

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN
PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA
AND
UNIVERSAL ACCREDITATION BOARD (UAB)
PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS**

1. ORIGIN

Through the North American Public Relations Council (NAPRC), the concept of Universal Accreditation began in 1984. After much negotiation and collaboration between the members of the NAPRC, a Universal Accreditation program was established in 1998.

2. PURPOSE

Universal Accreditation was established to create a critical mass of accredited professionals in the public relations field who subscribe to a common code of ethics and a common professional certification process.

3. GOVERNANCE

Establishing policies and procedures pertaining to universal accreditation is the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB). The UAB is the responsible authority for the granting and maintenance of Accreditation. The UAB consists of representatives from each participating organization.

Representing its participating organizations, the UAB:

- Grants certifying competence of individuals practicing public relations for APR and APR+M.
- Grants Accreditation and the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations.
- Develops and maintains the Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) Examination and associated examinations, including the Accreditation in Public Relations + Military Communication (APR+M) Examination and Certificate in Principles of Public Relations Examination.
- Oversees the development of Examination questions, answers, and ensures content is based on the body of knowledge of the profession.
- Reviews appeal cases

4. MISSION

The mission of the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) is two-fold:

- To unify and advance the communications and public relations profession by recognizing those who have demonstrated broad knowledge, experience and professional judgment in the field through Accreditation. The program also improves public relations practice through the preparation required by those who undergo the process. The designation 'Accredited in Public Relations (APR)' therefore signifies a high professional level of experience and competence.
- To increase the visibility, credibility and perceived market value of professional Accreditation in public relations to key decision makers who hire, recruit and manage public relations practitioners.

5. VISION

Support the needs of public relations professionals seeking accreditation across the full practitioner career lifecycle.

The general design of this lifecycle will be along the following lines:

- A Certificate in Principles of Public Relations aimed at college seniors and recent graduates and focused on ethics and basic skills.
- The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations (APR), targeting professionals with five to seven years of experience (recommended) and addressing the full range of skills expected of seasoned professionals.
- A series of specialty certifications designed for Accredited professionals in vertical practice areas, such as financial communications, investor relations, healthcare, military and legislative/governmental affairs. Currently the APR+M credential are authorized.

5. PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

1. Several public relations and communication organizations have agreed to participate in Accreditation. Currently, the organizations that belong to the UAB are:
 - a. Asociación de Relacionistas Profesionales de Puerto Rico
 - b. California Association of Public Information Officials
 - c. Florida Public Relations Association
 - d. Maine Public Relations Council
 - e. National Association of Government Communicators
 - f. National School Public Relations Association
 - g. Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)
 - h. Religion Communicators Council
 - i. Southern Public Relations Federation
2. Each participating organization agrees to the following:
 - a. To share in the cost of operating and administering the APR and APR+M through an annual fee. **(See appendix: Cost Sharing fees)**
 - b. To actively promote Accreditation as the hallmark of professionalism in public relations.
 - c. To instruct members, within one year of ratifying participation in UAB, that no other designations of public relations Accreditation currently in use will be valid for use on business cards, directory listings or other professional communications.

- d. To appoint a member to represent the organization on UAB
 - e. PRSA owns and holds exclusive rights to the use of the “APR” and the “Accredited in Public Relations,” “APR+M,” the ‘Accredited in Public Relations + Military Communication,’ and Certificate in Principles of Public Relations trademarks. PRSA will allow the use of those trademarks by members of participating organization whose existing Accreditation or certification is accepted by PRSA.
 - f. To adhere to the decisions of PRSA as related specifically to Accreditation, including any revisions or amendments to its policies and procedures, and to understand that it is the responsibility of the participating organization’s representative to UAB to keep his/her participating organization informed about major decisions.
 - g. To establish annual goals to increase the number of candidates participating in the Accreditation process.
3. Either party can terminate this agreement with 30 days written notice.
- a. The PRSA Board of Directors and/or the UAB (by a two-thirds vote) may discontinue UAB membership of a participating organization for non-participation.
 - b. Participating organizations may leave the UAB by submitting a written notice citing the reasons for leaving the UAB (for example, if the organization is defunct). The participating organization will be responsible for notifying its Accredited members of the steps they must take to maintain their Accredited status (joining another participating organization).
4. Recordkeeping and Data Management
- a. PRSA will maintain a master role of all individuals who have earned APR, APR+M or Certificate in Principles of Public Relations. This master list will allow the PRSA staff to manage the renewal and revocation process day-to-day. POs will provide contact information for their members who are APR twice each year for inclusion on this list and provide updates when contact information changes.

We agree to the above provisions.

Authorized Participating Organization Representative

Date

PRSA Representative

Appendix

COST SHARING BY PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Total Cost Sharing Fees

Base Fee	\$500
Per Member Fee*	
(Calculate using chart below)	_____
TOTAL DUE:	\$_____

<u>Percent of Membership that is Accredited</u>	<u>Per-Member* Fee</u>
0 – 5%	\$3
5.1 – 15%	\$2
More than 15%	\$1

*Member is defined as professional member of your organization; retired members, students and associate members (such as vendors, etc.) are not included for purposes of calculating the UAB fees.