# PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

## Course record information

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|---|---|
| Name and level of final award: | MA Public Relations |
| | The MA Public Relations is a Masters degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible. |
| Name and level of intermediate awards: | Postgraduate Diploma in Public Relations |
| | Postgraduate Certificate in Public Relations |
| Awarding body/institution: | University of Westminster |
| Teaching Institution: | University of Westminster |
| Status of awarding body/institution: | Recognised Body |
| Location of delivery: | Harrow / Central London |
| Language of delivery and assessment: | English |
| Mode, length of study and normal starting month: | Full time (one year) |
| | Part time day/ evening (two years) |
| QAA subject benchmarking group(s): | |
| Professional statutory or regulatory body: | PRCA – public relations consultants association |
| | CIPR – chartered institute of public relations |
| Date of course validation/review: | November 2016 |
| Date of programme specification approval: | Jan 2017 |
| Valid for cohorts: | From 2017/18 |
| Course Leader: | Jon Cope |
| Course URL: | westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate |
| Westminster Course Code: | |
| JACS code: | |
| UKPASS code: | 021665 |

**Admissions requirements**
There are standard minimum entry requirements for all undergraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply

For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements.

More information can be found here: westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply

**Aims of the course**
To equip students with the skills and knowledge to pursue a career in the field of Public Relations.

The MA in Public Relations is particularly relevant for those wishing to enter - or further - a career in public relations, or for those working in roles where communication issues play an important part.

It is designed to help broaden, enhance and update practical skills, while engaging in serious study of the context, issues and theory behind public relations. It is also designed to create better strategic managers - those who can seize opportunities presented by rapid changes in communication rather than simply following in their slipstream

At Westminster, our aim is to provide students with an academically challenging postgraduate education as well as relevant professional skills in the field of public relations. Students are encouraged to adopt a self-critical approach to their performance as a basis for lifelong learning and to enhance personal and professional skills

**Employment and further study opportunities**
Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses

- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students

- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision

- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements, which will inform the service delivered to students.

**Learning outcomes**
Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These threshold statements of achievement and are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

**Knowledge and understanding**
By the end of the course students should have a thorough knowledge of the public relations industry and the key theories and concepts underpinning its practice.

**Professional skills**
The course is designed to ensure that students develop to the maximum possible extent the skills which they take with them into professional life.

In the case of public relations we are aware that the range of skills is exceptionally diverse and that students on the course hope to develop careers in a variety of specialisms in many different countries. As an individual the nature of work undertaken may change dramatically with changes in job roles. We are acutely aware that we are preparing students for careers in a rapidly changing industry; we want our students to be able to take advantage of change, and not to be at its mercy!

| Professional skills | Module |
|---|---|
| Media Production/Design | Media and content strategy and optional modules |
| Writing for different audiences Story telling | Media and content strategy and optional modules |
| Pitching and client presentations | Communications planning and management and optional modules |
| Strategic communications planning | Communications planning and management and optional modules |
| Advocacy and persuasive techniques | All modules |
| Audience/media /market research | All modules |
| Analytics and analysis | Media and communications planning |
| Critical evaluation of communications | Public relations in society; Persuasion, propaganda and influence |
| Using digital platforms | All |

**Key transferable skills**
Some of the most important skills developed on the course are transferable and are not developed in a prescriptive way. The course will, for example, develop your skills as an independent researcher. We also encourage you to think creatively, to display initiative and to develop original ideas in a self-confident but at the same time reflective way. We emphasise written and oral communication skills. Some modules place particular stress on developing oral presentation techniques. Others involve teamwork, another important element in media and communications industries.

| *Transferable skill* | *Relevant Core Modules** |
|---|---|
| Teamwork | Media and content strategy Communications planning and management |
| Problem solving | All modules |
| Critical thinking | All modules |
| Presentation skills | All taught modules |
| Written communication | All modules |
| Digital media skills | All modules |
| Independent research | PR in society |

| | Persuasion, propaganda and influence<br>Dissertation<br>Professional project |
|---|---|
| Self-management | Professional project<br>Dissertation |
| Influencing skills/negotiation | Media and content strategy<br>Persuasion propaganda and influence |
| Creative thinking | Communications planning<br>All optional modules |

**Learning, teaching and assessment methods**

**Learning**

Students will learn through a mixture of practice based exercises, participation in group work, debates and class discussions. Wherever possible live client briefs will be used to simulate the professional work environment.

**Teaching**

Teaching and learning on the course is designed to be appropriate to the needs of each module. In general the more 'theory' based elements of the course tend to use lectures and class based group work whereas the practice sessions use a workshop and presentation style of delivery.

**Assessment**

There are no formal examinations on this course. Instead students are continuously assessed by a variety of methods including essays, seminar papers, presentations, group work, creative portfolios and participation in class debate and exercises.

The main types of assessment are reports, essays, presentations and creative portfolios. All require a high level of written and spoken English. In particular it is important that students feel confident of their ability to present creative ideas or arguments in front of an audience of their peers.

**Course structure**

Full-time students will complete the course in one year, part-time students in two years. Over this period (one year for full-time students or two years for part-time students) students will take the equivalent of six taught modules worth 20 credits each plus complete a dissertation or project – worth 60 credits - on a subject chosen by you and agreed with your supervisor

The taught element of the programme runs over two semesters. Semester one runs from mid September to late December and semester two runs from mid January to April. Students take six taught modules: four compulsory 'core' modules, three of which are taught in semester one and one in semester two; and two modules chosen from a range of options which will be taught in semester two.

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits per year.

| Credit Level 7 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Module code** | **Module title** | **Status** | **UK credit** | **ECTS** |
| 7PURL007W | Media and content strategy | Core | 20 | 10 |
| 7PURL005W | Communications planning and management | Core | 20 | 10 |
| 7PURL009W | Public relations in Society | Core | 20 | 10 |
| 7PURL002W | Persuasion, Propaganda and Influence | Core | 20 | 10 |
| **In addition to the above, students must choose one of the following final project modules:** | | | | |
| 7PURL008W | Dissertation/research project | Core | 60 | 30 |
| 7PURL011W | Professional project | Core | 60 | 30 |
| | | | | |
| **Optional modules** | | | | |
| **Module code** | **Module title** | **Status** | **UK credit** | **ECTS** |
| 7PURL003W | Corporate Communications and reputation management | Option | 20 | 10 |
| 7PURL001W | Brand and marketing communications | Option | 20 | 10 |
| 7PURL004W | Fashion promotion and PR | Option | 20 | 10 |
| 7PURL010W | Strategic planning in Advertising | Option | 20 | 10 |
| | School of Media, Arts and Design elective | Option | 20 | 10 |
| **Award of MA** | | | | |

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year.

**Professional Body Accreditation or other external references**

The MA PR is one of a select few courses accredited by the PRCA.

For further information on student services offered by the PRCA  **http://www.prca.org.uk/**

The course is also accredited by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations ( CIPR)

http://www.cipr.co.uk/content/training-qualifications/recognised-university-courses

**Academic regulations**
The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations

**How will you be supported in your studies?**

**Course Management**

**Jon Cope - Course Leader.** Responsible for day-to-day running and overall management of the course and development of the curriculum. Including:

- Admissions
- Approving students' programme of study
- Organisation of tutorial and supervisory support and pastoral care
- Co-ordination of Dissertation supervision
- Co-ordination of marks for assessment boards
- General management of the course

**Academic Support**
Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Faculty Registry Office. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students

**Learning Support**
The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students[1] can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

**Support Services**
The University of Westminster Student Affairs department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University.

**How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?**
The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2008. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a

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[1] Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

The course is also monitored each year by the Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from Course Committees, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. Each Faculty puts in to place an action plan. This may for example include making changes on the way the module is taught, assessed or even how the course is structured in order to improve the course, in such cases an approval process is in place.

A Course review takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with review panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years e.g. from Course Committees is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

**How do we act on student feedback?**
Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through Course Committees students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Student representatives are elected to Committee to expressly represent the views of their peer. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the student representatives.

- Each Faculty also has its own Faculty Student Forum with student representatives; this enables wider discussions across the Faculty. Student representatives are also represented on key Faculty and university committees.

- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.

- The University also has an annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey or PTES which helps us compare how we are doing with other institutions, to make changes that will improve what we do in future and to keep doing the things that you value.