Detroit Chapter

PRSA

Public Relations Society of America

# Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) Overview

# Objectives

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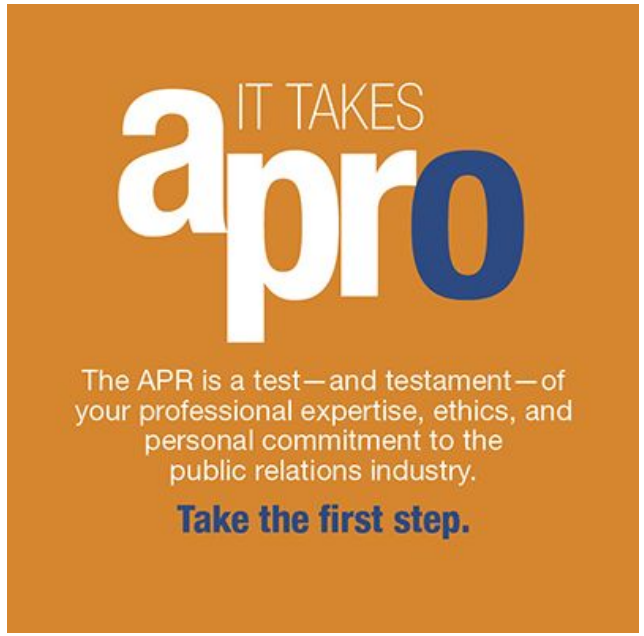
- Understand what Accreditation in Public Relations means and why it's important
- Understand the APR process
- Learn about resources available to support you through the APR process
- Know the steps and deadlines for PRSA Detroit's APR process



# What is Accreditation?

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- The public relations industry's only national, post-graduate certification program and is a recognized standard
- Spans all industries and practice areas
- Established in 1964
- Signifies a high level of skill and competency in the public relations field
- Administered by the Universal Accreditation Board, a consortium of nine leading industry organizations, including PRSA
- Accredited professionals have "APR" after their name

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# Why Seek Accreditation?



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# Steps to Accreditation

# Overview: Steps to Accreditation

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1. Complete the Examination Application for Accreditation in Public Relations and submit to PRSA National as soon as possible. Notify the PRSA Detroit Chapter of your interest to pursue Accreditation
2. Complete the Panel Presentation Candidate Questionnaire and submit to the PRSA Detroit Accreditation Committee
3. Prepare and sit for the Panel Presentation. A representative of the PRSA Detroit APR Committee will work with you to schedule the Panel Presentation (questionnaire must be received)
4. Continue to study and complete the computer-based exam **within one year of application** to PRSA National

# Step 1: Submit your application

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- Submit the **examination application** to PRSA National
  - Accreditation is open to any candidate in good standing with PRSA
  - 5 years of professional experience recommended but not required
- Notify **Jen Mrozowski** and **Kristin Sokul** (PRSA Detroit Accreditation Committee) of your interest in pursuing accreditation

## Exam Application Fee

**$385 – one payment**
*(application fee waived)*

OR

**$410 – two payments**
*(includes $25 application fee)*

**PRSA National refunds $110 if you pass!**

# Step 2: Complete the Candidate Questionnaire

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- Complete the **Panel Presentation Candidate Questionnaire** based on a public relations plan that reflects your experience
- Detailed, written answers to 14 questions highlighting:
  - *Your organization and your role*
  - *Your experience (programming emphasis)*
- The PRSA Detroit Accreditation Committee will contact candidates to schedule panel presentations ***after*** receiving your questionnaire

**SEND COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO JEN MROZOWSKI & KRISTIN SOKUL**

# Step 3: Panel Presentation
## *Scheduling*

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- The PRSA Detroit Accreditation Committee will work with candidates to schedule panel presentations
  - Panel presentations will not be scheduled until a candidate has submitted his/her questionnaire
- Panelists score knowledge, skills and abilities in 12 areas
- The UAB notifies candidates of Advance/Not Advance to the computer-based exam within 3-4 weeks after the panel presentation
- If a candidate does not advance, you can repeat the panel presentation after 90 days

# Step 3: Panel Presentation
## *Preparation*

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- Prepare a presentation and/or portfolio that highlights a completed program or campaign **you did on your own or where you played a major role**
  - *Must use the same program/campaign highlighted in your Candidate Questionnaire*
  - *Can be paid or volunteer*
- Organize your presentation/portfolio according to programming elements
  - *Include supporting materials in hard copy or PowerPoint – keep it simple*
- Your plan can have "holes," but you must explain in detail what you should have/would have done differently
  - *Provide explanation in both the questionnaire and during the panel presentation*

# Step 3: Panel Presentation
## *Format & Results*

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- Three Accredited panelists from PRSA Detroit
- Up to 2 hours; minimum of 1, including Q&A; in-person or virtual options
- Explain the program you outlined in your questionnaire
- Format similar to a job interview
- Panelists determine whether you “advance” or “do not advance” and report determination to PRSA National
  - You must “advance” to move on to the computer-based exam
  - The UAB notifies candidates of Advance/Not Advance to the computer-based exam within 3-4 weeks (results come directly from PRSA National)
  - Must wait 90 days to retry if you “do not advance”

# Step 3: Panel Presentation
## *General Tips*

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- View as an academic exercise; experience is important, but you must study to succeed
- In the Panel Presentation, stick with what you're most familiar with
  - i.e. If your experience is in community relations, don't focus on crisis management
- If your experience is narrow, you must work to think and present yourself as a well-rounded practitioner
  - i.e. If you primarily work in internal communications, make sure to demonstrate understanding media relations

# Step 4: Take the Computer-based Exam
## *Exam Categories*

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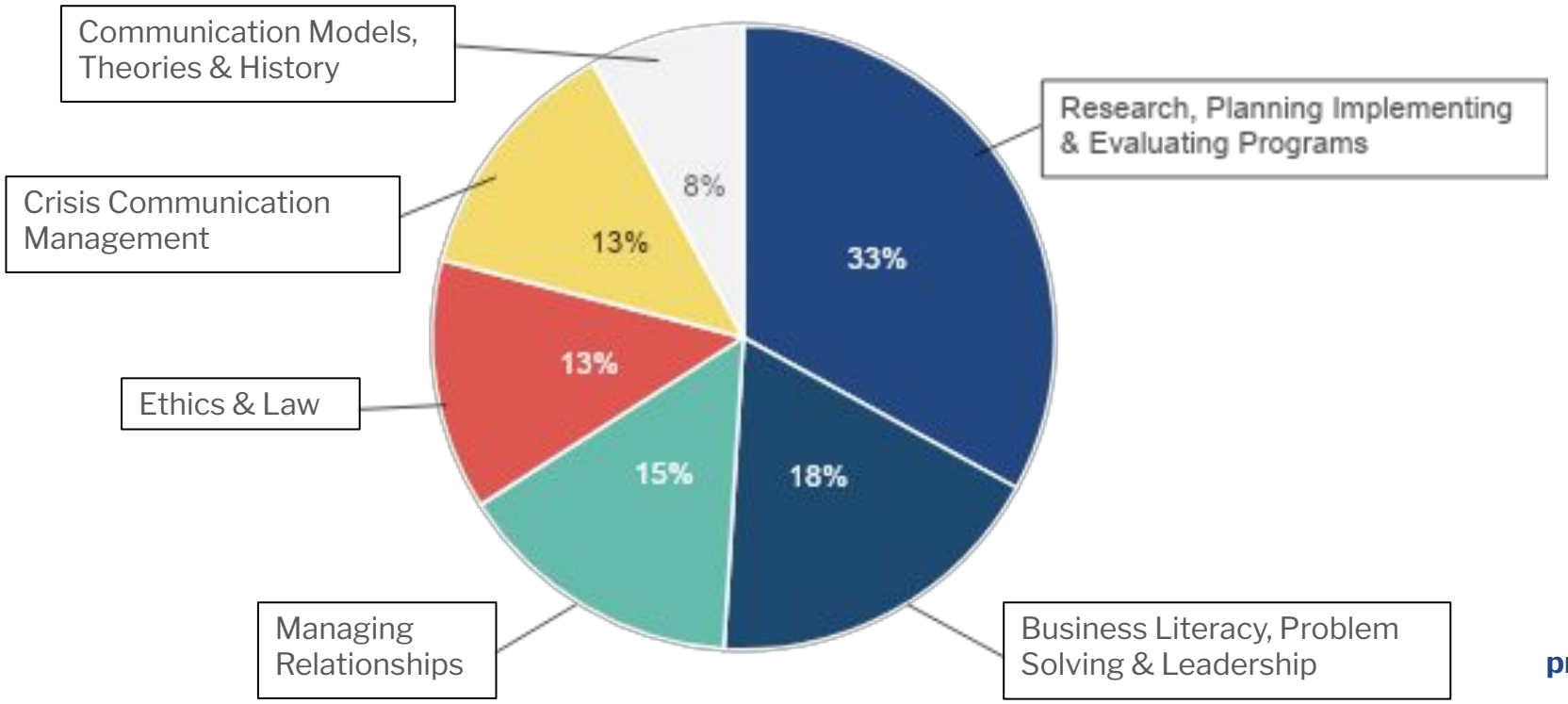
Candidates are tested on knowledge, skills and abilities in the following evaluation categories:



# Step 4: Take the Computer-based Exam
## *Scheduling, Format & Results*

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- You decide when to take the exam and schedule online through Prometric
- 3.75-hour test administered "on demand" through local Prometric Testing facilities (online option also available)
  - *10 to 15-minute optional break; clock still runs*
- 132 graded question, plus beta questions mixed in randomly
  - *Must get 67% of graded questions correct to pass*
- Preliminary results available immediately
- Official notification comes from PRSA National

YOU MUST COMPLETE READINESS REVIEW AND THE COMPUTER EXAM **WITHIN ONE YEAR** OF ACCEPTANCE OF YOUR APPLICATION

# Step 4: Take the Computer-based Exam
## *General Tips*

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- Prioritize study topics and establish a study schedule
- Questions require you to apply your knowledge to scenarios
  - *Often asked to identify the BEST answer*
  - *Few memorization questions*
- You can flag questions for later review
- It's okay if the exam seems hard
- If you don't pass your first time, it's okay – you can retry
  - *If you retake the exam, you have to pay the test fee again*
  - *If you pass the first time, PRSA National gives you a bit of a rebate*

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# Preparation Resources

# Managing Information Overload

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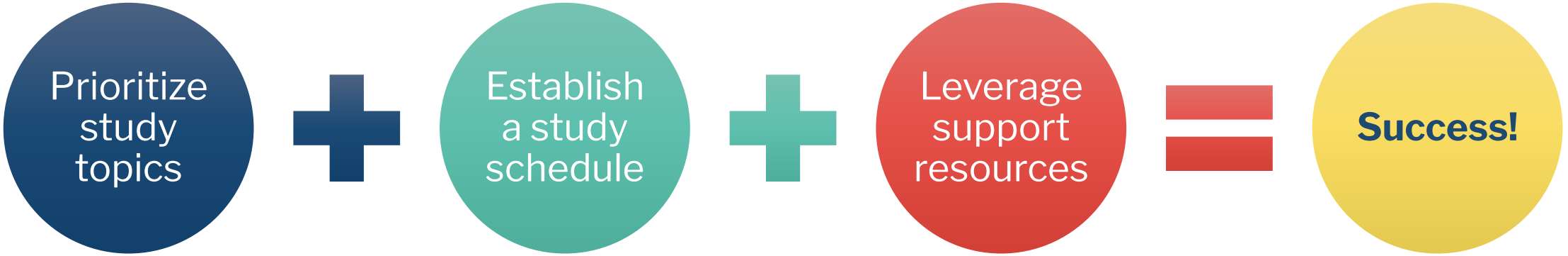

# PRSA National Accreditation Resources

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- Online resources available at https://www.praccreditation.org/
  - *Candidate Panel Presentation Instruction Guide*
  - *Recommended Textbooks*
  - *Study guide available online, FREE!*
  - *Online prep course offered by PRSA (members - $195; non-members - $295)*
  - *APR online sample test*
- PRSA National Manager of Accreditation:
  **Kathy Mulvihill**
  **Accred@praccreditation.org**
  **212-460-1346**

# Accredited PRSA Detroit Mentors

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- PRSA Detroit APR members can share insight, guidance and answer questions on the Accreditation process
- Seek help or support from an accredited colleague or friend
- Request to be paired with a mentor through the PRSA Detroit Accreditation Committee
  - *Candidates will receive an email from PRSA Detroit Accreditation Committee with more details and the names of APR mentors*
  - *Candidates will have the opportunity to select their APR mentor and must notify the PRSA Detroit Accreditation Committee of their selection*
  - *The PRSA Detroit Accreditation Committee will virtually introduce the APR mentor and mentee*
  - *It is the responsibility of the APR mentor/mentee to determine the structure, format and frequency of interaction and communication*

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# Next Steps

# Accreditation Timeline

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**START THE PROCESS**

- Notify Jen Mrozowski and Kristin Sokul of your interest in pursuing your APR
- Submit the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations application
- Begin studying for the computer-based exam

**MONTHS 1 - 3**

- Begin collecting and preparing materials for panel presentation
- Submit completed Panel Presentation Candidate Questionnaire to Jen Mrozowski and Kristin Sokul
- Keep studying for the exam

**MONTHS 4 - 5**

- Request schedule for panel presentation
- Finalize portfolio and presentation
- Complete panel presentation
- Continue studying for the exam (it will be worth the effort)

**MONTHS 6 - 8**

- Prepare for computer-based exam
- Schedule exam
- Complete exam




- Impress professional colleagues, family and friends with your shiny new APR pin…
  **YOU DID IT!**

***TIMELINE INDICATED ABOVE IS JUST A SUGGESTED PACE…***
***YOU HAVE ONE YEAR FROM YOUR APPLICATION APPROVAL DATE TO COMPLETE THE PROCESS***

# APR Maintenance

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- Once you earn your APR, it remains active for three years
- You must submit a renewal application and $75 fee to PRSA National every three years to remain accredited
- You must accumulate a total of 15 CEUs in three categories within the three-year time period:
  - Continuing education/professional development *(conferences, webinars, local chapter programs)*
  - Ethics Training
  - Professionalism *(PRSA involvement, awards, presentations)*



# Questions?

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Contact any of the following individuals for support:

- Jen Mrozowski, APR *(PRSA Detroit Accreditation Committee Co-Chair)*
  jenmrozowski@gmail.com
- Kristin Sokul, APR *(PRSA Detroit Accreditation Committee Co-Chair)*
  kristinmsokul@gmail.com
- Kathy Mulvihill *(PRSA National Manager of Accreditation)*
  kathy.mulvihill@prsa.org or 212.460.1400