and is consistent with the objectives and values of the public relations profession.

Skills and abilities are the practical application and demonstration of this knowledge, developed through learning, reflection, practice, and experience.

Specifically the course aims to:

- Provide students with a critical understanding of the issues at the forefront of contemporary public relations and a reflective awareness of the contribution of the profession to organisations, the economy, and society
- Enable students to become proficient in purposeful communication in the practice of public relations
- Develop the ability of students to devise and present specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely public relations programmes/campaigns

ASSESSMENT & EXAMINATION

The PRII Diploma is assessed by written examinations, a presentations skills exam and project work. Examinations take place in May each year.

This course is accredited by the Public Relations Institute of Ireland - the professional body for communications and PR in Ireland.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, the student will have a systematic knowledge and critical understanding of the:

- Theory and concepts of communication pertaining to public relations
 - Strategic function, value and contribution of public relations as a key form of organisational communication
 - Public relations working environment and function both in consultancy and in-house
 - Nature and needs of the mass media (print and broadcast, digital and social)
 - Interdisciplinary environment within which public relations professionals operate
 - Wider political, social and economic environment in which the profession operates
 - Contemporary ethical and legal issues pertaining to the work of public relations professionals
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Students will be able to demonstrate skills and abilities in:

- Analytical, strategic, critical and creative thinking
- Identifying the communication needs of organisations based on their business and/or organisational objectives
- Researching, strategising, planning, evaluating and measuring, and costing public relations programmes that contribute towards achieving organisation objectives
- Selecting and applying appropriate public relations tools and techniques to effectively implement communication strategies
- Writing purposefully to an advanced and specialised level
- Presenting creatively and purposefully
- Creating customised and compelling materials for print, broadcast, and digital/social media
- Developing and maintaining positive relations with clients, suppliers, and other professionals including media professionals
- Identifying, developing, and maintaining positive relations with key stakeholders in wider society including local communities
- Planning and managing events that contribute toward communication objectives



MODULES & COURSE CONTENT

MODULES	CREDITS	TEACHING HOURS	INDEPENDENT LEARNING HOURS	ASSESSMENT
Strategic Value of Public Relations & its Professional Environment	9	28	90	Written Examination
Communication Theory & Practice	9	28	90	Written Examination
Media Theory & Practice	12	35	90	Written Examination & Project
Complementary Professions	6	18	60	Project
Law, Regulation, Ethics & the Political Environment	6	18	60	Written Examination
Public Relations Campaigns & Presentation Skills	18	28	120	Project
			60	Presentation

MODULE 1: STRATEGIC VALUE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS & ITS PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

DESCRIPTION

This module introduces the role and contribution of public relations to the successful operation of an organisation by building positive stakeholder relationships.

It examines the range of professional public relations practices and specialisations including consumer public relations, corporate communication, sponsorship and corporate social responsibility, crisis and issues communication, internal communication and community engagement. Students will learn the structures of public relations consultancies and in-house public relations departments, the client-consultancy relationship and the employer-public relations manager relationship. Account and client management will be discussed including prospective client briefs, new business pitches, contracts and professional fees, project management and reviews.

The student will learn the range of tools and techniques available to the public relations practitioner excluding media relations which is covered in **Module 3: Media Theory and Practice**.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module the student will be able to:

- Critically assess the contribution of public relations to organisational success
- Recognise the position, role and function of public relations in the overall management structures of organisations
- Compare and contrast the roles and responsibilities of public relations professionals working in consultancy and in-house teams
- Identify internal and external stakeholders and their diverse communication needs
- Devise appropriate communication objectives and strategies to support an organisation's objectives
- Describe the role of research and planning in public relations programmes
- Select appropriate public relations tools/techniques to meet stakeholders' communication needs (the media as stakeholder is covered in **Module 3**)



MODULE 2: COMMUNICATION THEORY & PRACTICE

DESCRIPTION

This module equips learners with knowledge of communication and public relations theories and models that underpin contemporary practice.

Complementing knowledge from **Module 3: Media Theory & Practice**, learners will understand the importance of these theories and models in creating purposeful, professional messaging addressed to key stakeholders and publics, and assess the likely impact of these messages.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this module the learner will be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with core communication and public relations theories and their application to:
 - mass media communication
 - digital communication
- Demonstrate familiarity with public relations theories and models and their application to:
 - contemporary public relations practice
 - persuasive and symmetrical communication
 - identifying and prioritising key stakeholders and publics.
- Understand theories of persuasion and social influence.
- Recognise the speed, reach, access and affordability of communication technologies and techniques, and understand their privacy implications and impact on public relations practice.
- Construct purposeful communication focusing on key message development to key stakeholders and publics in a variety of styles.



MODULE 3: MEDIA THEORY & PRACTICE

DESCRIPTION

This module prepares the student to apply communication theories (see **Module 2**) to the practice of engaging with the media on behalf of clients/employers. Specifically this module examines the range of media in the contemporary market including print, broadcast, digital and social. Students will learn the objectives, strategies, constraints and pressures of the various media forms and how to build positive relationships with media professionals and organisations.

Students will learn the structures of media organisations, audience preference and usage, media needs and preferences and the media-public relations symbiotic relationship.

Practical learning will include identifying the internal structure of a news story and writing materials for the various media forms including customised media releases and statements, photo-captions, invitations, tweets, podcasts and Facebook posts, and advertorials or commercial features.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module the student will be able to:

- Critically analyse the role and influence of mass media in contemporary society and the synergistic relationship of public relations and media professionals
- Differentiate between the various media describing the contribution and value of each
- Recognise the influence of advances in media technologies on the practice of public relations
- Demonstrate professional skills in purposeful writing for a variety of media
- Compose professional-standard media materials e.g. media releases and statements
- Distinguish between different media styles and techniques incl. writing for digital, social, and traditional print media, national and local radio etc
- Identify the range of media campaign (outputs) evaluation and measurement techniques available to the public relations professional



MODULE 4: COMPLEMENTARY PROFESSIONS

DESCRIPTION

This module introduces a range of professions which interrelate with public relations and with which the public relations practitioner can expect to work, whether or not they are engaged in integrated communications campaigns.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module the student will be able to:

- Describe the relationship between public relations and related professions including: commercial photographers, event managers, advertising, marketing (incl. market research and direct marketing) managers, graphic designers and printers, digital/web designers, audio visual production companies and media monitoring suppliers
- Identify the contribution each profession makes to an organisation's external communication (with particular emphasis on marketing)
- Brief photographers, event managers, designers and printers, direct marketing and audio visual suppliers, market researchers and media monitoring service providers

MODULE 5: LAW, REGULATION, ETHICS & POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

DESCRIPTION

This module introduces the legal, ethical and political environment within which the public relations profession and media operate in Ireland. It includes content related to legal constraints such as the regulation and protections afforded by Irish law.

The module also covers national and international ethical guidelines for public relations professionals and how public relations relates to the political structures in Ireland and to wider society.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module the student will be able to:

- Identify and critically evaluate the ethical and legal issues relevant to the public relations profession including the law on defamation and copyright law.
- Behave in a professional and ethical manner
- Outline the political environment in Ireland and the EU, its structures and operations and how the public relations profession works with political structures (e.g. on issues management and public affairs/lobbying)
- Debate the contribution of public relations to Irish organisations, politics, and society

MODULE 6: PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS & PRESENTATION SKILLS

DESCRIPTION

This is a summative module which builds on the knowledge and skills comprising the Diploma in Public Relations syllabus and provides students the opportunity to apply their learnings to a practical task in the 'real' world.

This module also equips students with the theory and practice of professional presentation skills suitable for the modern business environment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module the student will be able to:

- Research, plan, and write a professional, creative and comprehensive public relations campaign for an organisation covering a 12 month period
- Demonstrate problem solving techniques, and critical, analytical and strategic thinking
- Plan and deliver effective, engaging and persuasive oral and visual presentations
- Utilise a range of audio/visual aids and technologies to enhance presentations incl. infographics
- Critically analyse presentation techniques and performances

**COURSE COMMENCES IN
SEPTEMBER EACH YEAR
COURSE FEE €2,640**



ENTRY REQUIREMENTS, ENROLMENT & FEES

Enrolment to the PRII Diploma in Public Relations is on an ongoing basis and closes 14 days before the course commences.

Numbers on the course are capped. Entry is through a competitive application process, whereby students provide a career resume and a one-page letter of motivation for undertaking the course. These applications are assessed by the PRII, and if appropriate, a follow-up interview will be scheduled. The resume and letter of motivation should be sent to Annmarie Jordan at annmarie@prii.ie. There is no application charge.

In the case of over-subscription, priority will be given to those already working in a public relations or related role, followed by those who will be using the qualification to seek employment in the profession.

All students must be at least 18 years of age and have passed a minimum of five subjects in the Leaving Certificate, or hold a qualification at Level 7 of the National Framework of Qualifications. These requirements can be waived if the person satisfactorily demonstrates that they have at least two year's professional experience in a public relations/communications role.

The cost of the Diploma is €2,640 with a non-refundable deposit of €875 payable to secure a place. All fees must be paid by 28th February and are non-refundable. A payment plan can be agreed.

If two or more students are undertaking the course from the same employer, a discount is available for the second and subsequent students, provided the employer is paying for the course on a single invoice.

Terms and conditions apply, please see www.prii.ie

ENROLMENT NOW OPEN

See www.prii.ie/diploma



BENEFITS OF STUDENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE PRII

Established in 1953, the Public Relations Institute of Ireland (PRII) is dedicated to promoting the professional practice of public relations in Ireland, and to serving the best interests of people working in the profession. There are over 900 members of the PRII, with members working in consultancies, industry, government, semi-state, voluntary and business organisations.

Members of the Institute subscribe to the Code of Lisbon, the Code of Athens and the PRII Code of Practice for Public Affairs and Lobbying. These codes promote integrity and clear understanding in the implementation of public relations programmes and closely reflect the overall objectives of the PRII itself.

All PRII Diploma students are members of the PRII. Among the benefits of this membership are:

- Access to eventual full membership through the normal channels following completion of the course, and they would then become entitled to use the designation MPRII.
- Successful students receive a diploma from the PRII at an annual graduation ceremony; the diploma recognises their attainment of academic knowledge and professional proficiency.
- Upon graduation, students are entitled to use the letters PRII Dip. PR to signify that they hold the Institute's accredited Diploma.
- PRII Dip. PR students are entitled to attend all members' only meetings of the Institute, including the regular series of Forums and other sessions. They also receive a preferential member rate for all other events such as the PRII's annual conference, networking events, and training courses.
- Students receive the Institute's weekly newsletter, the PRII Digest, and have access to the research and other members' content developed by the PRII.
- Students seeking employment in public relations will benefit from the regular efforts the PRII makes to market the course and its graduates to employers.
- Graduate Affiliate or Graduate Full Membership, depending on the experience and qualifications of the graduate in question, will be offered in the first year after their graduation at a rate of €130 (Graduate Affiliate) or €210 (Graduate Full). If availed of in the year after graduation, this rate will also be available for the following membership year.

CONTACT DETAILS

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84 Merrion Square,
Dublin 2, Ireland
D02 T882

(01) 661 8004
info@prii.ie
www.prii.ie

“

The PRII Diploma gave me the learning experience to understand the key aspects of PR with various media and the practical knowledge to put those learnings into action.

The course provided me with the opportunity to build new friendships with so many talented people from various professional backgrounds.

Cáit Nic Amhlaoibh,

Assistant to Senator Pádraig Ó Céidigh
Seanad Éireann

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“

I enrolled on the PRII Diploma in PR on the recommendation of a colleague and I knew it was a highly-regarded qualification in the industry. I recently moved into a Communications role with the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and feel the Diploma gave me an excellent understanding of how to plan and implement effective campaigns and interact with various stakeholders. My classmates and tutors came with a broad range of backgrounds which added great richness to our class discussions. The course definitely gave me a solid, practical foundation for a career in Communications.

Síne Friel,

Communications Official,
Irish National Teachers' Organisation

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