



## **SYLLABUS**

### **1. Outline of syllabus, including:**

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

### **2. Detailed content for each unit**

# 1) OUTLINE OF SYLLABUS FOR EACH UNIT

## UNIT 2.1 – PR THEORY AND PRACTICE (PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE)

**Suggested teaching time – 45%**

### **Aim**

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

### **Learning Objectives**

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

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

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

### **Indicative content**

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

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

## UNIT 2.2 – PR PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

### (VOCATIONAL SKILLS)

**Suggested teaching time – 45%**

#### **Aim**

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

#### **Learning Objectives**

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

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

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

#### **Indicative content**

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

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

## **UNIT 2.3 – PERSONAL SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT (REFLECTIVE PRACTICE)**

**Suggested teaching time – 10%**

### **Aim**

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

### **Learning Objectives**

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

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

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

### **Indicative content**

- Project design
- Research tools
- Personal reflection

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

## 2) DETAILED CONTENT FOR EACH UNIT

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

## Unit 2.2 - PR planning and management

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

## Unit 2.3 - Personal Skills and Development

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

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

The following description of a level 7 course is taken from the National Qualifications Framework [http://www.gca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/gca\\_05\\_2242\\_level\\_descriptors.pdf](http://www.gca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/gca_05_2242_level_descriptors.pdf) on 21/08/08

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