

# TRAIN TO GET INTO PR IN ONLY 10 WEEKS

**PMA's Postgraduate Course in Public Relations is an intensive 10-week course is designed to help you get your first job in PR.** People have questioned whether we can really teach anything worthwhile in such a short time. Of course we can. For 19 years, we have been successfully running a similar, nine-week postgraduate course for magazine journalists. How successful? Over the years, many who took that course have won national awards and are now editors or work on national newspapers, such as Will Drew on Arena and Sara Cremer on Eve. Their accolades include: Editor of the Year; Specialist Consumer Journalist of the Year; Consumer Journalist of the Year; The Observer Young Travel Writer of the Year; New Journalist of the Year.

The PR course works along the same lines as the journalism course, where the emphasis is on practical work, not theory. We don't talk about how the industry is supposed to work, we train you to go out and do the job. PR agencies want to recruit people who are immediately useful from day one, rather than having to train them over a period of months before they can start to make a worthwhile contribution. This document will tell you more about the PMA Postgraduate PR course, finding a job in PR, the talents you will need to win a place, and a little about PMA Training.



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# WHAT IS PR?

We visit many careers fairs across the country. Through talking to people we've found that many have a vague idea about PR as a job – enough to generate some interest in it as a potential career, but are unclear about exactly what PR is. The Public Relations Consultants' Association (PRCA) describes PR as:

'Public relations is about reputation - the result of what you do, what you say, and what others say about you.'

'Public relations aims to earn understanding and support, and influence opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics.'

'The organisation might be a private or public company, a government, a public sector organisation, or even an individual. The target of the communication might be a narrow or broad group, from a section of the public, to business customers, employees, investors, or shareholders.'

'A good reputation is not earned overnight. It has to be carefully cultivated as understanding and support develop. The management of reputation has to be carefully undertaken with integrity and honesty. It is very fragile and can be lost quickly if words or actions are found to be out of sympathy with reality.'

'A virtuous circle is created when a good reputation raises expectations about the kind of products or services a company supplies,

and the quality of products or services enhances the reputation.'

'Public relations has to contribute directly to business success. If its task is guarding and managing reputation and relationships this must have a demonstrable effect and not just result in a feel-good factor.'

'Many different techniques and skills can be used by public relations professionals as part of a campaign to develop mutual communication and understanding with the target audience, from media relations and public affairs (lobbying), to online PR and sponsorship.'

'Public relations is not always about a short-term campaign, for instance the launch of a new product or service. It also encompasses long-term strategic areas such as advising companies on working with the local community or meeting environmental responsibilities to enhance or protect their image.'

**If you'd like to know more about the PRCA click – [www.prca.org.uk](http://www.prca.org.uk)**

# JOB PROSPECTS

**Those who have already tried to get a job in public relations will have learnt that it's not easy.** If your mum or dad runs a PR company, you might waltz straight into a job. But if you don't know anybody (and most times even when you do) it can be very difficult to step onto that crucial first rung of your career ladder. You'll find that a degree is not a passport to a job, even if you've studied marketing and PR for the past three years. For those who haven't taken this route, it's even harder. There are lots of intelligent, eager graduates scouting the jobs market. Agencies can pick and choose, and increasingly, they are demanding practi-

cal skills rather than theoretical ones. That's where our course comes in. We work very closely with the top agencies, some of which will be supplying work placements for this course. Undoubtedly, some people from the course will gain jobs within these agencies. Perhaps most importantly, when the course is over, we work hard to help you get a job. More than half the jobs available are never advertised. That's why our contacts are vital, and why this course, though it is the shortest available, gives you more at the end: More skills. More prospects. More value.





# EXCEL UNDER PRESSURE

What do I need to do to get onto the course?

**Well, a degree in English or marketing is not essential.** Increasingly, a specialist degree is proving very valuable. If you've studied, say, fashion, computing or one of the sciences, you will be very attractive to both agencies and in-house PR, as long as you can tally that knowledge with the practical side of PR. We cannot be precise about the other qualities we look for. PR, marketing or journalism experience is not vital, though some sort of work experience will certainly be an advantage. It shows you have made some efforts to get into the industry. We also want to see that you have a

reasonable command of the English language (hence the 400-word article you are asked to write). We expect your application to be without spelling, grammar or punctuation mistakes. But just as important are persistence, adaptability, relating well to people and being able to work under pressure. This last point is important because this is a very intensive course and we cannot consider slackers, no matter how potentially talented. All those who win a place will be expected to be able to type (it doesn't have to be touch-typing) before the course starts.

# BUILDING PRACTICAL SKILLS

**This course is hard work.** It's geared to getting you a job in PR, whether with an agency or in-house. That means we cover the skills needed for both areas of the business. But this is very different from a college or university course. This is not a classroom course. The emphasis is on practical skills rather than theoretical ones, which is why there are constant practical exercises and projects, often in the evenings or at weekends. That means you take on real PR assignments, interview real people, rather than the tutor pretending to be a politician or an industry leader.

We 'adopt' a business or a charity, and under the guidance of your course tutor, you will create and run all aspects of PR for that organisation. We will train you in writing skills and make you think like a journalist. If you understand the sort of news stories and features that newspapers, magazines and radio want, you'll find it far easier to create and write for them. The essence is on practical work, so the tutor doesn't lecture you. Typically you will discuss the principles of, say, press conferences; then attend a genuine press conference. We look at the way that journalists operate, and see how well the PR is handled; then we write a press release from it, and a story for a newspaper or magazine. That's typical of the sort of thing you do every day. You interview real people and write real stories, attend exhibitions, plan market research, work on risk management scenarios, put together PR campaigns. It means that when you start to work for an agency, you don't just know the theory; you have an understanding of what the problems are in practice.



## EQUIPPED FOR TODAY'S PROFESSION

**To equip you with these practical skills, we "adopt" a small charity or business in desperate need of promotional help.** This project will be a core part of the course, and you will get the chance to put into practice most of the things you learn during the course on behalf of our chosen client. We only use working PR practitioners as tutors. This means you learn PR today, rather than as it was in 1980. The industry has undergone huge changes. It's far more professional. You need to know these things when you're looking for a job. All too often on training courses, the tutor is retired, has worked in a backwater PR agency all their life (or in one case, was even a teacher who had never actually worked in PR at all). The PR exec who is most valuable to today's agencies is an all-rounder. Many in PR are very good at dealing with people, and this is a crucial part of this course. But sadly, all too many in the industry (often at a senior level) have poor writing skills, and simply don't understand what journalists want.

# UNDERSTANDING THE PRESS

**Understanding a journalist's psyche is a vital part of a successful PR's armoury.** To ensure you have more than just an understanding, two weeks of the schedule will be spent learning to write news stories and features, with training from top journalists. What better way to understand a journalist's psyche than to learn what makes a story for them, to understand their obsession with deadlines, and how to write like them? We will teach you the styles of writing, how to get ideas, how to research and prepare articles, then put them together. Most delegates are shocked when they realise how loosely they use words. We teach you how to capture and hold a reader's attention with sharp, tight writing. You will also learn about:

- Media relations
- Client relations
- Direct marketing
- Event planning
- Using and commissioning market research
- Press kits
- Photocalls
- Product placement
- Pitching for new business
- Appearing on TV and radio.

We monitor your progress constantly. You have a core tutor who will hold regular tutorials and help when you are struggling. You will spend part of the course on a work placement in a PR agency, or working as part of an in-house PR team. This is where you put your new skills to the test, and find out why all the hard work you've put in is so valuable. You may even be lucky enough to secure your first job while you're there. During the final week there are examinations in: Media Law, Grammar and Current Affairs/PR. There's also a graduation ceremony, to which we invite people from throughout the industry, including those looking for prospective employees.

# WHY

## **pma** TRAINING

# PROVEN QUALITY

**We've been training people for 26 years, and running postgraduate training courses for 19 years. Our boast about training quality is more than sales talk.** This is a new course, and it's the shortest one available for acquiring all the PR skills. But you can rest assured about the quality of the course. PMA has a very high reputation in the media industry. Through our short-course programme, we train hundreds of people from the PR industry, magazines, newspapers, internal communications, radio and television. We know many of the senior people in organisations because we have trained them through our short-course programme. They phone us when they have vacancies, and ask if we have anyone who is suitable. At the heart of our success is the quality of our training. If you go on any other courses, it's very unlikely you'll get such high-quality tutors. This isn't sales talk. Colleges and residential courses use one or two tutors. We use up to a dozen on this course, all specialists in their areas, to pass on their talents. So a feature writer for the national press may tell you about feature writing; the head of communications for

an international company may talk about internal communications; a BBC producer may teach you about appearing on radio and TV.

PMA is officially recognised by the PRCA, CIPR, the Periodicals Training Council and Communicators in Business, and we also undertakes training for the BBC. We are the oldest and largest independent editorial training company in Europe. We run more than 500 courses a year for PRs and journalists and organise in-house training, devised by ourselves, for many of the country's leading organisations, from Edelman and the Ministry of Defence to Lewis PR and John Lewis. We train all over the world, and recently, we have carried out training courses in the US, Singapore, Germany, Belgium, South Africa and Switzerland, to name but a few.

We have our own training building, The Centre for Media Excellence, in Islington, London, which is just a short walk from King's Cross station. The course and shortlist interviews will be held here. All the rooms are air-conditioned and the centre is fully equipped with computers and broadband communications.

# PRICE AND APPLICATION DETAILS

2006 Course runs from September 18, until November 24

The fee for the ten weeks is **£3,400 plus VAT, a total of £3,995**. This includes all tuition and notes, free telephone use and broadband internet connection, as well as free photocopying facilities, daily newspapers and that invaluable post-course help. We even allow you access to the media centre for a month after the course has ended, to update your CV or for career advice from tutors. No other course makes the same effort for you when it's all over. We work very hard to help you find a job. Our post-course advice and assistance is unequalled. Even five years or more later, previous delegates on our postgraduate magazine course looking to change jobs will telephone us for advice.

You should be able to get a Career Development Loan from any of the following banks for the course fee:

- Barclays Bank plc
- Co-operative Bank plc
- HSBC

Such a loan enables you to defer payment of the loan for up to three months after the end of the course.



## How to apply

There are several ways you can apply. You can download the application form from the 'getintopr.com' website as a PDF or as a 'Word' file, then post the completed form to us. Alternatively, you can fill-in the on-line form and email it back to us.

Or you can contact us by phone, mail or email and we'll send out a form to you.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: AUGUST 4, 2006**

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