

**DEVELOPING THE
HIGHEST STANDARDS
FOR COMMUNICATION
PROFESSIONALS**

**PRII DIPLOMA IN
COMMUNICATIONS &
PUBLIC RELATIONS**



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With over a decade in public policy, I wanted a programme that would further expand my skillset and refine my strategic perspective. The PRII Diploma delivered exactly that. The syllabus combines robust theory, practical examples, and the real-world experiences of accomplished PR professionals, across a diverse range of topics. From the outset, this programme gave me insights that I could immediately apply to my daily work. The balanced curriculum and inclusive teaching style ensure that professionals, at any stage of their PR journey, can find immense value in the course.

The PRII Diploma has equipped me with a modern and impactful toolkit for stakeholder engagement, effective communications, and project leadership. For any professional looking to build their career and drive impact within public affairs, I highly recommend this programme.

Robert Kiernan

Director of the Irish Beverage Council, Ibec

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I came to the PRII Diploma with a strong grounding in advocacy from my background in law and policy. What the course really gave me was a clearer sense of how to ‘turn the dial’, how to translate that work into strategic, effective communications that actually make an impact.

Completing the diploma built my confidence in using the skills I already had, while also helping me develop new ones. I really valued the chance to connect with people from different industries, all bringing their own perspectives and insights.

It’s definitely a challenging course, you really earn the diploma, but that’s what makes it so rewarding.

I still find myself thinking back to advice from the lecturers in my day-to-day work, and I feel much more equipped now to deliver advocacy that’s both strategic and impactful.

Alison Cotter

Advocacy and Research Officer, MS Ireland

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**FOR DECADES THE MOST WIDELY
HELD AND HIGHLY REGARDED IRISH
QUALIFICATION IN PR**

**HELD BY ONE IN FOUR
COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONALS**



WHY THE PRII DIPLOMA IN COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC RELATIONS?

NOW IS THE TIME TO INVEST IN YOUR COMMUNICATIONS CAREER

To reflect the evolving public relations landscape and the strategic value it contributes to clients and the Irish economy, we renamed our diploma to the PRII Diploma in Communications & Public Relations. This name change follows research and stakeholder engagement held with our membership.

Held by one in three senior communications professionals in Ireland, the PRII Diploma in Communications & Public Relations remains the longest-established and most widely held Irish qualification in public relations; a reflection of its legacy and continued relevance in a profession that is evolving at pace.

Delivered and accredited by the Public Relations Institute of Ireland (PRII), the professional body for communications and public relations practitioners in Ireland, the Diploma is shaped by the real-world needs of the profession. Students benefit from a course grounded in practice, ethics, strategic thinking and the professional standards underpinning excellent communications.

According to the PRII Census 2025, Ireland's communications and public relations sector now contributes €1.9 billion to the Irish economy. The profession has grown to almost 4,000 people, while the average annual salary now stands at €78,000. In-house PR budgets have also risen by 10% since 2019, with team sizes growing too - showing a profession that is expanding in scale, value and influence.

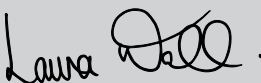
The role of the communicator has never been more important. In a world shaped by AI, misinformation, fragmented attention and rising expectations of transparency and trust, organisations need skilled, strategic, creative, professionally trained communicators. The PRII Census 2025 found that 66% of professionals welcome AI, two-thirds cite AI skills as their biggest training gap, and only one-third have received formal AI training. That tells us that our profession is evolving and needs people who invest in their learning.

The diploma is designed for graduates, career changers and those already working in communications who want to build their knowledge, strengthen their practice and gain formal recognition for their professional capability. As the Diploma is delivered by PRII, students also become part of something bigger: a professional community.

Beginning each September, online classes are on Monday evenings (6.30pm to 8.30pm), with supporting materials made available midweek to support flexible study. The course fee includes Student Membership of PRII and examination fees.

If you are ready to take the next step in your career - whether you are just starting out, changing direction, or looking to formalise your experience - I would warmly encourage you to consider the PRII Diploma.

We would be delighted to welcome you.



Laura Wall, MPRII
*Chief Executive Officer,
Public Relations Institute of Ireland*

COURSE AIMS

The PRII Diploma in Communications & Public Relations aims to provide the knowledge, critical understanding, and skills required for entry level and early career positions in public relations and communications organisations, as well as public relations practitioners seeking recognition for their professional attainment.

The knowledge component encompasses the theoretical and practical understanding of public relations and communication and is consistent with the objectives and values of the public relations profession.

Skills and abilities are the practical application and demonstration of this knowledge, developed through learning, reflection, practice, and experience.

Specifically the course aims to:

- Provide students with a critical understanding of the issues at the forefront of contemporary public relations and a reflective awareness of the contribution of the profession to organisations, the economy, and society
- Enable students to become proficient in purposeful communication in the practice of public relations
- Develop the ability of students to devise and present specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely public relations programmes/campaigns

ASSESSMENT & EXAMINATION

The PRII Diploma is assessed by written examinations, a presentations skills exam and project work. Examinations take place in May each year.

To support our students who are based across the entire country, our exams are held online and are supported by our proctoring partner, TestReach who is widely used across the training and higher education sector.

This course is accredited by the Public Relations Institute of Ireland – the professional body for communication and PR in Ireland.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, the student will have a systematic knowledge and critical understanding of the:

- Theory and concepts of communication pertaining to public relations
 - Strategic function, value and contribution of public relations as a key form of organisational communication
 - Public relations working environment and function both in consultancy and in-house
 - Nature and needs of the mass media (print and broadcast, digital and social)
 - Interdisciplinary environment within which public relations professionals operate
 - Wider political, social and economic environment in which the profession operates
 - Contemporary ethical and legal issues pertaining to the work of public relations professionals
 - Gain an understanding of key developments in artificial intelligence (AI), its impact on PR/communications and key tools to improve productivity
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Students will be able to demonstrate skills and abilities in:

- Analytical, strategic, critical and creative thinking
- Identifying the communication needs of organisations based on their business and/or organisational objectives
- Researching, strategising, planning, evaluating and measuring, and costing public relations programmes that contribute towards achieving organisation objectives
- Selecting and applying appropriate public relations tools and techniques to effectively implement communication strategies
- Writing purposefully to an advanced and specialised level
- Presenting creatively and purposefully
- Creating customised and compelling materials for print, broadcast, and digital/social media
- Developing and maintaining positive relations with clients, suppliers, and other professionals including media professionals
- Identifying, developing, and maintaining positive relations with key stakeholders in wider society including local communities
- Planning and managing events that contribute toward communication objectives



MODULES & COURSE CONTENT

MODULES	CREDITS	TEACHING HOURS	INDEPENDENT LEARNING HOURS	ASSESSMENT
Strategic Value of Public Relations & its Professional Environment	9	28	90	Written Examination
Communication Theory & Practice	9	28	90	Written Examination
Media Theory & Practice	12	35	90	Written Examination & Project
Complementary Professions	6	18	60	Project
Law, Regulation, Ethics & the Political Environment	6	18	60	Written Examination
Public Relations Campaigns & Presentation Skills	18	28	120 60	Project Presentation

MODULE 1: STRATEGIC VALUE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS & ITS PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

DESCRIPTION

This module introduces the role and contribution of public relations to the successful operation of an organisation by building positive stakeholder relationships.

It examines the range of professional public relations practices and specialisations including consumer public relations, corporate communication, sponsorship and corporate social responsibility, crisis and issues communication, internal communication and community engagement. Students will learn the structures of public relations consultancies and in-house public relations departments, the client-consultancy relationship and the employer-public relations manager relationship. Account and client management will be discussed including prospective client briefs, new business pitches, contracts and professional fees, project management and reviews.

The student will learn the range of tools and techniques available to the public relations practitioner excluding media relations which is covered in **Module 3: Media Theory and Practice**.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module the student will be able to:

- Critically assess the contribution of public relations to organisational success
- Recognise the position, role and function of public relations in the overall management structures of organisations
- Compare and contrast the roles and responsibilities of public relations professionals working in consultancy and in-house teams
- Identify internal and external stakeholders and their diverse communication needs
- Devise appropriate communication objectives and strategies to support an organisation's objectives
- Describe the role of research and planning in public relations programmes
- Select appropriate public relations tools/techniques to meet stakeholders' communication needs (the media as stakeholder is covered in **Module 3**)



MODULE 2: COMMUNICATION THEORY & PRACTICE

DESCRIPTION

This module equips learners with knowledge of communication and public relations theories and models that underpin contemporary practice.

Complementing knowledge from **Module 3: Media Theory & Practice**, learners will understand the importance of these theories and models in creating purposeful, professional messaging addressed to key stakeholders and publics, and assess the likely impact of these messages.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this module the learner will be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with core communication and public relations theories and their application to:
 - mass media communication
 - digital communication
- Demonstrate familiarity with public relations theories and models and their application to:
 - contemporary public relations practice
 - persuasive and symmetrical communication
 - identifying and prioritising key stakeholders and publics
- Understand theories of persuasion and social influence
- Recognise the speed, reach, access and affordability of communication technologies and techniques, and understand their privacy implications and impact on public relations practice
- Construct purposeful communication focusing on key message development to key stakeholders and publics in a variety of styles



MODULE 3: MEDIA THEORY & PRACTICE

DESCRIPTION

This module prepares the student to apply communication theories (see **Module 2**) to the practice of engaging with the media on behalf of clients/ employers. Specifically this module examines the range of media in the contemporary market including print, broadcast, digital and social. Students will learn the objectives, strategies, constraints and pressures of the various media forms and how to build positive relationships with media professionals and organisations.

Students will learn the structures of media organisations, audience preference and usage, media needs and preferences and the media-public relations symbiotic relationship.

Practical learning will include identifying the internal structure of a news story and writing materials for the various media forms including customised media releases and statements, photo-captions, invitations, social posts, podcasts and advertorials or commercial features.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module the student will be able to:

- Critically analyse the role and influence of mass media in contemporary society and the synergistic relationship of public relations and media professionals
- Differentiate between the various media describing the contribution and value of each
- Recognise the influence of advances in media technologies on the practice of public relations
- Demonstrate professional skills in purposeful writing for a variety of media
- Compose professional-standard media materials e.g. media releases and statements
- Distinguish between different media styles and techniques incl. writing for digital, social, and traditional print media, national and local radio etc
- Identify the range of media campaign (outputs) evaluation and measurement techniques available to the public relations professional



MODULE 4: COMPLEMENTARY PROFESSIONS

DESCRIPTION

This module introduces a range of professions which interrelate with public relations and with which the public relations practitioner can expect to work, whether or not they are engaged in integrated communication campaigns.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module the student will be able to:

- Describe the relationship between public relations and related professions including: commercial photographers, event managers, advertising, marketing (incl. market research and direct marketing) managers, graphic designers and printers, digital/web designers, audio visual production companies and media monitoring suppliers
- Identify the contribution each profession makes to an organisation's external communication (with particular emphasis on marketing)
- Brief photographers, event managers, designers and printers, direct marketing and audio visual suppliers, market researchers and media monitoring service providers



MODULE 5: LAW, REGULATION, ETHICS & POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

DESCRIPTION

This module introduces the legal, ethical and political environment within which the public relations profession and media operate in Ireland. It includes content related to legal constraints such as the regulation and protections afforded by Irish law.

The module also covers national and international ethical guidelines for public relations professionals and how public relations relates to the political structures in Ireland and to wider society.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module the student will be able to:

- Identify and critically evaluate the ethical and legal issues relevant to the public relations profession including the law on defamation and copyright law
- Behave in a professional and ethical manner
- Outline the political environment in Ireland and the EU, its structures and operations and how the public relations profession works with political structures (e.g. on issues management and public affairs/lobbying)
- Debate the contribution of public relations to Irish organisations, politics, and society



MODULE 6: PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS & PRESENTATION SKILLS

DESCRIPTION

This is a summative module which builds on the knowledge and skills comprising the Diploma in Public Relations syllabus and provides students the opportunity to apply their learnings to a practical task in the 'real' world.

This module also equips students with the theory and practice of professional presentation skills suitable for the modern business environment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module the student will be able to:

- Research, plan, and write a professional, creative and comprehensive public relations campaign for an organisation covering a 12 month period
- Demonstrate problem solving techniques, and critical, analytical and strategic thinking
- Plan and deliver effective, engaging and persuasive oral and visual presentations
- Utilise a range of audio/visual aids and technologies to enhance presentations incl. infographics
- Critically analyse presentation techniques and performances

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

DESCRIPTION

On the PRII diploma, participants will gain an understanding of key developments in artificial intelligence (AI), its impact on PR/communications and key tools to improve productivity.

In addition to your normal curriculum, several guest sessions will be organised to explore the impact of artificial intelligence in PR and communications and how you can leverage these tools to increase your impact and career progression.

Below are examples of sessions we are planning, these are subject to change based on the evolving AI landscape.

Session 1: The AI for PR Landscape

This session explores the evolution and current state of AI in communications, key research insights, practical tools and use cases, potential drawbacks, and the PRII's guidelines for responsible AI use.

Session 2:

This workshop will equip you with real AI implementation skills. The workshop explores AI applications across PR functions, from campaign planning to evaluation, while addressing ethical considerations and industry impact

Session 3:

In this workshop, you will discover how to use AI platforms to enable you to maximise the value of your existing content in a time and cost efficient way. You will learn how to create new digital assets like these and more, using content you already have, while bringing it to a wider audience in new and interesting ways.

**COURSE COMMENCES IN
SEPTEMBER EACH YEAR**

COURSE FEE €3,000
(€2,600 for PRII Members)



ENTRY REQUIREMENTS, ENROLMENT & FEES

Enrolment on the PRII Diploma in Communications & Public Relations is on an ongoing basis and closes 14 days before the course commences.

Numbers on the course are capped. Entry is through a competitive application process, whereby students provide a career resume and a one-page letter of motivation for undertaking the course. These applications are assessed by the PRII, and if appropriate, a follow-up interview will be scheduled. The resume and letter of motivation should be sent by email to diploma@prii.ie. There is no application charge.

In the case of over-subscription, priority will be given to those already working in a public relations or related role, followed by those who will be using the qualification to seek employment in the profession.

All students must be at least 18 years of age and have passed a minimum of five subjects in the Leaving Certificate, or hold a qualification at Level 7 of the National Framework of Qualifications. These requirements can be waived if the person satisfactorily demonstrates that they have at least two year's professional experience in a public relations/communication role.

The cost of the Diploma is €3,000 (*€2,600 for PRII Members*) with a non-refundable deposit of €900 payable to secure a place. All fees must be paid by 28th February and are non-refundable. An interest-free payment plan can be agreed.

If two or more students are undertaking the course from the same employer, a discount is available for the second and subsequent students, provided the employer is paying for the course on a single invoice.

If a Full Member of the PRII provides a letter of recommendation a discounted fee can be offered to non-members.

Terms and conditions apply, please see www.prii.ie

ENROLMENT NOW OPEN

www.prii.ie/diploma.html



BENEFITS OF STUDENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE PRII

Established in 1953, the Public Relations Institute of Ireland (PRII) is dedicated to promoting the professional practice of public relations in Ireland, and to serving the best interests of people working in the profession. There are over 1,200 members of the PRII, working in consultancies, industry, government, semi-state, voluntary and business organisations.

Members of the Institute subscribe to the Code of Lisbon, the Code of Athens and the PRII Code of Practice for Public Affairs and Lobbying. These codes promote integrity and clear understanding in the implementation of public relations programmes and closely reflect the overall objectives of the PRII itself.

All PRII Diploma students are members of the PRII. Among the benefits of this membership are:

- Successful students receive their diploma from the PRII at an annual graduation ceremony; the diploma recognises their attainment of academic knowledge and professional proficiency
- Upon graduation, students are entitled to use the letters PRII Dip. PR to signify that they hold the Institute's accredited Diploma
- PRII Dip. PR students are entitled to attend all members' only meetings and events of the Institute. They also receive a preferential member rate for all other events such as the PRII's annual conference, networking events, and training courses
- Students receive the Institute's weekly newsletter, the PRII Digest, and have access to the research and other members' content developed by the PRII
- Students seeking employment in public relations will benefit from the regular efforts the PRII makes to market the course and its graduates to employers
- Graduates can apply for Graduate Affiliate or Graduate Full membership at reduced costs, depending on experience and qualifications. This offer is valid in the first year after graduation and is available at the same rate for the following membership year
- Graduate Full members are entitled to use the designation MPRII

CONTACT DETAILS

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Dublin 2, Ireland
D02 T882

(01) 661 8004
diploma@prii.ie
www.prii.ie

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Completing the PRII Diploma with the PRII was an incredibly valuable experience and a defining step in the early stages of my career. As someone who entered the PR industry less than a year before starting the course, the diploma gave me a strong foundation in the principles and practice of public relations, from strategic communications and media relations to reputation management.

The programme combines practical learning with valuable industry insight, and the mix of lecturers and weekly guest speakers made the content both engaging and highly relevant. The online delivery of the course also made it very manageable alongside work and other commitments, as much of the learning could be completed at times that suited my schedule.

Studying alongside professionals from across the communications industry was another highlight, with each student coming from different backgrounds and bringing unique perspectives and insights to the discussions.

The knowledge and confidence I gained have been instrumental in my role, and I am now working as an Account Executive at Heneghan Strategic Communications where I have been able to apply this learning to strengthen my ability to support impactful campaigns for clients.

I would highly recommend the PRII Diploma to anyone looking to build a strong career in public relations and communications.

Sophie Casey

Account Executive, Heneghan

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I enrolled on the PRII Diploma on the recommendation of a colleague and I knew it was a highly-regarded qualification in the industry. I recently moved into a Communications role with the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and feel the Diploma gave me an excellent understanding of how to plan and implement effective campaigns and interact with various stakeholders. My classmates and tutors came with a broad range of backgrounds which added great richness to our class discussions. The course definitely gave me a solid, practical foundation for a career in Communications.

Sine Friel




*Communications Official,
Irish National Teachers' Organisation*

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