

Area of Interest: Creative Media and Communications

Public Relations

Ontario College Diploma

Program Code: 0468X01FWO

2 Years

Ottawa Campus

Our Program

Learn how to act as the bridge between organizations and the public, helping them navigate complex issues and protect their brand reputation.

The two-year Public Relations Ontario College Diploma program, which blends theory with practical experience, emphasizes professionalism and attention to detail, effective planning, as well as creative and critical thinking in all public relations activities. In this program, you acquire both theoretical and applied knowledge, and gain real-world experience by working with not-for-profit organizations to help them reach their target audiences.

Learn how to deliver strategically sound, creative and robust public relations solutions that make the most of the modern communications landscape. The program combines theory with hands-on experience in:

- writing
- editing
- visual communications
- communications planning
- time/resource management
- research and measurement
- public speaking
- teamwork
- media monitoring and social listening

You also gain experience in design, content management, social media engagement and business basics. This prepares you for work with:

- all levels of government
- national associations
- public relations agencies
- private companies
- not-for-profit organizations

Improve your skills throughout the program, and gain valuable experience working on the annual charitable fundraising campaign. In the last semester of the program, you put your skills into practice by completing a 280-hour field placement or a PR project built around a simulated client need.

Graduates from this program work across Canada and around the world, and have a thorough understanding of all media channels, from working with journalists and other influencers to

managing digital media campaigns.

Graduates may find employment in:

- public relations
- social media
- communications departments
- fundraising and advocacy

Graduates may also consider self-employment, freelancing and contract work.

SUCCESS FACTORS

This program is well-suited for students who:

- Have strong written communication and interpersonal skills.
- Are motivated, energetic, creative and flexible.
- Enjoy working in a team environment.
- Are detail-oriented, organized and committed to achieving excellence in their work.

Employment

Graduates may find employment in public relations, social media, or communications departments in corporations, associations, government and not-for-profit organizations. For those with entrepreneurial spirit, freelance, self-employment or contract work may be an option.

Learning Outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

- Participate in the planning of public relations activities, including the development of clear, measurable communication objectives and project budgets and selection strategies, tactics, tools and resources to support a range of stakeholder relationships and organizational objectives.
- Support the implementation and management of strategies, tactics, budgets and resources for a range of public relations activities communications and meet activity guidelines and requirements.
- Write and edit clear, accurate, targeted copy appropriate for the chosen channel(s) and to a specific deadline.
- Apply visual, audio, multimedia and interactive elements, fundamental design principles and accessibility standards, independently and collaboratively, to support the production of effective, timely communications appropriate for diverse channels and audiences.
- Use information sources, research tools and results, and analytical skills to support the development of communication objectives, selection and tactics, and measurement of the impact of public relations activities.
- Engage stakeholders by adapting language, tone and presentation style to the public relations purpose, situation, audience and channel(s).
- Comply with and support others to work in accordance with relevant professional association and industry codes of ethics, public relations professional standards and practices, and legal obligations, protocols and policies.
- Keep current with emerging social and economic trends, and local, national and global issues to inform public relations plans and activities, support organizational effectiveness and stakeholder relationships, and guide ongoing personal professional development.
- Select and use current and emerging technologies to support the quality and delivery of

- Select and use current and emerging technologies to support the quality and delivery of public relations activities and organizational effectiveness.
- Use strategies and tools to build and maintain professional relationships to support public relations activities, organizational objectives and career development.
- Identify and apply discipline-specific practices that contribute to the local and global community through social responsibility, economic commitment and environmental stewardship.

Program of Study

Level: 01	Courses	Hours
ENL1813M	Communications I	42.0
PRL1504	Writing Workshop 1	56.0
PRL1505	Public Relations 1	84.0
PRL1519	Design for Public Relations 1	28.0
PRL1532	Cultural and Media Literacy	42.0
PRL1546	Principles of Persuasion	28.0
PRL1563	Social Media Management 1	28.0
PRL1565	Research for Public Relations	42.0
Level: 02	Courses	Hours
ENL0082	Communications 2: Storytelling for Media	42.0
PRL0005	Public Relations 2	84.0
PRL0006	Writing Workshop 2	42.0
PRL0007	Media and Influencer Relations	42.0
PRL1536	Design for Public Relations 2	28.0
PRL1564	Social Media Management 2	28.0
PRL1567	Audio/Visual Production Workshop	42.0
Choose one from equivalencies:	Courses	Hours
GED0468	General Education Elective	42.0
Level: 03	Courses	Hours
PRL0008	Public Relations 3	56.0
PRL0009	Writing Workshop 3	42.0
PRL1542	Business Basics for Public Relations	28.0
PRL1547	Integrated Marketing Communications	42.0
PRL1559	Government Communications	14.0
PRL1560	Fieldwork Preparation	14.0

PRL1562	Public Relations in Practice	42.0
PRL1568	Measurement and Analytics for Public Relations	28.0
Choose one from equivalencies: Courses		Hours
GED0468	General Education Elective	42.0
Level: 04 Courses		Hours
PRL0003	Field Placement	280.0
PRL0004	Public Relations Project	280.0

Fees for the 2023/2024 Academic Year

Tuition and related ancillary fees for this program can be viewed by using the Tuition and Fees Estimator tool at <https://www.algonquincollege.com/fee-estimator> .

Further information on fees can be found by visiting the Registrar`s Office website at <https://www.algonquincollege.com/ro> .

Fees are subject to change.

Additional program-related expenses include:

- Books and supplies cost approximately \$350 each year.
- A smart phone with the latest photo and video capability (Android/Apple or comparable brand equivalent) is required in the second semester, but students SHOULD NOT upgrade their phone until they speak with the audio/visual production workshop professor.

Admission Requirements for the 2024/2025 Academic Year

College Eligibility

- Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent. Applicants with an OSSD showing senior English and/or Mathematics courses at the Basic Level, or with Workplace or Open courses, will be tested to determine their eligibility for admission; OR
- Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) certificate; OR
- General Educational Development (GED) certificate; OR
- Mature Student status (19 years of age or older and without a high school diploma at the start of the program). Eligibility may be determined by academic achievement testing for which a fee of \$50 (subject to change) will be charged.

Program Eligibility:

- English, Grade 12 (ENG4C or equivalent) with a grade of 70% or higher.
- Applicants with international transcripts must provide proof of the subject specific requirements noted above and may be required to provide proof of language proficiency. Domestic applicants with international transcripts must be evaluated through the International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS) or World Education Services (WES).
- IELTS-International English Language Testing Service (Academic) Overall band of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each band; OR TOEFL-Internet-based (iBT)-overall 88, with a minimum of 22 in each component: Reading: 22; Listening 22; Speaking 22; Writing 22; OR Duolingo English Test (DET) Overall 120, minimum of 120 in Literacy and no score below 105.
- Not sure if you meet all of the requirements? Academic Upgrading may be able to help with that: <https://www.algonquincollege.com/access/> .

Should the number of qualified applicants exceed the number of available places, applicants will be selected on the basis of their proficiency in English.

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Application Information

PUBLIC RELATIONS **Program Code 0468X01FWO**

Applications to full-time day programs must be submitted with official transcripts showing completion of the academic admission requirements through:

ontariocolleges.ca
60 Corporate Court
Guelph, Ontario N1G 5J3
1-888-892-2228

Students currently enrolled in an Ontario secondary school should notify their Guidance Office prior to their online application at <http://www.ontariocolleges.ca/>.

Applications for Fall Term and Winter Term admission received by February 1 will be given equal consideration. Applications received after February 1 will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis as long as places are available.

International applicants please visit this link for application process information: <https://algonquincollege.force.com/myACint/>.

For further information on the admissions process, contact:

Registrar's Office
Algonquin College
1385 Woodroffe Ave
Ottawa, ON K2G 1V8
Telephone: 613-727-0002

Toll-free: 1-800-565-4723
TTY: 613-727-7766
Fax: 613-727-7632
Contact: <https://www.algonquincollege.com/ro>

Additional Information

Students with a minimum B+ average have the option of completing their diploma with a field placement. Finding and securing an approved fieldwork opportunity is a shared responsibility. Your faculty have contacts in industry and, where feasible, will assist you in finding an approved field placement which may be unpaid. Students are also encouraged to seek out internship opportunities on their own.

Contact Information

Program Coordinator(s)

- Lara Mills, <mailto:millsl@algonquincollege.com> , 613-727-4723, ext. 7250
- Bradley Moseley-Williams, <mailto:moseleb@algonquincollege.com> , 613-727-4723, ext. 7566

Course Descriptions

ENL0082 Communications 2: Storytelling for Media

Storytelling has become an essential communication skill in multiple media and media management sectors, including Public Relations, Journalism, Marketing, and Brand Management. When stories are well developed, structured, and narrated, they can connect with and engage new audiences, increase brand awareness and loyalty, and influence changes in public thought and behaviour. Students explore the origins of storytelling and the art of story scaping through the consideration of diverse storytelling theories and in-depth study of key story elements. Through analysis, discussion, and workshops, students learn to craft compelling stories for various media channels.

Prerequisite(s): ENL1813M
Corerequisite(s):none

ENL1813M Communications I

Communication remains an essential skill sought by employers, regardless of discipline or field of study. Using a practical, vocation-oriented approach, students focus on meeting the requirements of effective communication. Through a combination of lectures, exercises, and independent learning, students practise writing, speaking, reading, listening, locating and documenting information, and using technology to communicate professionally. Students develop and strengthen communication skills that contribute to success in both educational and workplace environments.

Prerequisite(s): none
Corerequisite(s):none

GED0468 General Education Elective

Students choose one course, from a group of general education electives, which meets one of the following five theme requirements: Arts in Society, Civic Life, Social and Cultural Understanding, Personal Understanding, and Science and Technology.

Prerequisite(s): none
Corerequisite(s):none

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Prerequisite(s): none
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL0003 Field Placement

The professional development of a public relations practitioner begins with the integration of theory and practice under the supervision of a communications professional. Through this experience in the public relations field, students further develop and apply vocational skills and competencies. During their placements, students gain valuable PR work experience in a variety of areas, which may include research, writing, media relations, content creation, social media management, event planning and promotion, and stakeholder relations. Students also reflect on their learning through placement journals and meetings with their supervisor.

Prerequisite(s): PRL0008 and PRL0009 and PRL1560
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL0004 Public Relations Project

The public relations field requires practitioners with strong analytic and interpretive skills, who can conduct thorough research, apply it to communications problems and opportunities, and communicate their recommendations in an engaging way. Students consolidate theoretical and skills-based concepts and apply that knowledge to deep, purposeful learning experiences. Projects may take various forms based on a student's interests and passions, or their area of expertise. Through their completion and presentation of the project under a professor's supervision, and by reflecting on the experience, students make the transition from student to practitioner.

Prerequisite(s): PRL0008 and PRL0009
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL0005 Public Relations 2

Public relations campaigns in the non-profit sector help build awareness around important issues and create connections between organizations and their community stakeholders in addition to encouraging donations. Students put their skills into practice by planning, communicating, and executing a fundraising campaign on behalf of a community charity. This work-integrated learning opportunity allows students to experience public relations planning first-hand. Students define the issue or opportunity, identify stakeholders, set measurable objectives, devise and implement strategies and tactics, prepare communications materials, establish budgets, and set evaluation criteria. Students work in teams to plan fundraising events supported by community relations, publicity, media relations, social media, and internal public relations activities.

Prerequisite(s): PRL1504 and PRL1505
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL0006 Writing Workshop 2

Versatile writing skills are an asset to a public relations practitioner, allowing them to produce a range of communications products tailored to different audiences, channels and strategic needs. Through individual writing assignments such as profiles, website content, social media copy, and speeches, students hone their writing skills while also giving and receiving feedback from their classmates through a peer editing component. Students demonstrate an awareness of the importance of quality control including adherence to Canadian Press Style guidelines.

Prerequisite(s): PRL1504
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL0007 Media and Influencer Relations

All forms of media - social/digital and traditional - help shape the conversation around important issues. Public relations practitioners work with both journalists and online influencers to support their organization's objectives. Students develop contact lists of relevant media and influencers and learn to craft compelling pitches and other content to attract their attention. Students explore news values and how to frame an organization's story, while emphasizing the importance of

building relationships with media.

Prerequisite(s): none
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL0008 Public Relations 3

Learning how to respond strategically to any issue, challenge or opportunity is at the core of effective public relations. Students acquire the strategic skills, knowledge and professional qualities required to become a public relations practitioner in any field in Canada, from the corporate boardroom to a charitable organization. Through in-class exercises, assignments and case studies, students explore relationship management, crisis communications, marketing communications, investor relations, and internal communications. A pitch to a simulated public relations client allows students to develop and present a proposal for communications services within a very short timeframe.

Prerequisite(s): PRL1548
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL0009 Writing Workshop 3

Public relations practitioners must understand effective messaging and how to communicate appropriately, in writing, in a given strategic context. Using case studies and real-world scenarios, students discuss the role of writing as part of strategic communications and produce individual written assignments relevant to a given issue, challenge, or opportunity. Students continue to improve their writing and editing skills by reviewing each other's work, with an emphasis on quality control, including strict adherence to Canadian Press Style guidelines.

Prerequisite(s): PRL0006
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1504 Writing Workshop 1

Writing is foundational to everything public relations practitioners do and learning to write in a journalistic style is essential to effective media relations. Students learn the basics of public relations writing by analyzing news stories and writing copy designed to attract the attention of news editors, which includes following Canadian Press (CP) style guidelines. Students refine their spelling, grammar, and language skills while developing their knowledge of CP Style. They also produce individual writing assignments including news releases and letters to the editor, which demonstrate clarity, conciseness, correctness, and completeness - the four "Cs" of effective writing.

Prerequisite(s): none
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1505 Public Relations 1

Public Relations encompasses a wide array of roles and functions and can be challenging to define. Students develop an understanding of public relations and its role in influencing behaviour while also building, strengthening and (often) repairing relationships between organizations and their stakeholders. Students explore the four-step public relations process, learning the scope and nature of public relations roles and functions with an emphasis on strategic communication planning. Lectures, assignments and hands-on exercises allow students to explore areas such as ethics and codes of professional standards, the evolving relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists, and how to develop an effective communication strategy.

Prerequisite(s): none
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1519 Design for Public Relations 1

Public Relations practitioners often work with graphic designers and an understanding of basic design principles helps to facilitate that partnership. Students are introduced to graphic design and

learn the techniques, methods, basic tools and terminology required to communicate and collaborate with graphic designers in the field. They explore the theoretical aspects of graphic design, including design principles, colour harmony, typography and branding, with emphasis on technical specifications and best practices for print and digital content. Students develop software skills and learn basic program commands and functionality. A focus is placed on the importance of proper file naming, file structure and organization. Students apply design theory and technical knowledge to design basic layouts and execute tasks.

Prerequisite(s): none
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1532 Cultural and Media Literacy

Developing critical thinking skills for evaluating media content in a rapidly evolving media landscape is essential to understanding different perspectives and discerning truth from falsehood. Students examine the need for individuals in a society, functioning as citizens and consumers, to be culturally and media literate. From a sociological perspective, students also examine the source of individual attitudes, how attitudes are reflected in a person's and in society's value systems, and how culture and the media contribute, directly and indirectly, to the formation of individual attitudes and opinions. Using a variety of online media resources, students discuss events, trends, and issues, and how media coverage affects individual and public opinion within a cultural context.

Prerequisite(s): none
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1536 Design for Public Relations 2

Knowing how to do basic design work is an asset for public relations practitioners, particularly those who work in smaller organizations. Students enhance their working knowledge of design principles and software by applying it to the design of various public relations products, such as posters, social media graphics, media materials, and websites.

Prerequisite(s): PRL1519
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1542 Business Basics for Public Relations

Public relations practitioners play an essential role in advising business leaders about how, when, and why they should communicate with their stakeholders, and to do so, must speak the language of business. Students develop skills in business planning and financial management, budgeting and time tracking. They discuss how public relations practitioners can advocate for their role in the achievement of an organization's strategic goals. They also explore opportunities for entrepreneurship in the public relations field, such as operating a home-based business or working on a contract or freelance basis.

Prerequisite(s): none
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1546 Principles of Persuasion

Understanding how to influence behaviour through ethical persuasion underpins the practice of public relations. Students examine the communications process and various communications principles and theories, from the diffusion process to cognitive dissonance. They apply factors including audience analysis and source credibility as they plan and deliver informative and persuasive speeches. Students explore a variety of persuasive techniques, applying them in oral presentations.

Prerequisite(s): none
Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1547 Integrated Marketing Communications

Public relations practitioners often work collaboratively with marketing and advertising specialists

to support an organization's objectives, and it is vital to understand how these communications functions work together. Students examine various types of advertising methods and media, observing and evaluating different forms of advertising with a focus on digital channels. Students learn to use media and advertising terminology correctly while examining the elements of advertising campaigns, including creative and media strategies that meet marketing objectives. Students create branding strategies using advertising to support public relations objectives.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1559 Government Communications

The Government of Canada is one of the country's largest employers and offers many opportunities for public relations practitioners, whether in the public service, in a political office, or for a PR agency that serves government clients. Students explore the work of a public relations practitioner in government, as well as the various skills-based competencies the government evaluates, which are transferable to other sectors. Students learn about planning, budgeting, and project management in a government context, and the importance of understanding the current public and political environment.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1560 Fieldwork Preparation

Self-reflection and goal setting can support success in field placements as well as career development in public relations. In addition to reviewing the placement process and requirements, students examine their own skills, knowledge, interests, and professional qualities, with an eye to career planning. Students also refine their resumes, cover letters and portfolios and participate in mock job interviews. Guest speakers offer insights about networking and how to succeed in their field placement, as well as their perspectives on industry trends.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1562 Public Relations in Practice

Gaining hands-on experience with external clients seeking communications help allows students to integrate theory and practice through work-integrated learning. Students apply their research, analysis, strategic communication planning, writing, and presenting skills to the development of a plan or completion of a project for a client. Student teams work in a competitive environment and the client will determine which proposal best meets their needs.

Prerequisite(s): PRL0005

Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1563 Social Media Management 1

Social Media plays a crucial role in public relations by giving organizations the means to communicate with their audiences directly, often in real time. Students explore the impact of social media on the role of the public relations practitioner. They identify and review principles for effective engagement with stakeholders and customers, using core social media tools for listening, messaging, relationship building and participating in social networks and other online communities.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1564 Social Media Management 2

Telling an organization's story in an engaging way is an effective way to use social media in a public relations context. Students develop an understanding of the practical applications of social media as part of a complete public relations strategy. Students explore reputation management, crisis communications, and social media policy, along with content creation and scheduling using

current platforms.

Prerequisite(s): PRL1563

Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1565 Research for Public Relations

Research is an essential component of public relations, one that helps organizations fully understand their audiences and the environment in which they're communicating. Students examine the role research plays in the practice of public relations. They learn how to develop effective research questions while exploring how to gather, analyze and interpret data. Lectures and in-class exercises give students an overview of both quantitative and qualitative research methods using a variety of sources.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1567 Audio/Visual Production Workshop

Public relations practitioners must be familiar with a wide variety of communication tools to engage their audiences in different ways. Students develop audio and visual storytelling skills required for public relations, with an emphasis on video. Students learn the basics of podcasting and how it is used to support a broader communications or content strategy and how to use smartphones to produce compelling visual content for a range of communications channels, including social media and other online platforms.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

PRL1568 Measurement and Analytics for Public Relations

Measurement and analytics in public relations helps practitioners understand their audiences and evaluate the success of their public relations efforts, particularly on social media. Students examine different types of measurement metrics while learning how to use research data from a variety of sources to inform communications planning and evaluation. They work with analytics, media monitoring and social listening tools to identify issues and opportunities, and examine how to use appropriate metrics to evaluate communications activities, in line with the Barcelona Principles.

Prerequisite(s): PRL1564 and PRL1565

Corerequisite(s):none