

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

### Course record information

Name and level of final award:	<b>BA (Hons) Public Relations &amp; Advertising</b> The BA (Hons) Public Relations & Advertising is a BA degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA first cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	BA (Hons) Public Relations & Advertising Diploma of HE in Public Relations & Advertising Certificate of HE in Public Relations & Advertising
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Harrow Campus
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month:	Three years full time: September start.
<a href="#">QAA subject benchmarking group(s)</a> :	<a href="#">Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies.</a>
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	N/A
Date of course validation/review:	February 2015
Date of programme specification approval:	July 2015
Valid for cohorts :	2016/17 levels 4 and 5, 2017/18 levels 4,5 and 6
Course Leader	Trish Evans
UCAS code and URL:	P210 <a href="http://westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate">westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate</a>

## Course Overview

Public Relations & Advertising is a unique course, built on a decade of teaching promotional communications together with its supporting theory, and its relationship with print and broadcast media, digital platforms and social media. Our approach combines exploration of the latest and best professional practice with academic excellence.

To support, you, our students, in your professional ambitions, we have an extensive network of industry practitioners who teach on the course, advise on and refresh content, and host students for work experience, networking and industry events, as well as scholars and academic experts.

You will learn through a broad mix of lectures, group and individual tutorials, critical reviews, workshops, debates, presentations and scenario simulations.

You will receive peer and tutor feedback and are expected to develop self-knowledge and self-reflect on your coursework in order to acquire insight, skills, knowledge and experience from your time with us. All these learning techniques support your professional development for the communications industries, as well as life skills, in accordance with the University's key characteristics and graduate attributes.

We use a variety of assessment methods, including practical projects, presentations, debates, role-plays, written reports, academic essays, blogs, websites, social media, criticism, research and analysis tasks and portfolios. Approximately two thirds of assessments are practical work in various forms.

This course is designed to set high standards for professional achievement in specific industry roles and to prepare you for the challenges and opportunities of a career in public relations, and or advertising, or for a multi-skilled portfolio career. Graduates have a high employment rate in these industries including roles in publicity, press office, media relations, promotions, events, crisis management, campaigning, internal communications, creative, account servicing, content creation, market research, blogging, editing, and client management. Our graduates work across all media, particularly the latest online platforms, and across all sectors, public, private and third sector.

## 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.

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/undergraduate/how-to-apply](http://westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/how-to-apply)

## Aims of the course

The BA (Hons) Public Relations & Advertising is a media studies course to help equip you for the twenty first century. Understanding of the rapid change and development of media channels and communication practices is essential for you to achieve your full potential in work or further studies, and to assist you to do this, the course is designed to:

- Enable you to become skilled researchers, critical thinkers and creative communicators
- Use all media to communicate, including press and broadcast, as well as contemporary online platforms, and understand their commonalities and differences
- Know best professional practice as well as theories and concepts.
- Develop your ability to participate in contemporary media debates.
- Develop your awareness of the political, ethical, social, cultural & economic implications of these industries for your work.
- Allow you to operate in changing professional media contexts and practices globally
- Enable you to develop a range of transferable skills applicable to a variety of media and other professional working environments.
- Prepare you for postgraduate study in related practical and theoretical disciplines.

### **What will you be expected to achieve?**

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

- The overall **knowledge and understanding** you will gain from your course (KU).
- **Graduate attributes** are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA).
- **Professional and personal practice learning outcomes** are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course (PPP)
- **Key transferable skills** that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)

Course learning outcomes are delivered across all modules, not just core modules. Core modules focus on the delivery of particular course learning outcomes as shown. Note that individual modules have their own learning outcomes, which are detailed in their module handbooks.

We also offer a range of option modules (sometimes termed 'electives') at levels 4, 5 and 6 to expand skills and experience in particular aspects of the course.

**Level 4 learning outcomes:** Upon completion of level 4 you will be able to:

L4.1 Demonstrate understanding of a range of theoretical approaches to studying media, public relations and advertising (KU).

L4.2 Discuss key political, economic, social, digital and cultural aspects of public relations and advertising (KU).

L4.3 Use and understand the role public relations and advertising plays in wider society and across the full spectrum of communications mechanisms (PPP)

L4.4 Prepare written and visual content in a range of styles appropriate to a variety of media the environments. (KTS)

L4.5 Conform to the conventions and requirements of academic criticism and writing (GA).

L4.6 Identify, locate and interpret a broad range of secondary research materials from the field of media and communication (e.g. learners will understand principles of peer-review and academic journals, and will become familiar with the most important of these journals and with key relevant databases) (KU).

L4.7 Lead, contribute to, and participate effectively in discussions, both in-class and online (KTS).

L4.8 Manage independent study time and take responsibility for learning, with guidance (KTS).

**Level 5 learning outcomes:** Upon completion of level 5 you will be able to

L5.1 Demonstrate awareness of current and emerging professional working practices and opportunities in the public relations and advertising industries (PPP)

L5.2 Comprehend current practice issues in the context of major theories of media, culture and society, with some specialisation in one or more aspects, and effectively communicate to academic standards (KTS)

L5.3 Understand contextual factors influencing the practice of PR, advertising and the media within which they operate, ranging from changing politics, political economy, and socio-cultural factors (KU) (PPP)

L5.4 Show awareness of the similarities and differences across different national markets globally in relation to media landscape, PR and advertising (KU)

L5.5 Understand the legal and ethical issues involved in PR and advertising practices and show awareness of environmental issues and sustainability in general and be able to incorporate this knowledge in practice (KU) (KTS)

L5.6 Effectively communicate in written, oral and visual modes, engaging with professional and protocols and a range of external audiences (PPP, KTS)

L5.7 Manage study time and information, taking responsibility for your own learning, with limited guidance (KTS)

L5.8. Work effectively with others, demonstrating an ability to use strong discussion and collaboration skills, participate in and benefit from an exchange of ideas and methods, both in-class and online (GA)

L5.9 Consolidate and extend writing skills across a range of genres (e.g. reports, essays, research proposals, and writing for the web) (KTS).

**Level 6 learning outcomes:** Upon completion of level 6 you will be able to:

L6.1 Demonstrate awareness of graduation opportunities for employment or further study, including the requirement for adaptability in the changing media industries (PPP)

L6.2 Understand relevant theories of media, culture and society, with an awareness of the provisional nature of critical approaches in the discipline (GA, PPP)

L6.3 Flexibly, creatively and enterprisingly apply public relations and advertising production practices, to appropriate professional standards for recognition in the media (KU)

L6.4 Use planning strategies, development research, methods and tools, to produce work that is situated within and critically engages with contemporary professional communications and media practices (KTS)

L6.5 Develop leadership, project management, organisational and entrepreneurial skills through managing time, resources and other stakeholders effectively to complete a public relations and or advertising project with students or with an external organisation that achieves media recognition (PPP, GA).

L6.6 Effectively communicate in written, oral and audio-visual modes, meeting academic standards and professional protocols, and involving a range of audiences (KTS)

L6.7 Manage study time and information, taking responsibility for your own learning, and apply critical reflection to this process GA)

L6.8 Work effectively with others, recognising the varied contributions and roles that result in effective collaborative working, and offering of leadership or support as appropriate (KTS)

### **How will you learn?**

The course responds to the rapidly changing media landscape and equally rapid change and response in Public Relations and Advertising communications practice. These demand multi-skilled professionals, and require new means to distribute content for public relations and advertising.

We aim to provide you with a broad range of practical and conceptual knowledge and skills specific to the media studied, and applicable to the skills required in the workplace. You will also engage with the broader legal, ethical and social contexts and questions that affect us all, and you will become an effective communicator through diverse media for local and global audiences. We study significant current political, economic and cultural issues and how they are reflected in public relations and advertising practice and the opportunities therein. We thereby help you to acquire the Graduate Attributes identified above, as well as creative and professional skills, to become effective contemporary practitioners and life-long learners.

Our teaching and learning methods on the course are directly related to the aims and learning outcomes identified above. We have designed the course to lead you from a broad understanding and skills across the public relations and advertising industries and the key related theoretical concepts, to focused knowledge and skills, which you will apply by the end of the course. At the point of graduation we also intend that you will have gained an ability to identify the professional opportunities open to you for your future careers.

To achieve these objectives we deliver a series of practical modules that progressively increase depth of skills and knowledge across the three years of the course. A process of theoretical study accompanies the practical modules, with you being encouraged to integrate theory and practice throughout. Modules at levels 5 and 6 (2nd and 3rd year) address work- related skills to support career development, including a short period of work experience in levels 5 or 6. You can also apply to study part of your second year abroad with one of our overseas exchange partners.

At all levels teaching includes lectures and seminars, practical workshops, group activities and tutorials, together with industry events and career and networking opportunities.

You receive continuous formative feedback through group and one-to-one tutorials and periodic reviews, designed to give you multiple points of guidance throughout your studies and before a final assessment. Most practical assessments are conducted as group exercises (although assessed individually) making these key learning opportunities for all students involved. You are always welcome to seek time with your tutors and are in frequent email and regular messaging contact through the university's intranet and email system.

Scheduled / supervised time represents only a proportion of study for each module (approximately one third overall). The remaining time is self-managed by you, offering scope for creative exploration, research, wider reading and familiarity with all channels of communication and media, and the emergence of the autonomy required of you in professional life.

Core lectures in levels 4 & 5 (years 1 and 2) address the whole year group. Your final year Dissertation and Final Project are supported through lectures, group activities and focused one-to-one tuition.

We support our modules with online material through Blackboard, the University's Virtual Learning Environment. This material may include practical examples, current media references, key sources, discussion groups, blogs, and other functions.

### **How will you be assessed?**

Our assessment strategy reflects the philosophy of the course, aiming to develop creative, flexible and thoughtful practitioners of the future. Assessment is integral to the overall learning process, and we offer a range of assessment methods on both practical and theoretical modules. This allows our students to demonstrate their skills and understanding in a variety of ways. The benefit is that this provides a range of activities in which to excel, so supporting and encouraging a variety of preferred learning styles. All modules are assessed through coursework (we do not use exams).

Practical modules are typically assessed through a combination of presentations of practical work to staff, normally with other students present, and submitted written reports and essays. Debates, interviews, pitches and press conferences are all used as presentation formats.

Theoretical modules (and some practice-theory modules) draw upon a range of assessment methods, including written work, seminar presentations, research plans, essays and online study tasks.

Clear Assessment Criteria are stated in module handbooks and these are linked to the module Learning Outcomes.

Students receive written feedback from all assessments, and this directly relates to the assessment criteria for each module. Students also have an opportunity to discuss the outcome with module staff.

As mentioned above, formative feedback is also given throughout modules in tutorials, and group discussions, and in written peer feedback. It is designed to inform students of areas for improvement, and of current strengths which are to be nurtured and developed. Peer assessment will help to support you in developing skills in critical judgement and self- evaluation.

Some modules assess learning outcomes with another module (called 'synoptic assessment'). This allows you to combine elements of learning from different modules and show your accumulated knowledge and understanding of contemporary public relations and advertising practice and theory. It also helps to reduce formal assessment and so ensure that you have as much time and opportunity as possible to develop your skills, knowledge and experience.

Over the whole course approximately 65% of assessments are practical work.

### **Employment and further study opportunities**

University of Westminster courses capitalise on the benefits that London as a global city and as a major creative, intellectual and technology hub has to offer for the learning environment and experience of our students.

University of Westminster graduates will be able to demonstrate the following five Graduate Attributes:

- Critical and creative thinker
- Literate and effective communicator
- Entrepreneurial
- Global in outlook and engaged in communities
- Socially, ethically and environmentally aware

These Graduate Attributes are oriented towards your employability after completion of the course, and are aligned to the Course Learning Outcomes as follows:

### **Alignment of Graduate Attributes to Course Learning Outcomes**

These graduate attributes are designed to help you enhance your employability when you leave the Public Relations and Advertising course and enable you to pursue a career across a range of sectors – all of which employ practitioners in their communications teams, as well as within the broader marketing communications industry, a global growth sector in the last decade.

They are aligned to the Course Learning Outcomes as follows

Graduate Attribute	Evident in Course Learning Outcomes
Critical and creative thinker	L4.1; L4.2; L4.3; L4.4; L4.6; L5.1; L5.2; L5.7; L6.1; L6.7
Literate and effective communicator	L4.1; L4.2; L4.3; L4.4; L4.5; L5.1; L5.2; L5.3; L5.4; L5.6; L5.7; L6.2; L6.7; L6.8
Entrepreneurial	L4.7; L5.2; L5.4; L6.2; L6.3; L6.6; L6.8
Global in outlook and engaged in communities	L4.3; L4.4; L4.6; L5.2; L5.3; L5.4; L5.5; L6.1; L6.2; L6.3; L6.4; L6.6; L6.8
Socially, ethically and environmentally aware	L4.1; L4.3; L4.4; L4.5; L4.6; L4.7; L5.2; L5.4; L6.2; L6.3; L6.4; L6.6

The course provides focus on key transferable skills that have always been central to education

in the humanities or social sciences. These are skills in research and analysis, in critical thinking, and in communication. PR & Advertising graduates will have developed these to advanced levels, along with their knowledge and understanding of the media landscape and its social and cultural contexts. They will be creative, adaptable, thoughtful and resourceful, and will be able to work both independently and collaboratively in positions that require abilities in finding, analysing and communicating information and ideas.

Public Relations and Advertising, like all University of Westminster courses, capitalises on the benefits that London as a global city and as a major creative, intellectual and technology hub has to offer for the learning environment and experience of its students. Key modules will involve student research in visits to cultural institutions and media and industry organisations.

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.

All students on the BA in Public Relations and Advertising complete a work experience engagement from Level 5 onwards; the university careers office is the main hub for this, and all learners should take advantage of what the careers service can offer from the start of their degrees (e.g. vacancies, internships, placements, CV advice, practice interviews and many other services). The degree also enables graduates to enrol for further higher degree courses — such as a Masters degree — either at Westminster or beyond.

## Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Undergraduate students study 120 credits per year. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Credit Level 4				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
4PURL003W	Introduction to PR & Advertising	Core	20	20
4PURL001W	Media Insight & Intelligence	Core	20	10
4PURL002W	Campaigning: Persuasion & Influence	Core	20	10
4MEST016W	Media & Society	Core	20	10
4MEST015W	Media & Globalisation	Core	20	10
4MEST014W	Celebrity Culture & the Media	Option	20	10

Credit Level 5				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
5PURL003W	Global Practice & Issues in Contemporary Communications	Core	40	20
5PURL005W	Global Practice in Public Relations & Advertising*** (for Westminster PR & Advertising students who will study abroad in semester two only)	Core	20	10
5MEST015W	Online Advertising & Public Relations	Core	20	10
5REME003W	Researching Media and Communication	Core	20	10
5RDPR004W	Theories of Media and Communication	Core	20	10
5PURL001W	Advertising & Promotional Culture*	Option	20	10
5PURL002W	Sex, Violence & Censorship*	Option	20	10
	Option/ Elective*	Option	20	10

Credit Level 6				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
6PURL003W	Final Project in Advertising & PR	Core	40	20
6PURL001W	Professional Practice & Employability in PR & Advertising	Core	20	10
6MEST006W	Long Dissertation *‡	Core Option	40	20
6MEST012W	Short Dissertation* ‡ Extended Research Essay	Core Option	20	10
	Option**	Option	20	10
	Elective	Option	20	10

**\*Level 5 option modules:** (1) Advertising & Promotional Culture; (2) Sex, Violence & Censorship; (3) Politics & the Media; (4) Creativity; (5) Information Society; (7) Theories of Media and Communication

All PR & Advertising students choose either two of these, or one of these or an elective.

\*\*\*5PURL005W Global Practice in Public Relations & Advertising core module is available only to students who study abroad in the second semester of their second year. (See Study Abroad below)

**\*\*Level 6 option modules:** (1) Transforming Audiences; (2) Contemporary Issues in Media Policy.

All PR & Ad students choose either one of these modules if doing Short Dissertation plus two electives; if doing Long Dissertation, either one of these modules or an elective.

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

\* Indicates that you must take one of these modules. If you take Short Dissertation you must also then take another elective module of 20 credits, and the course leader must agree that elective.

‡ Indicates modules with a pre-requisite (a module that must be passed first).

### Alternatives to the BA (Hons) PR & Advertising – Faculty and University electives

Students will also be able to choose from a number of elective modules, offered by the Media, Arts and Design Faculty and the university as a whole.

The Media, Arts and Design Faculty electives will aim to encourage collaborations between courses and across clusters. At the moment, these modules are still in development. However, one Faculty elective is currently running and available for PR & Advertising students to choose – Creative Encounters, which is offered at Level 5.

The Westminster electives will be available to students across the whole of the university. As with the Faculty electives, these modules aim to encourage collaboration - this time across faculties. They will directly address the distinctive series of Graduate Attributes that all Westminster degrees aim to encourage and develop (outlined in detail on Page 9 of this document). They will give students the opportunity to pursue interests beyond their specific degrees and to network with students outside of their home courses and faculties. At the moment, these electives are still in development but they will be available for students to choose at all levels of their degrees.

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

### **Study Abroad**

Students who opt to study abroad for the second semester of their second year (level five) will study equivalent modules to the course modules listed above at their overseas host university. The total number of credits taken while studying abroad will equal 60 credits at the University of Westminster and on completion of study abroad students will progress accordingly on return to Westminster. Students who study abroad will complete a Learning Agreement signed by their Course Leader prior to acceptance on the study abroad host course, which will state that the modules chosen while abroad are the equivalent of home modules and are comparable, and meet the required standards and credit levels.

### **Professional Body Accreditation or other external references**

BA (Hons) Public Relations & Advertising students enjoy membership of the PRCA, which offers industry focused and professionally oriented learning, high quality work experience, and maintains engagement with its graduates as they develop their careers.

### **Academic regulations**

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at [westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations](http://westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations)

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

#### **Course Management**

The BA (Hons) Public Relations & Advertising is managed by a Course Leader, and is grouped with a number of other courses in the Faculty of Media, Arts and Design on the Harrow Campus. The Dean of Faculty and other senior Faculty staff provide support and management at their respective levels, enhancing the specific role of the Course Leader.

The professional and research practice of course staff is employed in improving the delivery of the course to ensure that we reflect current and emerging real-world concerns and demands.

#### **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<sup>1</sup> 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 2013. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

- 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 Student Experience Survey which seeks the opinions of students about their course and University experience. Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.

**Please note:** This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks, which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.

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