

ACCREDITATION SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

The question of readiness comes up repeatedly as public relations practitioners and educators grapple with the demands of busy jobs while trying to maintain work/life balance. Yet at some point in time, most of us want to see how our skills measure up on a national scale. That's usually when we begin to wonder about pursuit of the APR designation and ask the question "Am I ready?"

To help you do a self-assessment, the Council has prepared the check list below. Beyond the first five must-haves, the more check marks you can make, the closer you are to readiness to proceed with the process. Once you determine you are ready to proceed, the Council has put in place a variety of supports to help you apply and be successful.

AM I READY?

	I must have a minimum of five years public relations practical work (and/or teaching) experience where I have been exposed to a broad range of communications activities.
	I must have the ability to communicate well both orally and in writing in one of Canada's two official languages.
	I must be able to write clearly and concisely in plain language and demonstrate that I am competent in grammar, spelling and punctuation.
	I must have a solid theoretical working knowledge of communications principles; including but not limited to: the RACE formula, communications planning, linking goals and objectives to outcomes, media relations, crisis communications, stakeholder identification
	I must have taken on progressively more responsible roles on behalf of my employer and/or clients; have had experience in planning, guiding and directing projects, activities and/or people toward the fulfillment of strategic objectives; and in developing the strategies themselves.
	I am comfortable in a setting when tasked to draw on my experience and best practices to evaluate challenging situations, and where I am called upon to provide my counsel and insights on matters of a strategic nature as they relate to the organization(s) I work with or for.
	I have been able to hone my skills as a public relations generalist through my work and volunteer experience.
	I have experience dealing with a broad range of issues, publics and situations.

	If I am an educator, I have taken on a leadership role to develop and/or to improve program/course curriculum, delivery and assessment.
	I have reviewed the suggested reading list on the CPRS Accreditation web site. I am familiar with the Accreditation Handbook.
	I am confident in my knowledge and understanding of public relations theories.
	I can cite examples from my work or volunteer activities of how I might apply a theoretical challenge.
	I have earned a reputation as a “go to” practitioner among my peers, and my view or guidance is often sought by others due to my ability to think strategically, act calmly in crisis situations, or come up with practical solutions to problems.
	I follow local, regional, national and international current events.
	I am able to think on my feet to formulate plausible, rational and insightful responses to ethics questions.
	I would welcome mentoring (formally or informally) by an accredited public relations practitioner who would willingly share his/her senior public relations experience and knowledge.
	If I am an educator, I encourage students to volunteer in the community and in the public relations profession. I lead them by example, being active in the community and in the profession as a volunteer.
	I believe attaining my APR is as important to me personally as it could be professionally; recognizing that it may not have a direct impact on my career development or financial remuneration.
	I am committed to participating in lifelong learning and involvement in the discipline, industry or profession, as it is very important to maintain the APR designation once I attain it.

Many APRs acknowledge that one of the most important aspects of their accomplishment in successfully completing the accreditation process was the mentoring they received from a senior practitioner. Many had the benefit of this through their employment and others found mentors through their local society activities or through working with their local accreditation chair. Still others reached out to CPRS members beyond their own Society who formally or informally provided guidance and direction.

If you would like to discuss your readiness or have other questions about the accreditation process, or would like to be connected to a mentor you may either contact your local accreditation chair, or call the CPRS national office at (416) 239-7034 or e-mail accreditation@cprs.ca