



SYLLABUS

PUBLIC RELATIONS 1

PURPOSE

The purpose of studying the multilevel IAC Public Relations course is to equip the student with the theoretical knowledge needed to put the work done by professional public relations operative into a proper context. The IAC Higher Diploma in Public Relations is recognised by the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) for professional qualification purposes as equivalent communication degrees, the BTech Public Relations Management degree and the National Diploma in Public Relations.

Each of these academic qualifications counts for 20 points on the PRISA rating scale. A minimum of 50 points is required for qualification as a Public Relations Practitioner (PRP). Recognition as a Chartered Public Relations Practitioner (CPRP) requires a minimum of 60 points.

OBJECTIVES

- To carry out simple communication tasks involving the analysis, contextualisation and synthesis of written material dealing with the basic principles and ideas underpinning public relations as a professional management discipline.
- To assist in practical application of basic concepts and principles, mainly through creative use of very ordinary channels and media of communication.
- To construct a base for more advanced study of the discipline in levels II and III.

Important note:

Because public relations is a sophisticated professional discipline, it demands a very high level of proficiency in reading, understanding and writing clear, coherent English (of Afrikaans). The discipline also requires the ability to think logically and to methodically apply concepts and principles to solving problems.

The fact that public relations practice is a recognised profession also implies that successful completion of each stage of the IAC public relations curriculum demands a high degree of maturity and sophistication. Moreover, a pass at any level of the course is, in effect, a guarantee to a prospective employer that the candidate concerned has reached a particular level of professional competence. This competence will allow him or her to work effectively as public relations operative in a business or other organisational environment.

It is for this reason that supplementary practical tuition by trained practitioners in how to arrange press conferences, special events, exhibitions, seminars and conferences, as well in the use of other communication media is considered to be vital.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

It should be noted that these are listed of priority. Although references have been for relevant sections in all three texts, diligent study of the first text only should equip the student to successfully handle the examination.

Handbook of Public Relations, by Skinner and Von Essen: (5th ed.): (Southern Book Publishers). 1999.
Understanding Public Relations, by R C Krause: David Philip. 1997 (Preferred supplementary textbook).
Effective Public Relations, Cutlip and Center: (7th ed.) Prentice-Hall) (Supplementary textbook).

Important note

It should be noted that, in the nature of public relations practice, it is impossible for any textbook to cover every aspect of the syllabus in detail. Tutors are expected to take account of this and to supplement the text with material from professional journals, from their own experience and/or lectures and workshops involving professional practitioners. IAC examiners' reports are another important source of tutorial material. The examination takes account of this aspect and no questions are asked that be not covered in the prescribed text.

SYLLABUS

Section one: The nature of public relations:

(20%)

The following topics must be studied in some detail, since students will be expected to be able to identify, restate or outline
(continued)

- 1.1 Applied communication science:
 - basic concept of communication
 - theories and models of communication
 - communication and interaction
 - mass communication
 - the individual as communicator
 - sociological aspects of communication.
- 1.2 Definitions of public relations
 - conventional definitions
 - alternative definitions
 - own definitions
- 1.3 Purpose of public relations practice, in terms of:
 - outcomes or results expected by different type organisation
 - impacts on different sectors or groupings in a community

Textbooks: Skinner and von Essen, Part 1 Chapters 1-10
Krause, Chapter 1
Cutlip and Center, Chapters 4 to 10

Section Two: Historical perspectives:

(2%)

The actual historical development of public relations is not examined as such, but a careful and thorough reading of the chapter on the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) in the South African Handbook of Public Relations (Skinner and von Essen) is essential to give the subject its proper context. It is especially important for students to be able to accurately list the criteria used by PRISA to qualify practitioners for different grades of membership since these are required in terms of Section five. (It is wise to check with PRISA).

- 2.1 Development of the profession
- 2.2 Scope of public relation's practice
- 2.3 Organisation of the profession (PRISA).

Textbook: Skinner and von Essen, Chapters 1,2, 33
Cutlip and Center, Chapter 4

Section three: Ethical considerations:

(10%)*

Students must be able to explain the reasons for practicing public relations at all illustrate the high degree of responsibility all organisations must accept for the effects on the societies in which they operate in addition, they must be able describe the way in which the public relations profession regulates itself.

- 3.1 The need for public relations: conscience of an organisation
- 3.2 The need for honesty and integrity
- 3.3 The public's right to know
- 3.4 Social responsibility
- 3.5 Consumerism and consumer bodies
- 3.6 The law and public relations
- 3.7 The code of conduct of PRISA and disciplinary procedures

Textbook: Skinner and von Essen, Chapters 2, 22, 23 and 33
 Krause, Chapter 3
 Cutlip and Center, Chapter 14

Section four: The role of public relations in an organisation

10%

This section dovetails with the previous one and students are required to explain both the purpose of public relations activities as well as how particular public relations techniques are used to achieve particular aims and objectives of the organisations concerned.

- 4.1 The function of public relations in an organisation as whole
- 4.2 The corporate identity of the organisation.

Textbook: Skinner and von Essen, Chapters 1-10, 27
 Krause, Chapters 2 and 3
 Cutlip and Center, Chapter 6

Section five: The public relations practitioner

18%*

The student is required to explain why an organisation should want to employ the services of a public relations practitioner in terms of what purposes professional practitioners are expected to fulfil. In addition they are required to describe what technical tasks professional public relations people need to be able to do to achieve those purposes. In addition, the student must also explain what academic, experiential and professional qualifications are needed, as well as what kind of person will succeed in the profession.

- 5.1 Personal attributes
- 5.2 Acquired skills – education and training
- 5.3 Opportunities in public relations
- 5.4 Professional status of the PR practitioner

*refer to Section three.

Textbook: Skinner and von Essen, Chapters 1-10, 33
 Krause, Chapters 2 and 3
 Cutlip and Center, Chapter 3

Section six: Introduction to the tools of public relations

20%

Students are required identify, and describe the nature of the many different forms of communication media available to the public relations practitioner. They should be able to point out the functional differences between those communication media with similar characteristics.

- 6.1 Press:
 - newspapers
 - magazines
 - specialized journals
- 6.2 Electronic media:
 - radio
 - television
- 6.3 Visual aids:
 - flipcharts
 - felt/blackboards
 - OH projector

- 35mm transparencies
- models
- 6.4 Audio-visual aids:
 - video recordings
 - slide/tape presentations
 - films
- 6.5 House publications:
 - internal
 - external
 - annual reports
- 6.6 Printed material:
 - pamphlets
 - information brochures
 - posters
- 6.7 Oral communication:
 - speeches
 - lectures
 - conferences
- 6.8 Written communication:
 - Oral communication:
 - speeches
 - lectures
 - conferences
- 6.8 Written communication:
 - letters
 - reports
 - memoranda
 - circulars
- 6.9 Advertising:
 - marketing
 - recruitment
 - corporate
- 6.10 Special events:
 - openings
 - launches
 - promotions
 - open days
 - receptions
- 6.11 Exhibitions and demonstrations
- 6.12 Sports and cultural sponsorships
- 6.13 Community-service projects
- 6.14 Guest programmes and visits.

Textbook: Skinner and von Essen, Chapters 11-26
 Krause, Chapters 7-12
 Cutlip and Center, Chapter 11

Section seven: Introduction to the public relations processes (20%)

Students are required to draw a diagram clearly showing that public relations practice is a systematic and methodical process requiring the completion of specific steps, each of which covers a number of different actions.

- 7.1 Analysis of the problem
- 7.2 Planning the action programme
- 7.3 Implementing the programme:
 - news utilisation

- news elaboration
 - information programmes
 - social responsibility programmes
 - special events
- 7.4 Evaluation of programme
- 7.5 Revision of programme

Textbook: Skinner and von Essen, Chapter 10
 Krause, Chapters 4, 5, 6
 Cutlip and Center, Chapters 7 to 10

Important Tutorial Note: Practical Work

It is imperative for students to develop the ability to use the various tools as far as possible for example:
 Arranging press conferences, special events, exhibitions (case study method if necessary)
 Use of microphone (conduct a taped interview for evaluation by tutor). Oral presentation to audience. (taped for evaluation by tutor). Production of house magazine/newsletter. Production of brochures, papers.

Examination:

The examination consist of a choice of questions carefully posed under each of the following headings:

- Section A: The nature of public relations
- Section B: The role and ethics of public relations
- Section C: The Public relations practitioner
- Section D: The public relations process
- Section E: The tools of public relations

Each question is worth 20marks. A pass mark of 50% is required. However, to pass this examination it is essential for candidates to answer one question from each of the five sections listed. In the event of a student failing to do this, only the first answer presented from each section will be evaluated to determine the total mark. Even if the total achieved from four questions is 50% the candidate has failed the examination.

Although students are not penalised for language or spelling errors, it is important to remember that public relations are essentially a communication discipline. Reference should be made one again to the important note highlighted in the section on learning objectives.

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