Area of Interest: Media and Communications

Public Relations

Ontario College Diploma  
2 Years  
Ottawa Campus

Our Program

Reputation can be a company’s biggest asset: develop public relations expertise blending theory with practical experience.

The two-year Public Relations Ontario College Diploma program emphasizes professionalism and attention to detail, 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, which may include media relations, social media, and event coordination. The program combines theory with hands-on experience in:

- writing
- editing
- visual communications
- 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 the 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 during a 280-hour field placement.

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

Graduates may find employment in:
• public relations
• social media
• communications departments

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

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

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 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 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

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<th>Level: 01</th>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<td>Communications I</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRL1504</td>
<td>Writing for Public Relations</td>
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<td>PRL1505</td>
<td>Public Relations I</td>
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<td>PRL1532</td>
<td>Cultural and Media Literacy</td>
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<td>PRL1546</td>
<td>Principles of Persuasion</td>
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<td>Social Media Management I</td>
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<td>PRL1537</td>
<td>Contemporary Issues</td>
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<td>PRL1542</td>
<td>The Public Relations Business Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRL1547</td>
<td>Integrated Marketing Communications</td>
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<td>PRL1551</td>
<td>Public Relations III</td>
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<td>PRL1559</td>
<td>Government Communications</td>
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<td>PRL1560</td>
<td>Fieldwork Prep</td>
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<td>PRL1562</td>
<td>Public Relations Workshop II</td>
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<td>PRL1568</td>
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Choose one from equivalencies:

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<td>Field Work</td>
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Fees for the 2020/2021 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](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](https://www.algonquincollege.com/ro).

Fees are subject to change.

Additional program-related expenses include:
Books and supplies cost approximately $800 each year. Students must purchase their own laptop computer (Mac or PC). Computers and supplies can be purchased directly from Algonquin’ s Connections store at educational discounted rates.

A Nikon digital SLR camera with video capability OR 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 purchase a camera or upgrade their phone until they speak with the visual production workshop professor.
Admission Requirements for the 2021/2022 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.

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

Admission Requirements for 2020/2021 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.

- International applicants must provide proof of the subject specific requirements noted above along with proof of either: (IELTS / TOEFL) 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.

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

**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
Email: mailto:AskUs@algonquincollege.com

Additional Information

This program has a field work component that must be completed in order to graduate. Finding and securing an approved fieldwork opportunity is a shared responsibility. Your faculty and field work supervisor/coordinator has contacts in industry and where feasible will assist you in finding an approved field placement.

For more information, please contact Bradley Moseley-Williams, Program Coordinator, at 613-727-4723 ext. 7566, or mailto:moseleb@algonquincollege.com or Lara Mills, Program Coordinator, at ext. 7250, or mailto:millsl@algonquincollege.com.

Course Descriptions

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

ENL1869A Business Communication for Media

Students examine communication within a business context. Students practise both oral and written communication activities that are common to most professional environments. Students write memos, letters, and reports, and practise oral communication in job interviews and presentations.

Prerequisite(s): ENL1813M
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

PRL0003 Field Work

Field work helps students gain on-the-job experience while honing their public relations skills. Students are placed with organizations including public relations agencies, hospitals, government departments, not-for-profits, associations, and corporations. While placement hosts are not required to pay students a salary, students are reimbursed for any job-related out-of-pocket expenses. If students are unable to secure an external field placement, they can complete their field work hours on-campus by working out of the Algonquin Public Relations Agency. During their internships, students gain valuable experience in a variety of areas, such as media relations, social media management, event planning and promotion, and stakeholder relations.

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

PRL1504 Writing for Public Relations

Students develop an understanding of media relations and the relationship between editors/news directors and public relations practitioners. They learn the basics of public relations writing, particularly for the mass media, by analyzing news stories and writing copy in the journalistic style, which includes following guidelines established by Canadian Press. Using a computer and the Internet, students produce individual writing assignments, in the proper format, for the mass media. These materials, including news releases and letters to the editor, are evaluated on their clarity, conciseness, correctness and completeness.

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

PRL1505 Public Relations I

An introduction to the practice of public relations in Canada, from the skills needed to be a practitioner, to the models of public relations as practiced, is provided. Students are introduced to the public relations process, learning the scope and nature of public relations management roles, particularly strategic management. Students also learn about specialized functions, with an emphasis on media relations and social media engagement, and about specific activities, particularly publicity. Lectures and hands-on exercises deal with such areas as ethics and codes of standards, news values and characteristics. The evolving relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists, and publicity tools and techniques for traditional media, and emerging social media and other channels are also discussed.

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

PRL1519 Design for Public Relations I

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. Students learn the theoretical aspects of graphic design, including design principles, colour harmony, typography and branding. The technical specifications and best practices for print and digital content are emphasized. 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

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 will discuss events, trends, and issues, and how media coverage of them affects individual and public opinion within a cultural context.

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

PRL1536 Design for Public Relations II

Students enhance their working knowledge of design principles and software by applying it to the design of various public relations products, such as posters, media materials and websites.

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

PRL1537 Contemporary Issues

Students develop abilities to assess current issues, evaluate their importance, and summarize key information related to these issues. Ongoing and emerging issues and trends affecting Canadian society are emphasized. Students are responsible for researching specific issues, preparing advocacy materials, taking part in and leading group discussions, and making presentations that brief colleagues on specific topical issues and trends.

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

PRL1542 The Public Relations Business Environment

A general overview of the operation and management of a public relations business, either as a small business or as a public relations consultancy is provided. Students are exposed to opportunities for entrepreneurship in the public relations field, such as operating a home-based business or working on a contract or freelance basis. Key areas, such as business planning, budgeting and record keeping, time tracking, marketing (through traditional and social media channels), proposal writing and project management are covered. Students learn about their role as public relations consultants an how to understand the corporate requirements of public relations practitioners.

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

PRL1546 Principles of Persuasion

Students are introduced to the communications process and various communications principles and theories, from the diffusion process to cognitive dissonance. Using this communications knowledge base, students obtain hands-on experience applying factors in persuasive communications, from audience analysis to source credibility, as they prepare plans for and deliver informative and persuasive speeches. Students learn persuasive techniques and use them in oral presentations on a variety of topics in a classroom setting.

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

PRL1547 Integrated Marketing Communications

Students will examine various types of advertising methods and media. Students will observe
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 are provided with an understanding of how to create branding strategies using advertising to support public relations objectives. Students will learn advertising terminology to effectively communicate with team members in various stages of an advertising campaign.

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

PRL1548 Public Relations II

Students experience the four-step public relations process: defining public relations problems/opportunities; planning and programming; taking action and communicating; and evaluating the program/activity. Students learn to identify stakeholders and publics, set and write process and outcome objectives, devise and implement strategies and tactics, prepare communications materials, establish budgets and set evaluation criteria. Students apply a four-step process to planning, implementing and evaluating a public relations campaign that involves strategic and communications management, community relations, fundraising, special event management, publicity and media relations. They also work on a team to plan community relations, and internal public relations activities and present their proposals through an oral presentation.

Prerequisite(s): PRL1504 and PRL1505
Corerequisite(s): PRL1566

PRL1551 Public Relations III

Students acquire the 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. Students explore relationship management, crisis communications, marketing communications, investor relations and internal communications. A self-directed learning component gives students experience in producing PR materials for the workplace. Using computers and the Internet, students produce materials.

Prerequisite(s): PRL1548
Corerequisite(s): PRL1562

PRL1559 Government Communications

A general overview of the work of a public relations practitioner in a government role is provided. Students are exposed to the various skills-based competencies government evaluates, and they understand the operation of the Government of Canada and other public sector clients. Key areas, such as planning, budgeting, project management and understanding the public and political environment are emphasized. Students learn about their role as public relations consultants in their department, and how to understand the corporate requirements of government and public sector agencies.

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

PRL1560 Fieldwork Prep

Students produce an inventory of their own skills, knowledge and professional qualities, with an eye to developing the skills they need to be successful in field work. Job search skills are emphasized by working on resumes, portfolios, cover letters and interview skills.

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

PRL1562 Public Relations Workshop II

Students further develop their strategic thinking, writing and presentation skills by producing materials for internal and external audiences. Assignments may include producing communications...
plans, performing communications audits and writing content for news releases, websites and social media. All work is evaluated for creativity, clarity, conciseness, completeness, correctness and adherence to guidelines set out in print and broadcast style guides.

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

**PRL1563 Social Media Management I**

Students explore the impact of social media on the role of the public relations practitioner. They identify and review in detail 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 II**

Students develop an understanding of the practical applications of social media as part of a complete public relations strategy. Areas such as reputation management, crisis communications, and social media policy are covered.

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

**PRL1565 Research for Public Relations**

Students are provided an overview of the role research plays in the practice of public relations. Students learn the necessity of gathering, processing, transferring and interpreting information. Lectures and demonstrations deal with research methods and techniques for qualitative and quantitative, primary and secondary, and formal and informal research using library, database and Internet sources. Students acquire experience in gathering and analyzing research data.

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

**PRL1566 Public Relations Workshop I**

Students are involved in the writing, production and packaging of public relations materials, from speeches to media kits. In addition to writing, students learn how to organize public relations events, such as news conferences, how to keep track of project-related details, how to manage time, money, and other resources in a public relations environment and how to prepare a public relations proposal. All copy is evaluated for its clarity, conciseness, completeness and correctness. Students also learn the difference between copy written for print and that written for electronic media.

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

**PRL1567 Visual Production Workshop**

Students develop skills required for public relations job assignments revolving around still photography and video storytelling. From a photojournalistic perspective, they learn how to use SLR digital cameras and smartphones to produce compelling visual content for a range of communications channels, including social media other online platforms. Students also receive hands-on experience taking photos and shooting video in a public relations context.

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

**PRL1568 Measurement and Analytics for Public Relations**
Students learn how to use research data from a variety of sources to inform communications planning and measurement. They work with media monitoring and social listening tools to identify issues and opportunities, and to use appropriate metrics to evaluate communications, in line with the Barcelona Principles.

Prerequisite(s): PRL1564 and PRL1565
Corequisite(s): none