Diploma in Public Relations and Communications Management

Looking for a Career in Public Relations?

If you are a strategist, a planner, and above all, an effective communicator, you will find a public relations career both inspiring and rewarding. Joining the world of professional public relations can offer you an opportunity to learn about and help guide the success of organizations in many fields.

Organizations, whether in the private, public or not-for-profit sector, are facing an increasing need to communicate strategically with their stakeholders – employees, media, local community, shareholders, government regulators and many others on whom their success, even existence, depends. Transparency is being demanded publicly in matters of governance, financial reporting, social responsibility, and client services, to name but a few.

As a Public Relations Professional you will build relationships with these stakeholders. Using the information you gain, you will advise the organization’s management on how best to earn cooperation and support from these groups. Your tools may be many and varied depending on the type of organization, but will often include website content creation and management, social media tracking, news releases, employee newsletters, speeches for senior management, or position papers for industry or government hearings. You may be called upon to manage events such as employee presentations, annual meetings, news conferences, on-line briefings, tours, and public displays.

How can a McGill University’s School of Continuing Studies program prepare you for a career in Public Relations?

This diploma program is intended for those wishing to pursue a career in public relations and communications, those whose management responsibilities include PR/communications, or those already working in the field who would like to further their academic background. Students gain knowledge in a range of specializations that will help them build their careers in the consulting, corporate or not-for-profit sectors. Material is updated regularly to include new technology and emerging issues. While skills are taught, major emphasis is placed on the strategic aspects of public relations.

The Diploma in Public Relations and Communications Management is both student-oriented and professionally based. Professionally based, because its content is kept up to date with best practices in industry and is frequently augmented by ongoing research in communications studies. Diploma students will be trained for a career in the practice and/or management of the public relations/communications function within an organization or as a consultant.

If you have public relations and communications experience, you will have a chance to hone your skills and explore new areas of practice at greater depth. If you are new to the field, you will acquire broad-based general knowledge of an exciting and rapidly growing profession. You will have opportunities to discuss communications strategies with practitioners from a variety of industry sectors and to work on real public relations cases. By the time you have completed the program, you will have an in-depth overview of the major practice areas, considerable hands-on experience, and a solid resource network.
Which of McGill’s Public Relations Management programs is for you?

- **Certificate in Public Relations and Communications Management**
  - [30 credits]

- **Diploma in Public Relations and Communications Management**
  - [30 credits]

- **Graduate Certificate in Public Relations Management**
  - [15 credits]

**Note:**
- *CGPA = Cumulative Grade Point Average*
- **Program designed for Managers.**
The Program

The Diploma in Public Relations and Communications Management is a 30-credit program which consists of ten courses, eight Required courses and two Complementary courses.

The diploma’s program requirements are:

8 Required courses (24 credits):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPRL 510</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Public Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPRL 520</td>
<td>Applied Public Relations Communication</td>
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<tr>
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<td>CPRL 531</td>
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<td>Communication Planning</td>
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<td>Ethics in Public Relations</td>
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2 Complementary courses from (6 credits):

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<tr>
<td>CGM2 510</td>
<td>Project Management: Tools &amp; Techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMIS 544</td>
<td>Digital Marketing Automation, Planning and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPRL 515</td>
<td>Fund-Raising and Philanthropy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPRL 532</td>
<td>Public Relations Event Management</td>
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</tbody>
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Note: All courses are 3 credits each unless otherwise stated.

Important Note:

This program is effective as of Fall 2020.

If you were admitted PRIOR to Fall 2020, please follow the STUDY PLAN which you were provided with at the time of your admission.
Course Sequence

Diploma in Public Relations and Communications Management

**CPRL 510**
Fundamentals of Public Relations

**CPRL 520**
Applied Public Relations Communication

**CPRL 530**
Internal Stakeholder Communication

**CPRL 531**
Media Context and Applications

**CPRL 533**
Communications in the Corporate Sector

**CPRL 535**
Public Opinion and Public Policy

**CPRL 539**
Fund-Raising and Philanthropy

**CPRL 540**
Communication Planning

**CPRL 541**
Ethics in Public Relations

**CGM2 510**
Project Management: Tools and Techniques

**CPRL 532**
Public Relations Event Management

**CPRL 535**
Public Opinion and Public Policy

NOTE:

Required Courses

Complementary Courses

- Pre-requisite course
- Co-requisite course

*Note: Please refer to course description for additional pre-requisites.

To obtain information on course offerings, please refer to the interactive timetable at:
[https://cce.mcgill.ca/itimetable/cpd/ProgramDetails/126](https://cce.mcgill.ca/itimetable/cpd/ProgramDetails/126)
Course Descriptions

CGM2 510 Project Management: Tools and Techniques  (3 credits)
Pre-requisite: None
Focus on main concepts and theories of project management from initiation to close-out. Topics include: project life cycle, planning, scheduling, implementing, monitoring, controlling, close-out and ethics. The concepts presented apply to projects of various sizes, types and degrees of complexity.

CMIS 544 Digital Marketing Automation, Planning and Technology  (3 credits)
Pre-requisite: None
Covers the fundamental concepts needed to develop a digital marketing plan. Enables students to gain an understanding of market behaviour, translation of corporate goals into digital marketing objectives, basic overview of various strategic approaches to align to objectives, as well as implementation and control.

CPRL 510 Fundamentals of Public Relations  (3 credits)
Pre-requisite: None
Survey and history of public relations practice, its various sub-specialties and its role in the organizational structure. Theories of communication and applications of theoretical knowledge in the field. Recent trends and best practices in both private and not-for-profit sectors. Professional ethics and associations.

CPRL 515 Fund-Raising and Philanthropy  (3 credits)
Pre-requisite: None
The organization as donor and fund-raiser. Social, legal and regulatory context of fund-raising and corporate giving. Role and structure of foundations, government agencies and other donor organizations. Corporate community support. Fund-raising campaigns (planning and methods), donor relations, working with volunteer leadership, information management, ethics and accountability.

CPRL 520 Applied Public Relations Communication  (3 credits)
Co-requisite: CPRL 510
Identification, analysis and solution of communication problems in a variety of public relations contexts. Emphasis on planning, audience, research, content, effectiveness, language, editing and design of communication tools. Practical approaches to print and Internet communication, oral presentations, and writing for media.
Note: Given in a workshop setting, this course will allow students to improve their skills through practice, instructor feedback and peer evaluation. Owing to the nature of the subject matter, assignments must be submitted in English.

CPRL 530 Internal Stakeholder Communication  (3 credits)
Co-requisite: CPRL 510 and CPRL 520
Communication with the full range of internal stakeholders, including employees, management, Board, volunteers and foundations, as well as audiences specific to the organization such as patients, students, members, etc. Topics include organizational culture, labour relations, mobilization of stakeholders and issues/change management (i.e. mergers, acquisitions, partnerships).

CPRL 531 Media Context and Applications  (3 credits)
Co-requisite: CPRL 510 and CPRL 520
Context in which media operate (regulation, ownership, practical constraints). Building relationships with journalists. Media theory and current trends in media uses and technology. Strategies and tools
for communicating through media, including message development, spokesperson training and media events. Crisis and risk communications.

**CPRL 532 Public Relations Event Management**  
(3 credits)  
Pre-requisite: None  
Management of events in support of organizational objectives for relations with investors, clients, employees, government, media or community. Special events as part of public awareness or fund-raising programs. Topics include planning, budgeting, financial support, logistics, protocol, working with suppliers and partners, promotions and evaluation.

**CPRL 533 Communications in the Corporate Sector**  
(3 credits)  
Pre-requisite: CPRL 510 and CPRL 520  
This course will provide exposure to issues and functions essential for practice in the corporate sector, issues management, crisis communications, financial communications, branding and reputation management, as well as communications related to mergers and acquisitions. It will also provide the basic financial literacy necessary for any communications management professional.

**CPRL 535 Public Opinion and Public Policy**  
(3 credits)  
Co-requisite: CPRL 531  
How organizations, voters, media and interest groups work to influence public policy, and how the efforts of each affect the others. Government relations at the political and public service level, including lobbying, advocacy, and regulatory issues. Coalition building. Public opinion research methods and theory. Media and democracy.

**CPRL 540 Communication Planning**  
(3 credits)  
Pre-requisite: CPRL 530 and CPRL 535  
Communication plans in real situations. Topics include environmental scanning, audits, strategy and implementation of plan, including timelines, budgeting, working with suppliers and consulting skills. Emphasis on evaluation and return on investment of communication. Note: Students will interact with practitioners in the field. Considerable time will be required outside of classroom hours, as students will work in teams against tight deadlines. It is recommended that students not take on a heavy course load during the term they take this course.

**CPRL 541 Ethics in Public Relations**  
(3 credits)  
Co-requisite: CPRL 510 and CPRL 520  
Public relations practitioner's role and influence in the ethical organization: corporate social responsibility, laws and regulations on governance, and public accountability. Legal and ethical behaviour related to sustainable development and globalization. The ethical public relations practitioner: professionalism, codes of ethics, issues in practice.
Professional Associations

If you have any general questions about the professional practice of public relations or what type of jobs you can expect to find, you can contact the professional associations in the field by logging onto their websites.

- **Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS)**
  
  Website: [http://www.cprs.ca](http://www.cprs.ca)
  
  Telephone: (416) 239-7034 ext. 249
  
  E-mail for General CPRS inquiries: admin@cprs.ca

- **Société québécoise des professionnels en relations publiques (SQPRP, a member society of the Canadian Public Relations Society Inc. – CPRS)**
  
  This association recognizes McGill’s public relations programs. Students interested in membership or further information about the organization should contact SQPRP:

  185-315, place d'Youville
  Montréal, QC, H2Y 0A4
  Website: [http://www.sqprp.ca](http://www.sqprp.ca)
  
  E-mail: info@sqprp.ca
  
  Telephone: (514) 845-4441

- **The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC)**
  
  The Montreal chapter of IABC recognizes McGill’s public relations programs. For more information on IABC membership or the association, please visit their website: [http://montreal.iabc.com](http://montreal.iabc.com).
Admission Requirements

1. Students must hold an undergraduate degree from a recognized university as approved by Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et l’immigration (MRCI) with a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0/4.0 or a CGPA of 3.2/4.0 for the last two full-time academic years.

2. If your CGPA is lower than the above requirement, please submit the following for consideration with your application, official transcript.
   a. **Letter of Intent**: A letter, 1 to 2 pages in length single-spaced, written in English or French, which addresses the following:
      - basis for interest in the program;
      - your knowledge that would be pertinent to the program;
      - your interest in the field of study and the reasons for applying to our program
      - plans for integrating the training into your current or future career;
      - a description of your professional experience and its relevance, if applicable, to the program
      - awards received or other contributions;
      - any additional information relevant to your application.
   b. **Curriculum Vitae**
   c. **Two Letters of Reference**: At least one should be from a current or former employer.
   d. **GMAT and/or GRE Test Score Results (optional)**: Submit a copy of the official test score results.

Students are expected to have a working knowledge of word processing and spreadsheets.

Students with a Bachelor’s degree in Commerce (or equivalent) may be able to enroll for a graduate certificate. For more information, please visit: [http://www.mcgill.ca/continuingstudies/prospective-students/apply/graduate-programs](http://www.mcgill.ca/continuingstudies/prospective-students/apply/graduate-programs)
Admission Procedures

STEP 1: PREPARE

1. Choose the program (certificate, diploma, graduate certificate or graduate diploma) you would like to apply to.
2. Verify the Application Deadlines to ensure that you submit your application in time.
3. Ensure you have a valid email address and credit card on hand to pay for the application fee (Visa, Master Card or America Express).
4. From the list of programs, click on the program you would like to apply to.
5. Review the admission requirements for the program to ensure you meet the criteria.
6. Ensure you have all necessary documentations required for your application as indicated in the “Documents Required” section.

STEP 2: APPLY

1. Click “Apply Now” at the top of the program page or go to https://mcgill.ca/4Um and click “Apply Now”.
2. If you have a Login ID and PIN, enter them now, or if not, create one and log in.
3. Click on “Begin New”.
4. Enter the information requested and click “Continue”.
5. When asked, “What are you applying for at McGill?”, click on “Continuing Studies”.
6. On the next page, select the program you would like to apply to.
7. Complete the rest of the application with all required information and submit.
8. You will receive a confirmation email providing you with a McGill ID number and a PIN. Within 24-48 hours, you will be able to log in to Minerva (www.mcgill.ca/minerva).

STEP 3: UPLOAD SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Once you have access to Minerva, upload your supporting documentation as per the admission requirements of your chosen program.

- Uploading your documents will speed up your application process and is strongly recommended.

- For instructions on how to proceed, please go to: https://mcgill.ca/continuingstudies/legal-documents.

(If you are unable to upload the documents, you can send them by regular mail or bring them in person to our Client Services office at the address below).

- Sending official transcripts: All transcripts received via the upload process are considered unofficial. If transcripts are required for your application, you will also need to have any official transcripts sent directly to McGill University by mail, in a sealed envelope by the educational institution(s) where you studied.

STEP 4: VERIFY ADMISSION STATUS

Once a decision has been made, admitted students will receive a “Letter of Admission” along with registration instructions.

Difficulty Applying Online?

If you have any problems with your online application, or if you have questions regarding admission requirement and procedures, contact Client Services (https://www.mcgill.ca/continuingstudies/client-services).
Helpful Tips for Applying

What is an Official Transcript?
If you have studied at an institution:
- In Canada or the United States – you will need to request a copy of your official transcripts (your marks) from that institution which the institution will mail to the address below in a sealed envelope with the official institution’s logo.
- Outside of Canada or the United States, - you will need to request a copy of your official transcripts (your marks) from that institution which the institution will mail to the address below in a sealed envelope with the official institution’s logo.
- **Note:** In cases where the language of instruction at the institution is not English or French, you must also send an official translation of the official transcript certified by a representative from the **Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec** (OTTIAQ - [http://ottiaq.org/](http://ottiaq.org/)).

- You need to request official transcripts as soon as possible once your application has been submitted to the School of Continuing Studies. Your Educational Institution must then mail these directly to the appropriate office below:

**Client Services c/o Admissions**
McGill University – School of Continuing Studies
688 Sherbrooke Street West, Room 1125
Montreal, QC H3A 3R1
Canada

- **Important:** You must make sure you apply by the application deadline. However, if you have any outstanding supporting documents at the time of your application, you may upload them as they become available or forward them directly to the School of Continuing Studies as soon as possible. Your admission application will only be completed once the University has received all of the required documents.

- **Note:** All required documents received by McGill University’s School of Continuing Studies become the property of the university. Official documents and/or transcripts will not be returned to the applicant.

- **Note:** Transcripts received by McGill University’s School of Continuing Studies cannot be transferred to any other department or program as it would constitute submitting a new application. Therefore, you must submit a new sealed envelope of your official transcripts for each application made to McGill University’s School of Continuing Studies.
Language Requirements

- The language of instruction for most courses and programs at McGill University is English; however, students may submit any written work that is to be graded in English or French, except in cases where knowledge of the language is one of the objectives of the course.

- Applicants must demonstrate an adequate level of proficiency in English prior to admission, regardless of citizenship status or country of origin. McGill University has this language requirement in place to ensure that all students are provided with the opportunity to succeed in their chosen program.

- In all cases, the University reserves the right to require proof of English proficiency if it is deemed necessary. For additional information, please click on the link below.

https://www.mcgill.ca/continuingstudies/language-policy

Exemption by Examination

Students admitted to a Certificate, Diploma, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma program requiring a pre-requisite or co-requisite course, must provide proof that they have taken and successfully passed an equivalent 3-credit course, with the requisite grade as per McGill University’s requirements, at the appropriate level at another approved institution or have successfully completed the Exemption by Examination test.

- The Exemption by Examination test is not applicable to required or complementary course(s) within a program.

- You cannot take the Exemption by Examination test if you have already attempted the course (a grade of W is considered as have attempted the course).

- If you are unsuccessful in the Exemption by Examination test(s) you will not be permitted to repeat the test(s) and must instead enroll in the course(s) for which the particular test(s) was taken.

To be eligible to write the Exemption by Examination test, you must have applied to or been admitted into a program. (The test is optional).

For more information visit: https://www.mcgill.ca/continuingstudies/recognition-prior-learning
McGill University’s School of Continuing Studies Bursaries
The School of Continuing Studies will post the application form and eligibility requirements for the active term on its website. Please refer to link below for further information.


McGill University’s School of Continuing Studies Scholarships
For a list of McGill University Scholarships, please consult McGill University’s School of Continuing Studies website by clicking on the link below.


McGill University’s School of Continuing Studies Graduating Prizes
For a list of McGill SCS Graduating Prizes, please consult McGill University’s School of Continuing Studies website by clicking on the link below.

https://www.mcgill.ca/continuingstudies/graduating-students

Aide financière aux études (AFE)
As a credit-bearing program, this program is eligible for financial aid through the Quebec Government.

https://www.quebec.ca/education/aide-financiere-aux-etudes/

Note: The amount and number of McGill University’s School of Continuing Studies Bursaries, Scholarships, and Graduating Prizes issued varies from year to year, depending on funds received and their specifications.

Contact

McGill University
School of Continuing Studies

688, Sherbrooke St. West, Suite 1140
Montreal, QC, H3A 3R1

Program information

Tel. 514-398-6200
Fax: 514-398-2650

info.conted@mcgill.ca